



# voice

Aberdeen's Citizen's Panel

Issue 41 / October 2017

# voice

Welcome to the 41st citizens' panel newsletter. This newsletter gives you a brief summary of the results of the 41st questionnaire which you received in June. Topics in the questionnaire included: Early Learning and Childcare, City Centre Masterplan, Green/active travel network, Attitudes towards mental health in Grampian, Walk Aberdeen, Transport and the Winter Maintenance Policy.

Your involvement in the City Voice plays an important role, helping to inform and contribute to future plans by all partners of the City Voice. The questionnaire data is analysed by our research consultants from Craigforth. As always, all information you give us is kept strictly confidential.

The timetable for the City Voice is currently under review so, unlike previous releases, we are not including a questionnaire with this newsletter. While the timing and format are still to be finalised, it looks likely that the next questionnaire will be issued early in the New Year.

Thank you for supporting the City Voice and please feel free to get in touch if you have any comments about the citizens' panel.

**Shirley Findlay**  
Acting City Voice Co-ordinator

## Issue 41 / October 2017

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## NEWS

Following on from our recent recruitment efforts, we now have more than 1,400 people on our panel – an increase of over 500 from the figure at the start of the year. This is an important development for the City Voice and we would like to thank both new and existing panellists. We are still, of course, interested in increasing and broadening our panel,

so if you know of anyone (family, friends, work colleagues) who lives within the boundaries of Aberdeen City and is over 16 years of age, and who would like to join us, they can do so by either signing up online at [www.aberdeencyvoice.org.uk](http://www.aberdeencyvoice.org.uk) or by emailing us at [cityvoice@aberdeency.gov.uk](mailto:cityvoice@aberdeency.gov.uk). Alternatively, they can call us on: 01224 522421.

Remember...you can follow us on our blog <https://aberdeencyvoice.wordpress.com/> and we are on the Aberdeen City Council's facebook page and twitter feed.

### 41st Questionnaire - Panel Response

A total of 1,441 questionnaires were sent out (either by email or paper copies) and we received 861 responses – equivalent to a response rate of 57%. While this response rate is slightly lower than for previous questionnaires, the increased panel size means that this equates to a higher volume of responses and therefore more robust survey results.

Note: Due to the nature of the survey (e.g. some questions may be more or less relevant to you), not all respondents answer every question. The percentages given in the summary below are therefore a percentage of the respondents who answered those particular questions and not a percentage of the total number of respondents.

# PEOPLE -

## Early Learning and Childcare



The first set of questions related to the use of Early Learning and Childcare services in light of the Scottish Government's plans to expand the offer of funded Early Learning and Childcare by 2020. Only a small proportion (5%) of respondents indicated that they are currently using early learning and childcare. This is equivalent to 22%

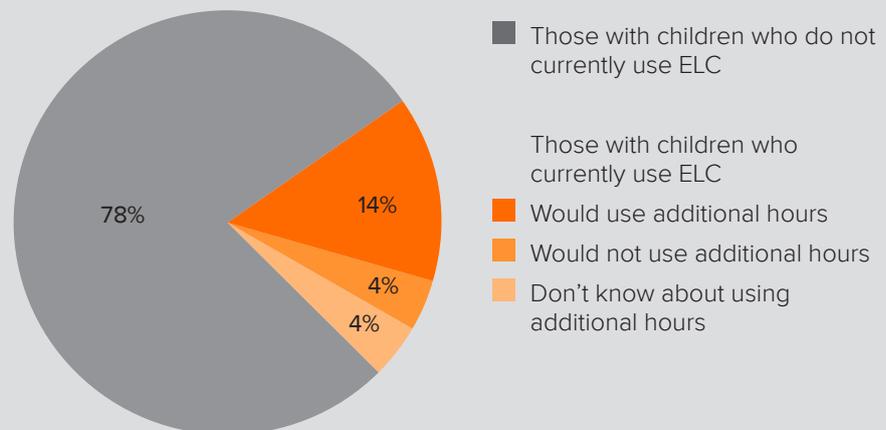
of respondents who have children. Approximately two-thirds of those currently using these services said that they would use additional funded hours if they were available (see Figure 1).

The most common reasons respondents gave for intending to use the additional funded hours

were (1) to allow them to work and (2) to support their child's learning and development. When asked about what factors would influence their choice of early learning and childcare provider, flexibility of hours and being close to home were rated as the most important factors.

