

### Consultation Findings on Proposed SEND transport Policy

#### 1. Introduction

A Statutory consultation was carried out between 25 October 2021 and 16 January 2022 on a proposed update to the Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) transport policy.

The council has consulted on proposed changes to its transport policies in the past. In February 2017, both mainstream and SEND school transport policies were consulted on, little feedback was received at the time and it is not clear what the outcome was regarding any changes

On this occasion, the council consulted with people on updates to the current SEND transport policy for children and young people up to the age of 16 years, and those with SEND attending Post-16 education.

The consultation sought people's views on the proposed updated policy, which outlines:

1. The council's responsibility to enable, support and assist children and young people with SEND to participate in education and training.
2. Parent/ carer responsibilities in supporting their child(ren) access education and training.
3. The council's commitment to support children and young people to develop their independence, enabling them to prepare for adulthood.
4. How the council will meet its obligations to provide 'home to school' and 'college travel' to eligible children and young people with SEND living in Leicester.
5. Alternative options for travel assistance, such as personal transport budgets and independent travel training.

#### What is a SEND transport policy?

The SEND transport policies, in general, describes the support provided by the council in regards to home to school transport, where children have Special Educational Needs. The policy outlines eligibility and criteria for being eligible for support. The current policy document is available [here](#).

The policies have been updated, for consultation, to outline more clearly what the council offers, with added and enhanced detail on the support we provide. In summary:

- Nothing has been removed from the council's transport offer, and information about what we offer should be clearer to find and understand.
- Policies now clearly outline the obligations of the council, and also the responsibilities of parents/carers in getting their children to school on time.

The council in this consultation on SEND transport policies asked several questions regarding:

- The ease of understanding the proposed changes to policies;
- The impact that the changes will have on people;
- Whether there was anything 'missing' or not addressed in the proposed policies

### Why does the council want to update the SEND transport policy?

The council would like to make its SEND transport policies easier to understand, so it is clear what support families can/not get, and why. We also want to strengthen the message around parental responsibility in regards to children being taken to school, as historically, this has been seen as the responsibility of the council. The council also recognises that:

- The transport offer should be based on the needs of children and young people as they develop and progress.
- The council has a duty to support and enable young people to develop and achieve independence to enable them to prepare for adulthood.
- Encouraging young people's independence will develop their skills for life, their confidence and social skills, and increase their opportunities for continuing education, training and social inclusion.

The council also has a duty to:

- Manage public money responsibly
- Provide value for money services
- Promote the use of sustainable travel and transport

The proposed amendments of the policy will support the efforts to reduce the council spend on transport by offering more cost-effective alternatives as the first offer, while also promoting independence.

If the updated policy was implemented, we would be able to more effectively promote independence of children with SEND, linking to our [Preparing for Adulthood Agenda](#). The council would be able to promote methods of transport assistance that are more cost effective, and relevant to the needs of the child.

The consultation was led by a small team within the commissioning sector of Social Care and Education.

## **2. Methodology**

### **a. Letters**

Letters were sent out at the start of the consultation to 729 families in receipt of council provided transport to explain how to participate in the consultation. The letter explained that the council were proposing to make changes to the SEND transport policy and that the recipient's opinions were important. The letter detailed all of the ways to contact the council about the consultation.

The following were sent with the letter:

- The web address for the consultation website where more information about the proposed policy changes could be found, as well as an online version of the survey.
- The postal address and email address to contact the consultation team with any queries.
- The consultation helpline telephone number and e-mail address to contact the consultation team with any queries.

The survey was also available to complete online on the council website at [SEND transport policy - Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

The consultation team also made contacted City of Leicester Association of Special School (CLASS) to arrange a discussion, which they confirmed they did not want. Also requesting the school communicate out to parents about the proposed updates to policy, inviting them for their comments.

Attempts were made to channel shift respondents to online where appropriate, in line with corporate vision – the consultation survey was available online-only.

## **b. Organisations and other stakeholders**

Various board/group members and organisations were engaged with, to inform about the consultation and help where enquiries may be made about the proposed changes. These organisations represent the interests of people who receive transport services:

<b>Group/Organisation Name</b>	<b>This group/organisation represents...</b>
Lead Members for Social Care and for Education	Council Executive
Children Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission	Leicester City Community
Media/press team	
Staff working in services	Staff and those pupils the staff support
Trade Unions	Representing education professionals