**Figure 1**

### Likely use of additional funded Early Learning and Childcare hours if made available



## This is what we are doing

The City Voice Questionnaire 41 came at an opportune time as we were undertaking Phase 2 consultation and engagement on the expansion of early learning and childcare and it gave us another consultation mechanism. The findings will inform the Aberdeen City Council Service Delivery Plan and the implementation of the planned expansion in free early learning and childcare hours, which the Scottish Government will introduce by 2020.

We have now undertaken two consultations on the expansion of the early learning and childcare in the city: an initial city-wide one; and one focussing specifically on the Community Planning Partnership three priority localities. The key findings of the City Voice Questionnaire 41 were very similar to our previous findings and they help us to consolidate some of our intelligence around the needs and preferences of parents and carers, namely:

- That most of those currently using early learning and childcare indicated that they would use additional funded hours if they were available;
- That early learning and childcare is most commonly used for respondents to work and to support their child's learning and development; and
- That flexibility of hours and proximity to home were rated as important factors in their choice of provider.

We will also use the results when we move to the City Wide phase of the engagement and consultation. I trust this is of assistance and thank you again for supporting our work on the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare within City Voice.

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# PLACE - City Centre Masterplan



This part of the survey relates to the City Centre Masterplan and panellists were asked their views on a number of different aspects of Aberdeen City Centre.

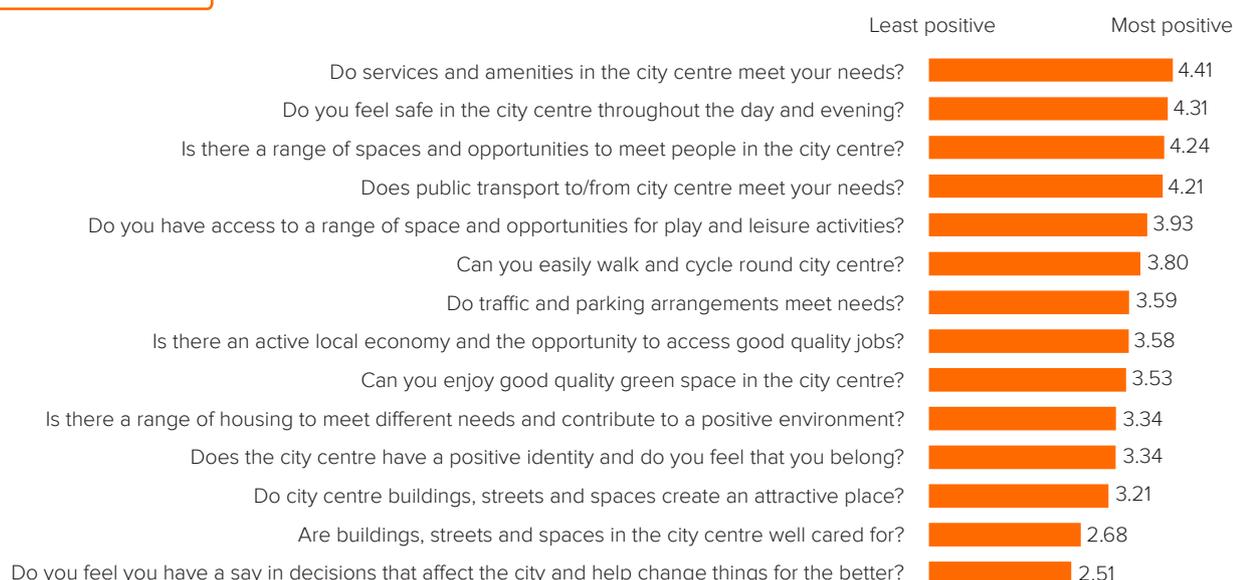
In the survey, panellists were asked to rate a range of different aspects of the City Centre on a scale of 1 (a lot of room for improvement) to 7

(very little room for improvement). Figure 2 shows the average scores for each aspect. Although there was some variability in responses, overall, respondents were most positive about services and amenities in the City Centre meeting their needs and feeling safe in the City Centre. Opportunities for social interaction and public transport also received

an average score of more than 4 out of 7. Respondents were least positive about the extent to which they feel they have a say in decisions that affect the City Centre and the extent to which buildings, streets and spaces in the City Centre are well cared for – both of these had an average score of less than 3 out of 7.

**Figure 2**

**Views on statements regarding Aberdeen City Centre (average out of 7)**



## This is what we are doing

The responses to the questionnaire showed that, generally, services and amenities in the city centre meet needs, the city centre is safe, and public transport provision is good. Areas of satisfaction include access to spaces and opportunities for play or leisure, ease of walking and cycling around the city centre, traffic and parking arrangements, the city centre having an active local economy, and being able to enjoy good quality green space in the city centre. There is room for improvement in ensuring communities have a say in decisions that affect the city centre, and the extent to which buildings, streets and spaces in the city centre are well cared for.

Areas for continuing focus for improvement include creating an attractive place that is easy to get around; promoting a positive and belonging identity for the city centre; delivering a range of housing to meet need; the enjoyment of good quality green space in the city centre; and enabling safe access to the city centre.

As progress is made in delivering Phase 1 of the City Centre Masterplan, these results will inform decisions for achieving transformational change over the longer term. The challenge is being addressed and these results provide the evidence of success.

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# PLACE-

## Green/active travel network

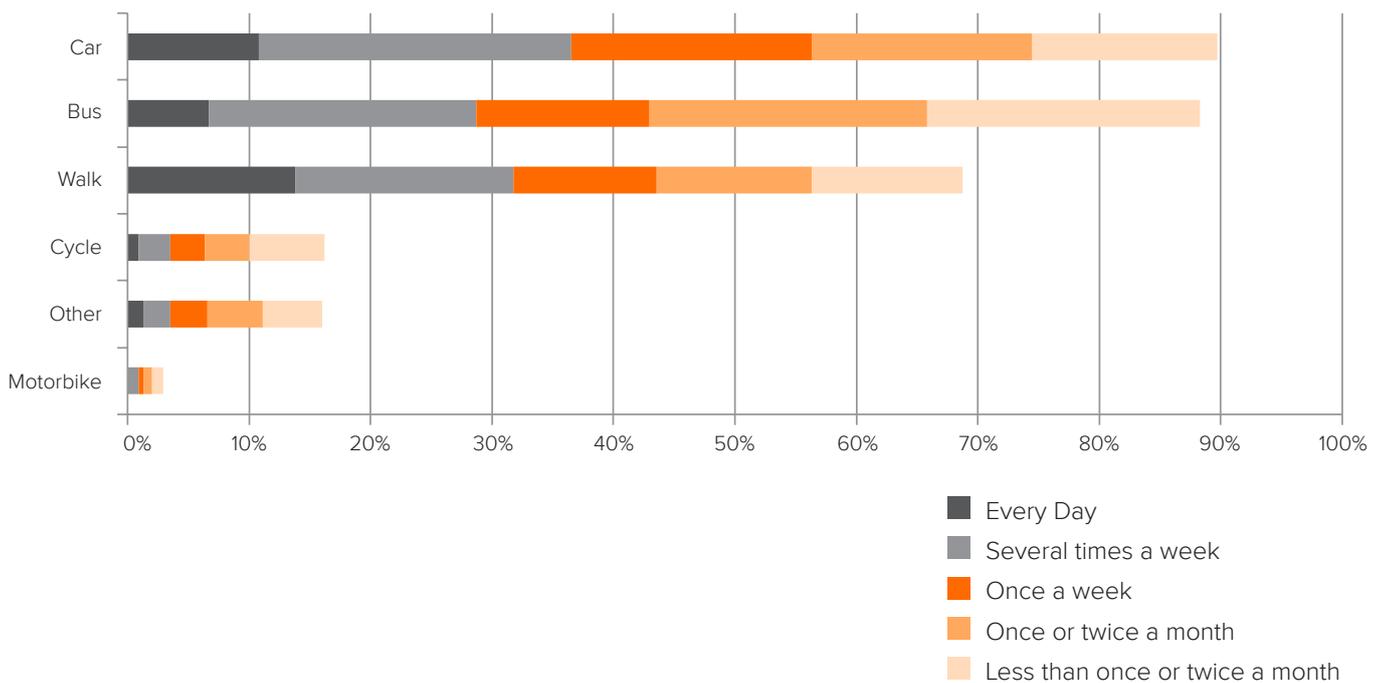


This section of the questionnaire asked what you think about the city's green spaces and about how you travel into the City.