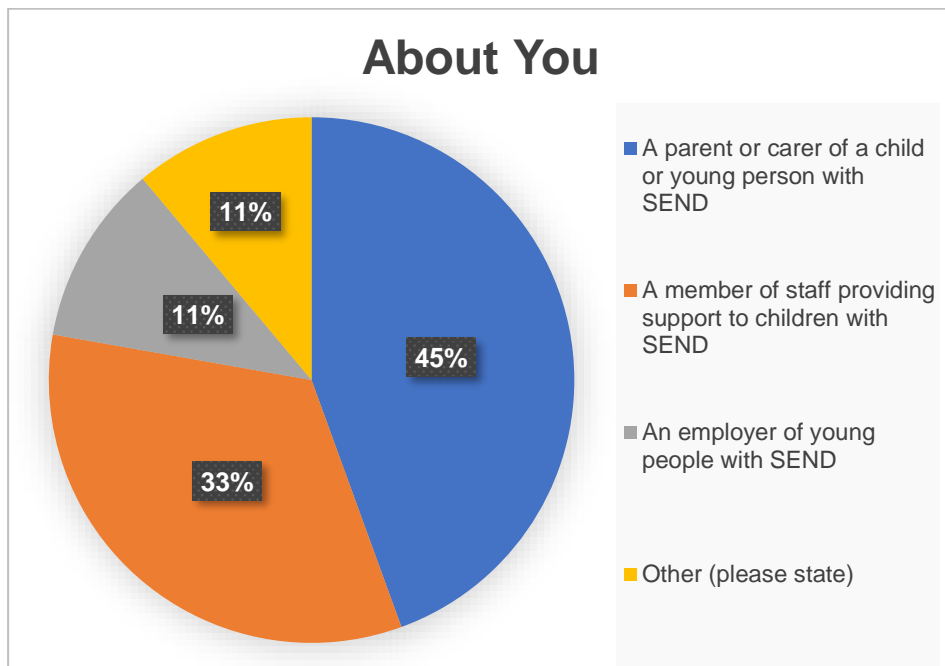
MPs	Constituents
Big Mouth Forum (children and young people)	
Parent Carer Forum	Parents and Carers of Children and Young People with SEND
City of Leicester Association of Special Schools	All Special schools
Mainstream Schools	Mainstream school settings
Early years settings	Early year provision
SEND Improvement Board	Special Education Provision
Schools Forum	All Leicester City Schools
Children’s residential homes	Looked After Children

The full stakeholder engagement plan can be found in Appendix B.

**c. Consultation survey**

A total of 9 people provided their comments on the proposed updates to policy via the consultation survey. Headline findings can be observed in “3. Headline Findings”

A full list of the responses to the Consultation survey can be found in Appendix xx.



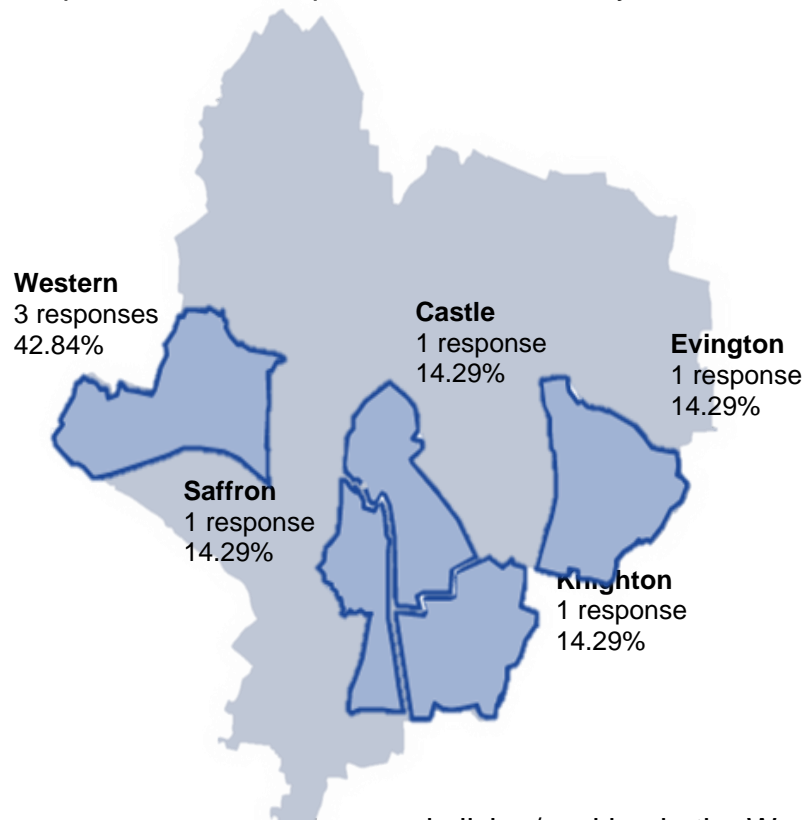
0 people chose to not answer this question.

1 person identified as ‘other’, stating that they were ‘Local Authority staff’.

Representation from several groups of people was not obtained in the survey, including:

- Children or young people with SEND
- Members of the public
- School representatives
- Health representatives
- Early years representatives
- Alternative learning representatives
- FE provider