Most (88%) respondents said they used the city's green spaces at least once a month with a quarter using them at least once a week. When asked about satisfaction with the green spaces, 44% of respondents said they were satisfied, 24% were dissatisfied and 32% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was a relationship between use of green spaces and levels of satisfaction. The proportion of those who said they were satisfied was considerably higher amongst those who used the green spaces at least once a week (52%) compared to those who never used them (10%).

When asked about travel into the city, more people reported using the car or the bus than any other mode of transport – only 10% of respondents said they never used the car for travelling to the city and 12% of respondents said they never used the bus. Car was also the mode of transport used most often, with 56% of respondents saying that they used the car to travel into the city at least once a week. Walking and buses were also common modes of transport, with 44% and 43% of respondents using these options at least once a week. Only 16% of respondents reported ever cycling and 3% reported ever using a motorbike to travel into the city.

**Figure 3** Travel modes used when travelling into the City



## This is what we are doing

Unfortunately we have not received a service response

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## Attitudes towards mental health



This section explores panellists' views on mental health in Grampian, and the extent to which this may be associated with stigma and discrimination.

Most (72%) respondents felt that people with mental health problems experience at least some stigma and discrimination, with 22% feeling that people with these problems experienced 'a lot' of stigma and discrimination. While just over half of respondents (51%) thought that stigma and discrimination around mental health has decreased in the last few years, a quarter (25%) felt that it had stayed the same and 8% felt that it had increased.

When asked about talking to someone if they had a mental health issue, most respondents (60%) said that they would be likely or very likely to talk to someone (e.g. family member, friend or work colleague). Similarly, a high proportion (73%) indicated that they would be likely to go to see their GP in relation to a mental health issue. However, only 20% reported that they would be likely to

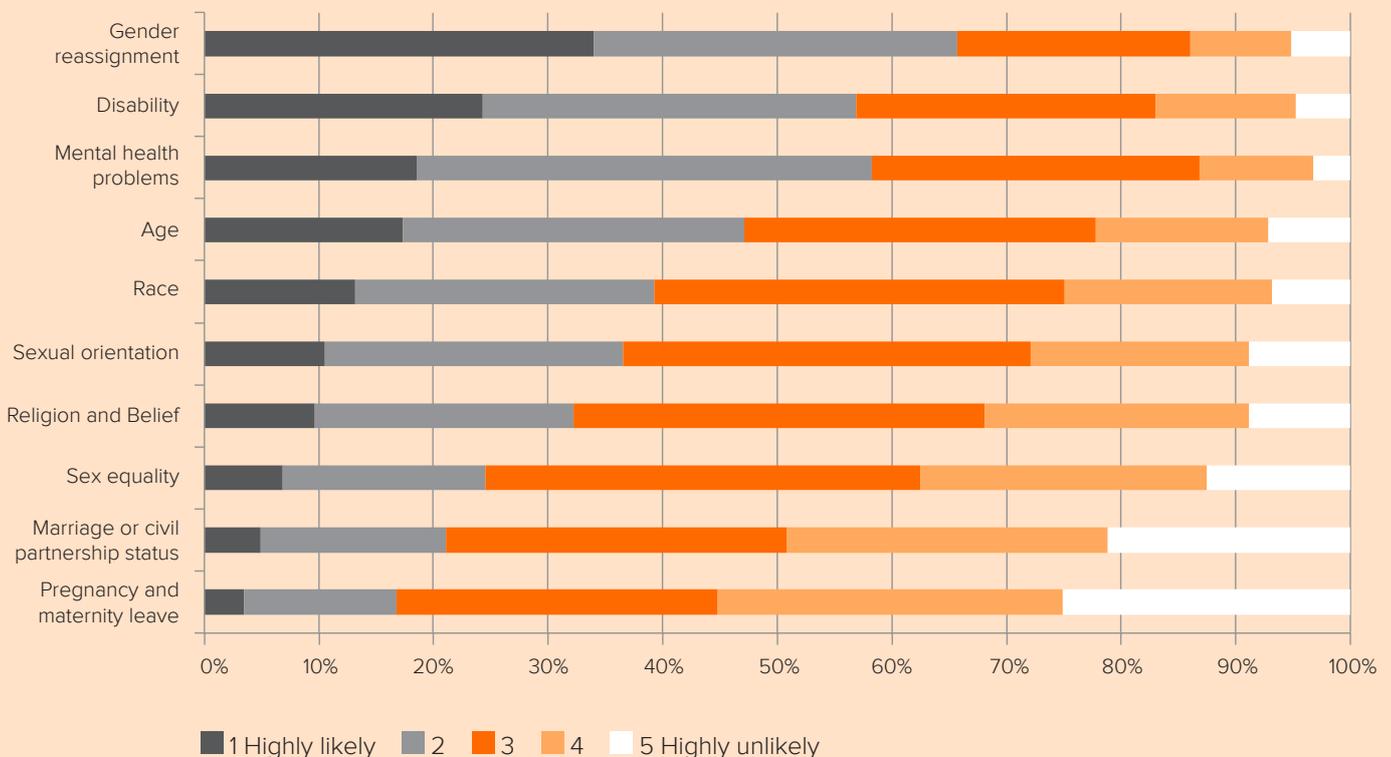
talk to their employer about their mental health.