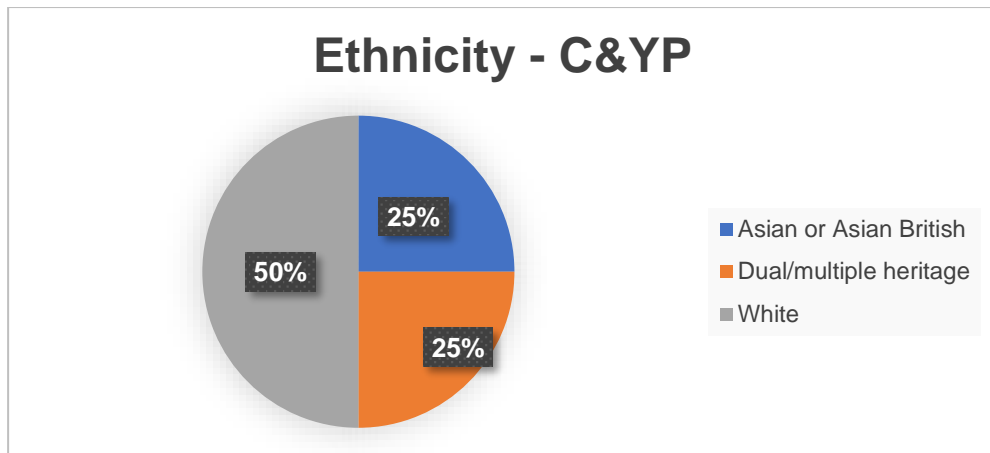
Survey responses were received from only 5 of the city's 21 wards. Survey responses are not representative of the city, as a whole.



Most responses were made by people living/working in the Western ward. 1 response was made by a person outside of Leicester. 1 person chose to not provide their postcode.

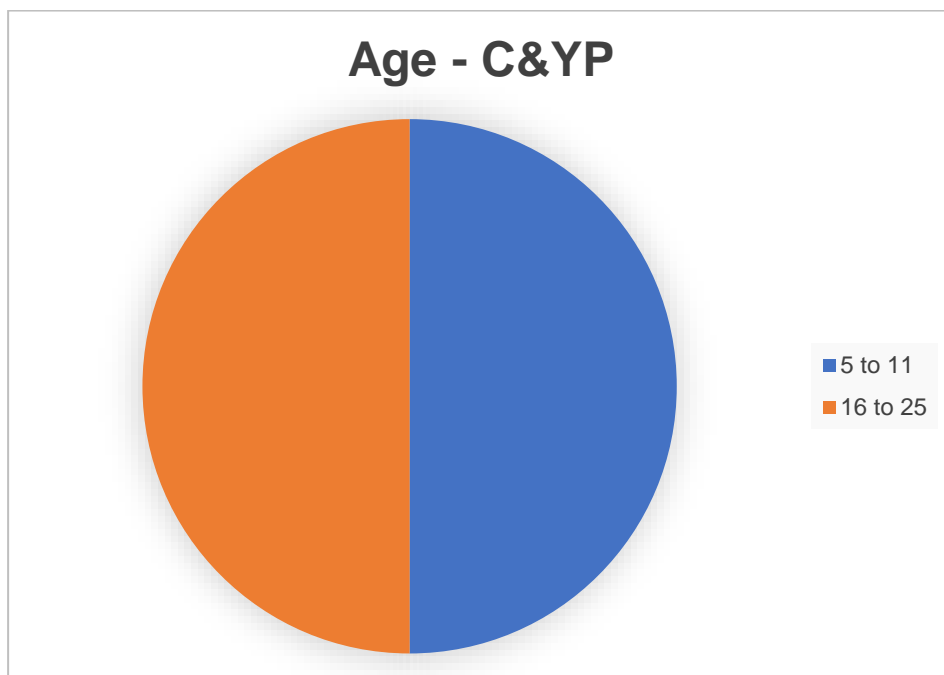
### Equalities Monitoring – Children and Young People

Unlike the demographic of Leicester, the ethnicities of the children and young people provided in the survey were not diverse. Just 4 people provided a child or young person's ethnicity. With this, it would be logical to assume that the survey does not accurately reflect the views of the many diverse families that live in Leicester.



The consultation team asked for the age of children and young people in the survey. There was equal representation between those aged 5-11 years, and 16-25 years.

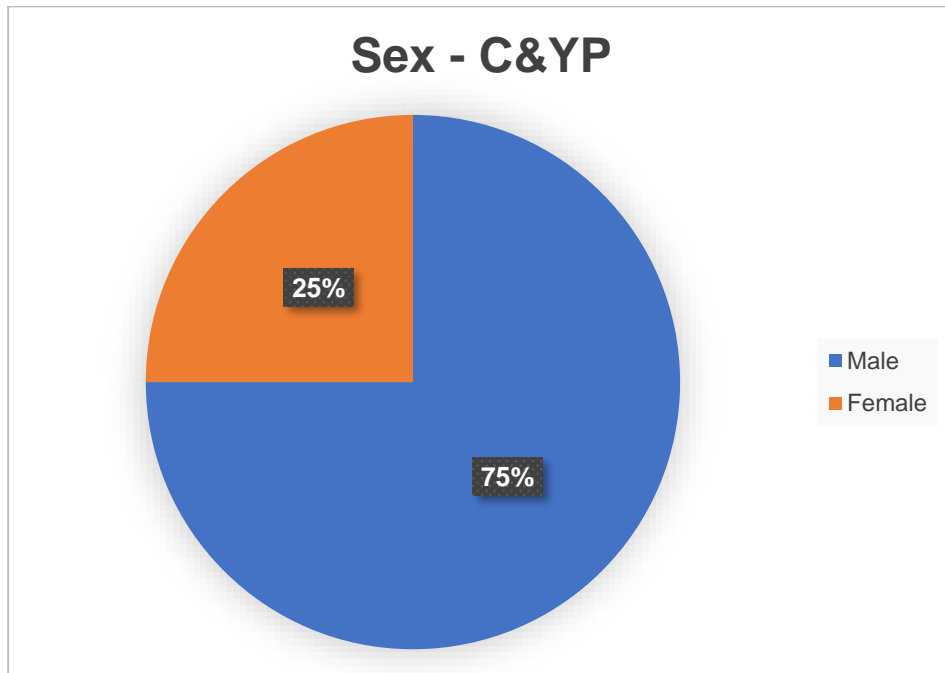
This lack of representation from other age groups would suggest that the survey results are not wholly representative of the people that receive SEND services.



Over half of people chose to not provide the age of a child or young person.

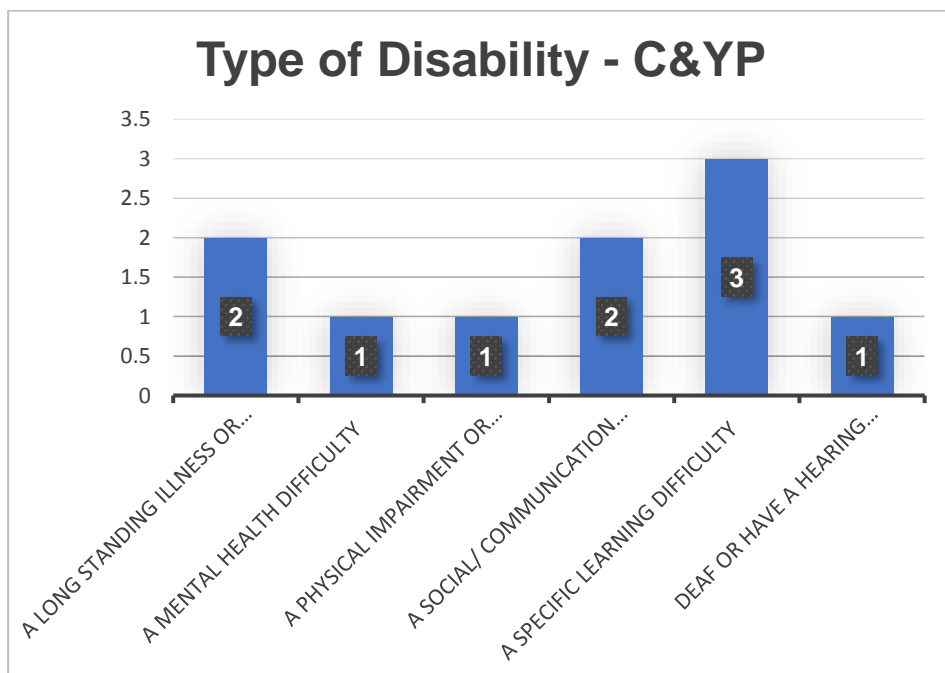
Only 4 people chose to provide a child or young person's religious status, with 50% stating that they identify as Christian, and 50% stating that they are Muslim. These figures would indicate that the survey responses do not accurately reflect the many different religions practiced in Leicester.

Only 4 people chose to provide a child or young person's sex, with 75% of people identifying as male.



Only 4 people chose to provide a child or young person's disability status, all 4 people identified as having a disability. Furthermore these 4 people provided details on the type of disability that a child or young person has.

Please note that people could state that a child or young person has more than one disability.

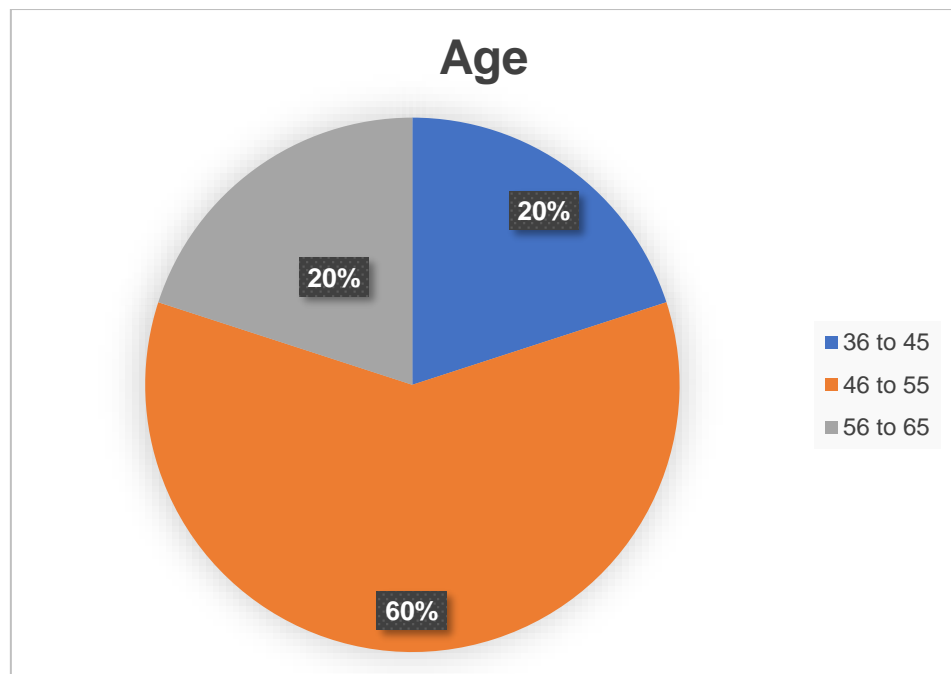


Most people stated that a child or young person has a specific learning difficulty. Due to the limited number of responses, it is not sure if responses to the consultation accurately reflect those children and young people receiving a service.