Panellists were also asked what characteristics they felt would be most likely to lead to discrimination. Of the list provided, respondents thought that gender reassignment (66% of respondents), mental health problems (58%), disability (57%) and age (47%) were the characteristics most likely to lead to discrimination (see Figure 4).

The survey also asked panellists about what they would do if a work colleague or someone in their community approached them about mental health issues. Almost all (99%) respondents indicated that they would respond in some way, with the most common approach being to suggest (after giving initial support) that the person goes to a GP or professional (88%), followed by suggesting going to a third sector or voluntary organisation (37%).

**Figure 4**

**How likely could these characteristics lead to people experiencing discrimination?**



# PLACE - Walk Aberdeen



## This is what we are doing

The results from the current survey showed a positive signs of public attitudes towards mental health. The majority (72%) of the respondents felt that people living with mental health conditions experience some stigma and discrimination, there was also encouraging signs that stigma and discrimination in mental health has declined in last few years. This supports the evidence from a national survey conducted by “See Me” campaign which showed similar results. There was also declining trend in discrimination against various groups, for example discrimination against mental health problems, gender reassignment, disability and age have declined but still prevalent as over half of the respondents reported some form of discrimination. Another important set of information was about public awareness and signposting. Public seem to be more aware about mental health problems and showed willingness to sign post friends, family and colleagues to get help from primary healthcare services for example GPs or voluntary organisations.

The information from the survey is very useful and will be used in the design of content for various training programs in mental health improvement, particularly data about stigma and discrimination and sign posting will help update previously available information in Grampian. The information will also be helpful in referencing various public mental health reports at Grampian and national level.

### Imran Arain

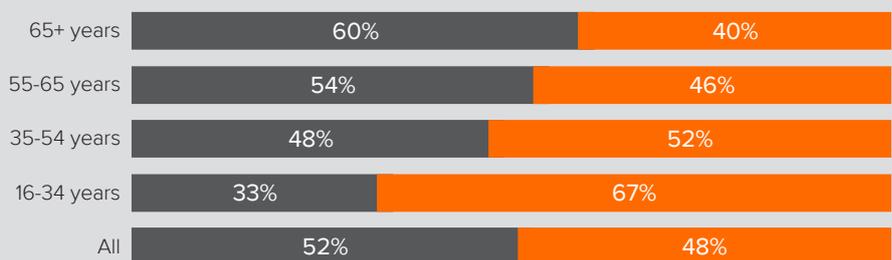
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In this section of the questionnaire, panellists were shown an (untitled) image of a boundary marker stone and asked if they knew what the subject of the photograph was. Just over half (52%) of respondents reported that they knew what it was. Interestingly, the proportion of people who said they recognised it was higher in older age groups than in younger age groups (see Figure 5). Most respondents (70%), including those who did not recognise the image, correctly identified the stone as a boundary marker.

**Figure 5**



When asked if they knew the location of any boundary stones, more than half (61%) of respondents said that they didn't. Only 19% of respondents were confident that they knew where one (or more) boundary stones were located and a further 21% said they thought they might know the location of one (or more) of the stones. Again, there were differences by age group - a higher proportion of those in the youngest age group (16-34 years) than the oldest age group (65+ years) said that they didn't know the location of any boundary stones (74% compared to 51%).