### Equalities Monitoring – People Completing the Survey

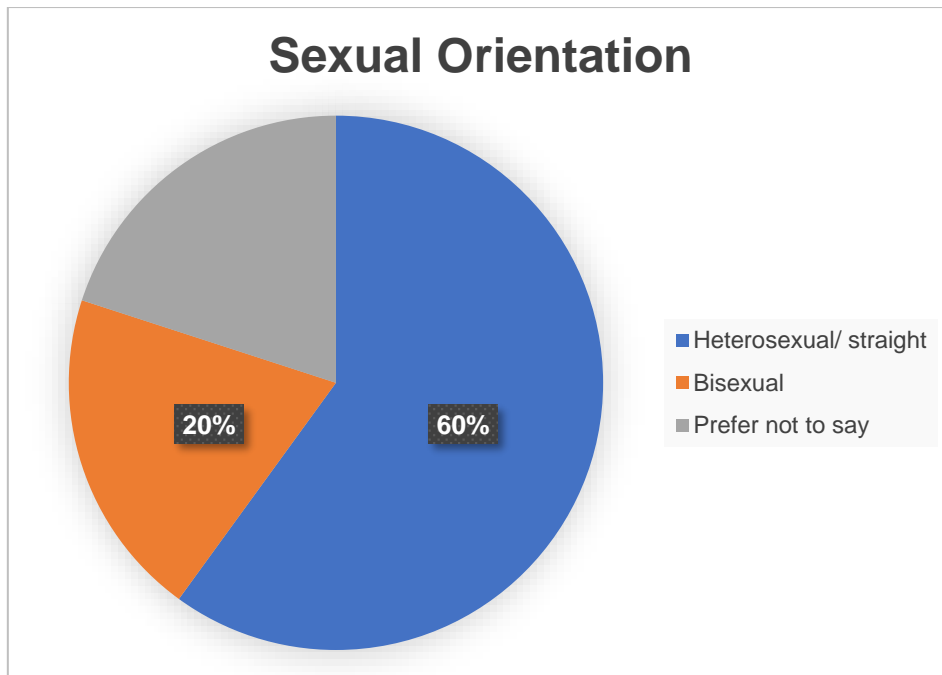
Of the 9 people that completed the survey, 5 provided their ethnicity. All 5 people identified as White British. This is not representative of the diversity of people living in Leicester.

5 people chose to provide their age. Over half of people were aged 46 to 55.



5 people chose to provide their sexual orientation. With limited representation from the LGBTQ+ community, it would be logical to assume that survey results do not accurately reflect the views of all people living in Leicester.

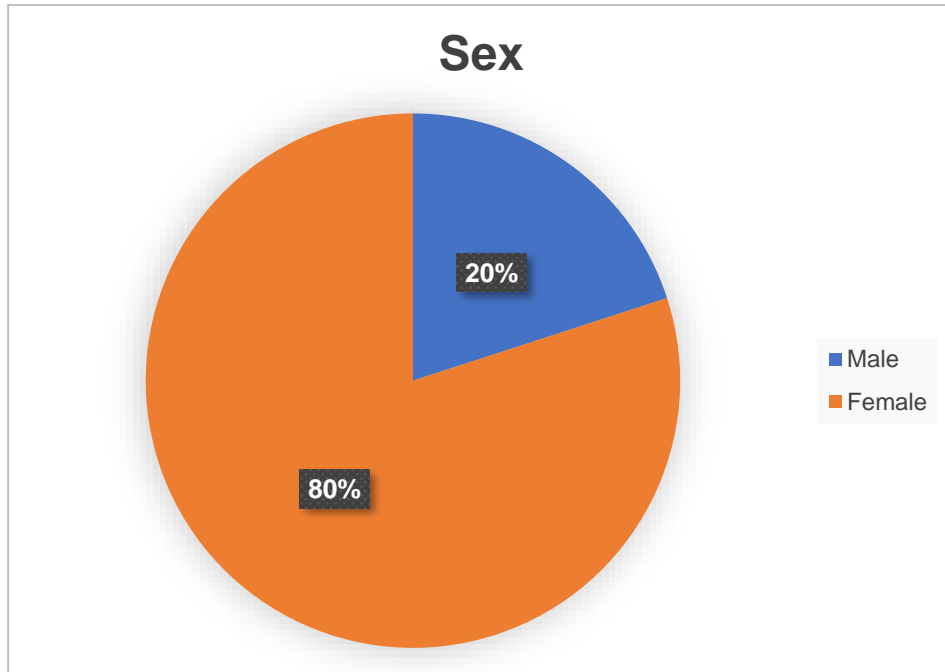




Of the 5 people that chose to provide their disability status, all 5 people stated that they do not have a disability. It would be logical to assume that the survey responses are not wholly representative of people who work/live in Leicester with a disability.

5 people chose to provide their religious status. 4 people identify as Christian, with 1 person identifying as having no religion. This is not wholly representative of the many different religions practiced in Leicester.

5 people chose to provide their sex. 80% of people identify as female. Further more, of the 4 people who disclosed their gender, all 4 stated that their gender is the same as that assigned at birth.



**d. Submissions and Other Comments**

Approximately 3 people called the consultation helpline. There was also an exclusive email address supplied for consultation queries, which was [SCESurvey@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:SCESurvey@leicester.gov.uk)

A system was established to swiftly respond to people who had specific questions or required help/translation to complete the survey.

The calls were wide ranging and common themes in the types of call received can be identified as follows:

Queries received were in regard to current transport arrangements. These were directed to the relevant council officers.

A generic email account was also set up to receive queries about the consultation. No comments or observations were made about the proposal via e-mail. No emails were received.

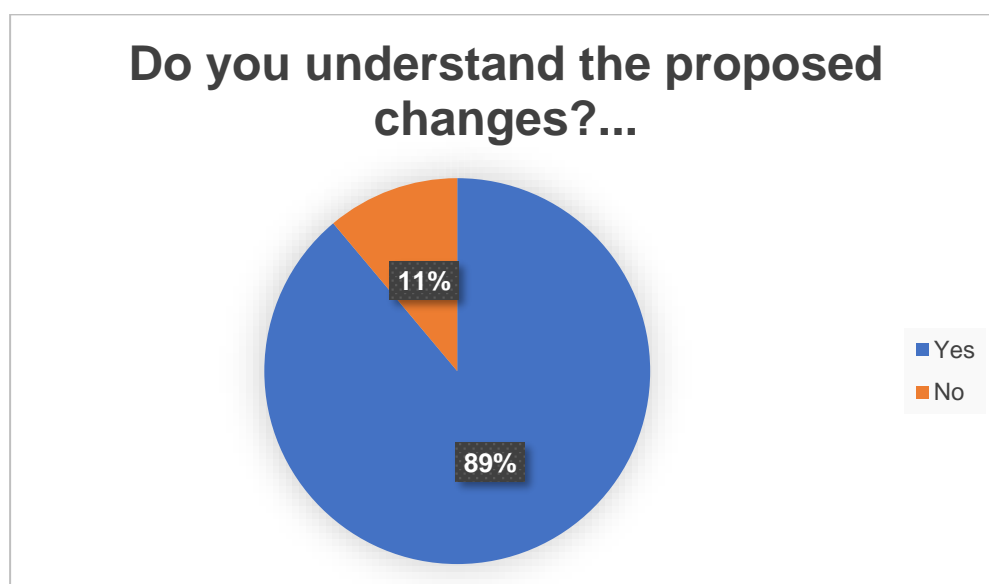
### 3. **Headline Findings**

#### a. **Updates to the SEND home to school/ college transport policy**

People were asked:

*“Do you understand the proposed changes to the policy?”*

All but one person replied to this question with the answer ‘yes’.



0 people chose to not answer this question.

People were also asked to provide some commentary on their choice. 3 comments were recorded.

Comment summaries are provided below.

For people that did understand the proposed changes, they said:

- Regarding the council’s responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18 years – If an expectation is made on colleges to provide bursary, then SEN needs should be clear on EHCP.
- The council expects parents of SEND children and young people to be experts, and that the council should take some accountability for meeting needs.
- There is no acknowledgement of children with divorced parents who provide overnight care arrangements. One person felt discriminated against, because they are a single parent.
- There is not enough acknowledgement on the different support needs, specifically a lack of clarity on what moderate learning disabilities are and the need to be flexible when providing transport provision to people.

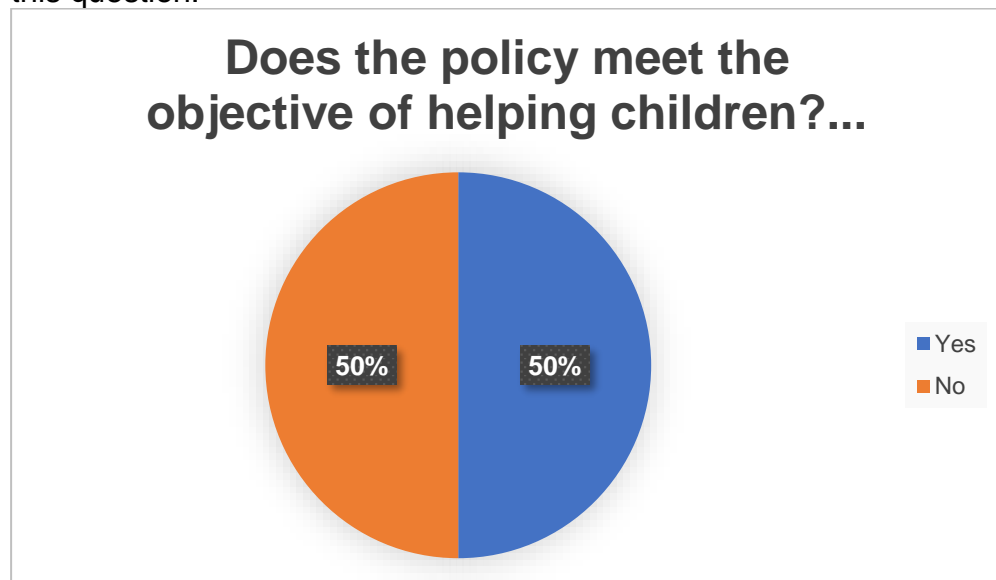
For people that did not understand the proposed changes, they said:

- It isn't clear how the policy has changed.
- It is difficult to make a comparison between current and proposed policies.
- It is felt as if the council is not being transparent about the changes suggested.