## This is what we are doing

Unfortunately we have not received a service response

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# PLACE - Transport



This section considers panellists' experience of and views on transport in Aberdeen, including questions about use of specific modes of transport and experience of parking in the City.

Firstly panellists were asked about their usual mode of transport for different types of journey. Overall, car, bus and walking were the most commonly used. There was, however, some variation depending on the type of journey. For example, while car was the most common mode of transport for work/education, bus was the most common for travelling to the city centre. Similarly, while the use of taxi/minicab was very low for most types of journey, it was relatively high (24%) for travel to the city centre at night. At 64%, the car was, by far, the most common mode of transport for other journeys (i.e. those not to work/

education and not in the city centre). Figure 6 shows the use of different modes of transport for different types of journey.

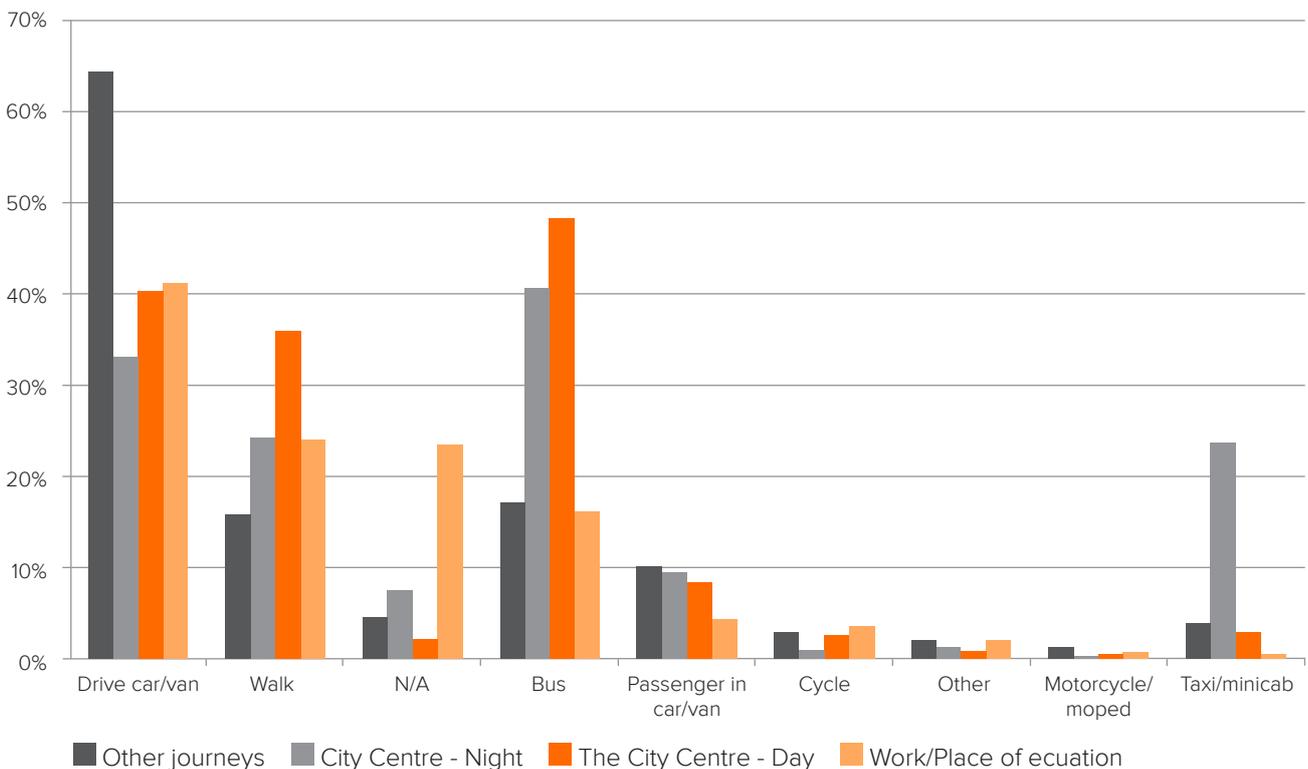
Choosing how to travel (for all types of journey) was most commonly based on convenience (above 55% for all journey types). Short journey time and reliability of journey time were also important, particularly for journeys to work/education (52% and 41% respectively). Cost was the next most important reason given by respondents for most journey types. Safety was also a consideration for journeys to the city centre at night.