People were asked:

*“Does the policy meet the objective of helping children and young people prepare for adulthood?”*

Responses to this question were mixed, with 50% of people stating 'no', and 50% of people stating 'yes'. One person chose to not answer this question.



Comment summaries are provided below.

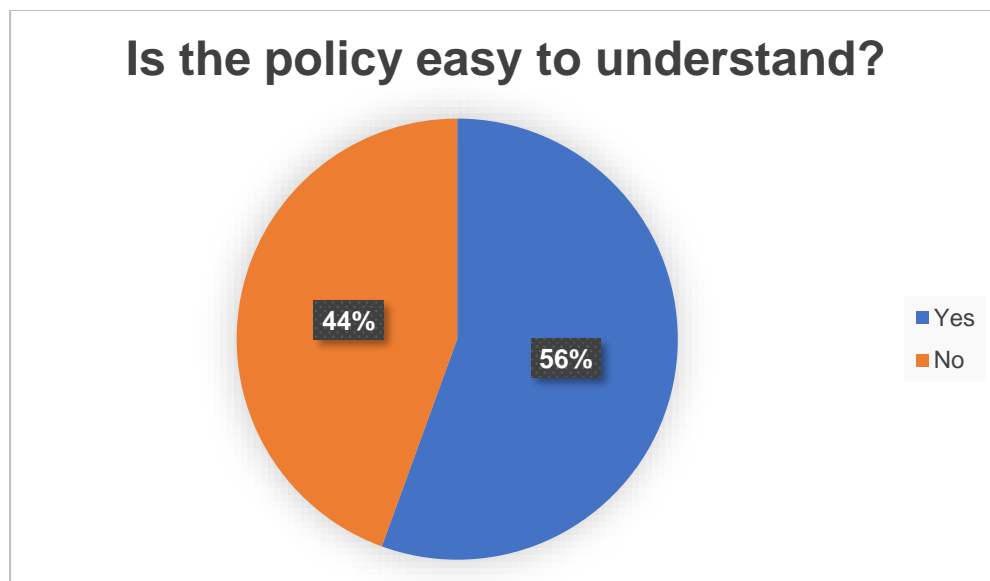
For people that did not think that the policy meets objectives, they said:

- The policy changes reduce transport provision for children and young people.
- The policy is counter productive to enabling children and young people.
- The policy should be clear on what efforts will be made to help children and young people correct behaviour that could result in transport being withdrawn.
- Priorities should be made to make sure that vulnerable children and young people are not expected to travel alone or with strangers.

People were asked:

*“Is the policy easy to understand?”*

Responses to this question were mixed, with 44% of people stating ‘no’, and 56% of people stating ‘yes’.



For people that stated that the policy was not easy to understand, they said:

- Eligibility criteria for support is not clear, in general.
- It is difficult to understand what support the council is responsible for, for young people from the age of 16 years plus.
- The policy itself is too long and would benefit being redrafted in Plain English

People were asked:

*“Is there anything else you would like to see included in the policy?”*

Responses to this question were mixed, with 50% of people stating ‘no’, and 50% of people stating ‘yes’. One person chose to not answer this question.

People were provided with an opportunity to comment on what else could be included:

- Clearer assessment criteria and decision making.
- Provide the online application process in multiple languages.

Lastly, people were asked how the changes to the SEND home to school/ college transport policy would affect them/ people with SEND.

6 people provided comments:

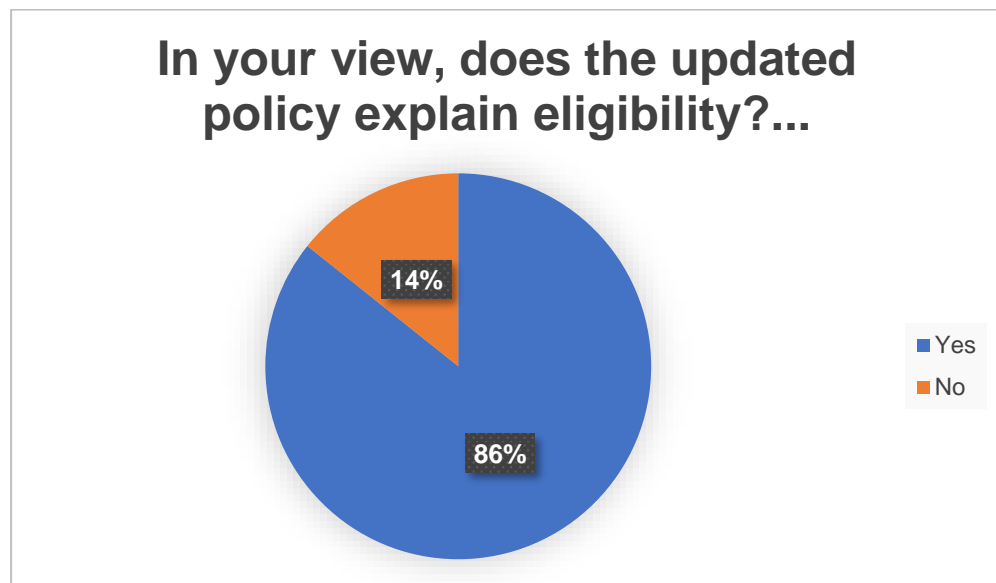
- The policy makes transport arrangements difficult, and may affect school attendance and even parents' working status.
- It is not clear what will be changed with the proposed policy.
- Independent travel training and annual assessments will have a greater focus, to prepare children and young people for adulthood.
- The policy make create barriers because of the language used.

#### **b. Updates to the Post-16 SEND transport policy**

People were asked:

*“In your view does the updated policy explain eligibility for transport for Post 16 young people?”*

All but one person replied to this question with the answer ‘yes’.



2 people chose to not answer this question.

People were also asked to provide some commentary on their choice. 3 comments were recorded.

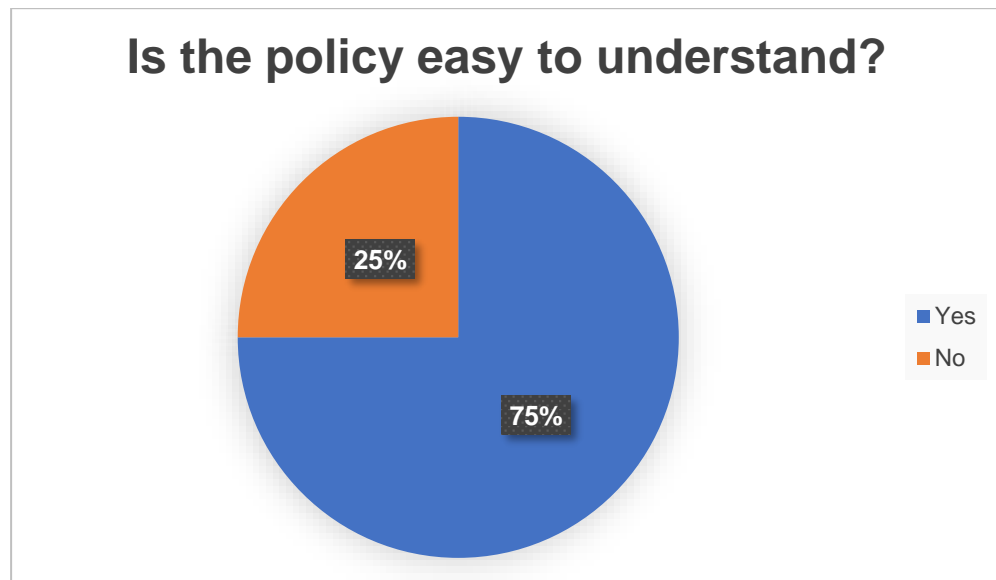
Comment summaries are provided below:

- The policy would suggest that the council does not want to be accountable for transport for post-16 students – this has been perceived negatively.
- The policy is too ‘wordy’
- Changes that could affect the lives of people negatively would not be liked.

People were asked:

*“Is the policy easy to understand?”*

Most people responded that the policy was easy to understand. 1 person chose to not provide an answer to this question.



3 people commented further on the policy, in regards to ease of understanding:

- The council is not taking responsibility for transport provision.
- The policy itself could be better presented in Plain English – this was mentioned by more than one person.

People were asked:

*“Is there anything else you would like to see included in the policy?”*

Responses to this question were mixed, with 43% of people stating 'no', and 57% of people stating 'yes'. Two people chose to not answer this question.

People were provided with an opportunity to comment on what else could be included:

- Will there be an option for parents to pay for transport provision?
- The council should take more responsibility for transport provision.
- A continued emphasis on travel training to prepare for adulthood.
- Clearer criteria for qualification.

People were asked how the changes to the Post-16 SEND transport policy would affect them/ people with SEND.

2 people provided comments:

- The policy would help a member of staff support people with SEND to encourage independence from an early age – as long as those that need transport are not excluded.
- The policy will enable those in Post-16 life-long learning.

Lastly, people were asked if they have any final comments on either of the two policies.

5 people provided comments:

- There is no information on how travel reviews will be conducted, including who will attend reviews?
- More 'effort' could have been made to explain the changes in policies, meaningfully.
- It would seem as if the council are deferring responsibility of SEND transport provision.
- Plain English in the policies would be useful and made available in multiple languages.
- Other formats for the policy would be useful, for different learner styles (use of video and images).

### Other Engagement

A member of the commissioning team attended a virtual meeting hosted by the Parent and Carer Leicester forum to speak about the policy. A presentation was given about the policy amendments, and families had the opportunity to ask questions about the policy.

No questions about the policy were asked, and parents instead took the opportunity to ask about their specific transport arrangements, or to air frustrations about transport, these comments were noted and shared with the relevant team.