When asked about the ease of using specific modes of transport, respondents were most positive about travelling by taxi (69% rated this as an easy option) and walking (66%). In contrast, modes of transport most commonly rated as difficult were cycling (54%) and public

transport (26%).

The next set of questions in this section related to parking. Most respondents (83%) said that their household had a privately-owned car with a third (33%) having 2 or more cars in their household. When parking their car at home, most respondents (68%) use private off-street parking. Public on-street parking is used by 25% of respondents and public off-street car parking is used by 5%. When asked how long it normally takes to find a parking space in the city centre, 24% said it took less than 5 minutes with almost half (47%) saying that it normally takes between 5-10 minutes (see Figure 7). Closeness to destination (75%) and cost (53%) were ranked as the most important factors influencing choice of parking space.

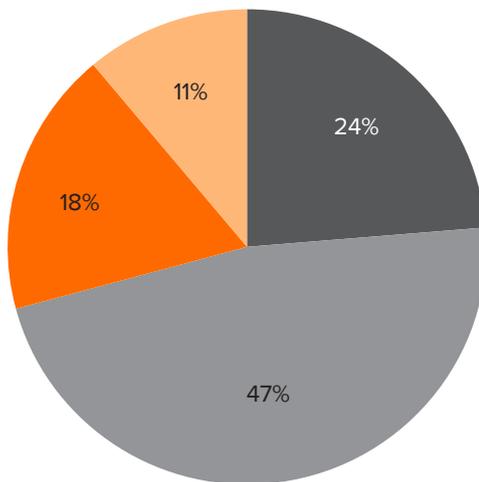
**Figure 6** Travel modes used when travelling into the City



## PLACE -

**Figure 7**

**Time taken to find parking in Aberdeen City Centre**



■ Less than 5 minutes ■ 5-10 minutes ■ 11-15 minutes ■ Over 15 minutes

## This is what we are doing

Thank you for completing our series of questions relating to transport and parking within the City.

We are currently developing a number of transport projects as part of wider improvements to the network. Your responses will give us some baseline data on your current travel patterns, as well as providing information about how you currently move around the City. For example, it was particularly interesting to see how different modes of transport were more commonly used for different types of journey and to find out which type of transport you found easiest/most difficult to use. Information such as this will help to identify where we need to focus attention in the coming year. Similarly, the questions relating to parking will help to inform the Car Parking Action Plan for the City which is currently under development. Once this is available we would hope to consult City Voice panellists in 2018.

### Joanna Murray

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The final section of the survey relates to the Council's Winter Maintenance Policy. Overall, 63% of respondents said that they think the council is making adequate winter maintenance provision, and most respondents are against (35%) or very much against (28%) a move towards reducing the level of preparedness for winter roads maintenance.

Figure 8 shows satisfaction levels with different aspects of winter maintenance provision. While satisfaction was relatively high in relation to gritting and snow-ploughing of bus routes and other main roads, it was considerably lower in relation to local roads, busy footways and cycle paths. Just over a third (36%) of respondents said they were satisfied with the Roads Winter Service Plan 2016/17 and 45% were satisfied with the Report of Expected Weather Conditions. Comparison with survey results from Questionnaire 38 shows that levels of satisfaction with these two aspects has dropped by 20% and 15% respectively.

Panellists were also asked about satisfaction with street lighting. While views on street lighting in winter conditions were generally positive, levels of satisfaction were lower for residential areas (68%) than for the city centre (74%). Again, there was a drop in satisfaction levels when compared with Questionnaire 38 (3% and 8% respectively). Views were less positive on repair times with 55% of respondents saying they were satisfied with the time taken to repair street lights.

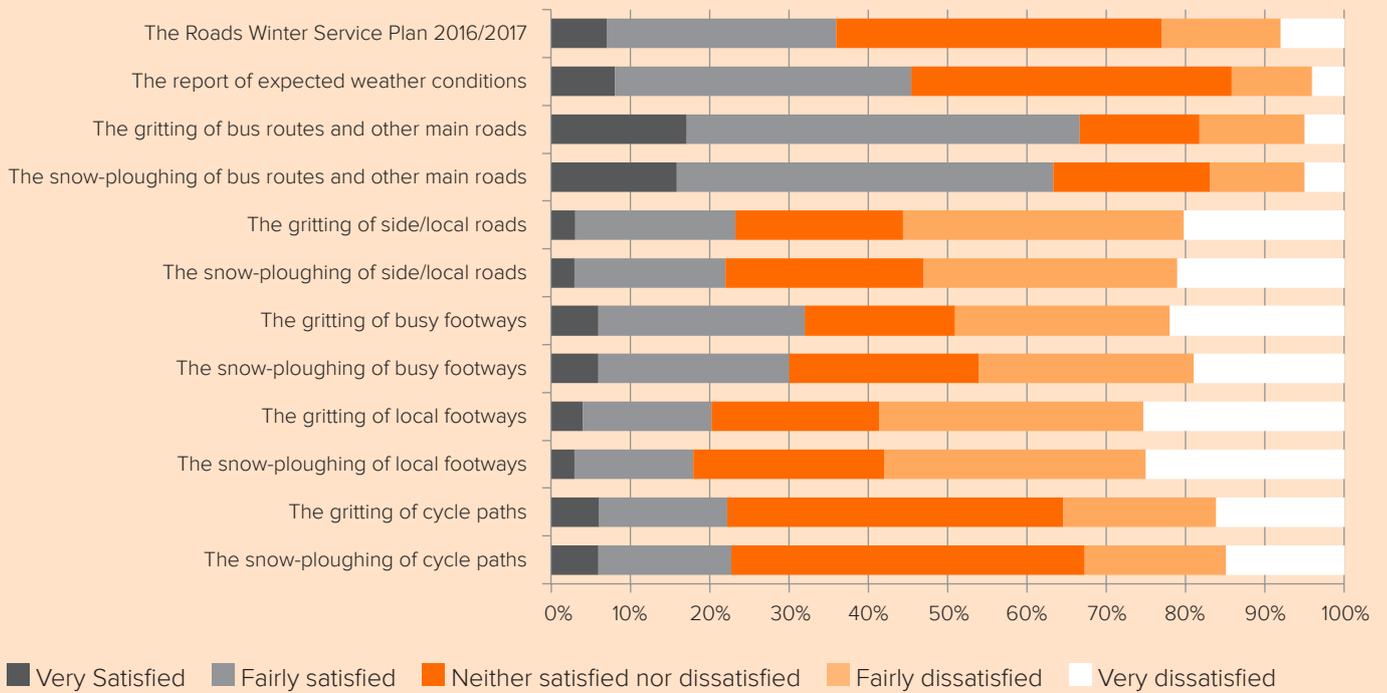
The final questions in the survey asked about grit bins and salt bags. Less than half (42%) of respondents indicated that they had used grit bins and only 7% that they had used community salt bags. Most respondents who had used grit bins (63%) were satisfied with the service, however only 36% of those who had used the salt bags were happy with the service.

# Winter Maintenance



**Figure 8**

**Satisfaction with Aberdeen City Council's performance in the following areas**



## This is what we are doing

The public's generally positive response to the winter the council's winter maintenance operations is pleasing however we do need to take into account the views of the citizens regarding possible changes to the treatment plans.

The milder winter in recent years does pose the possibility of dedicating fewer resources to winter treatment, however the panel's views on this course of action were in the main negative. It is helpful to be aware of these views before any changes are considered to service provision.

The Roads Winter Service Plan for 2016/17 was very similar to the previous year's plan consequently it is surprising that there was such a large change with the degree of satisfaction with the content. This may be as a result of the question raising the possibility of reducing the level of winter treatment being asked within the same survey.

There was a reasonable degree of satisfaction with the treatment of the main roads and bus routes. The lower satisfaction regarding the side road treatment is reflective of the priority that the operational plan places on various sections of the network and is in line with the national practice of prioritising treatment towards the busiest roads first.

It is a concern that the level of satisfaction with street lighting in the city centre has reduced. However as the LED replacement programme is rolled out across the city, it is hoped that the level of satisfaction will increase.

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# Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, together with the detailed report of the 41st questionnaire, is available to view on the Community Planning website [www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk](http://www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk). Internet access is provided at libraries throughout Aberdeen City and hard copies will be available at Marischal College Customer Service Centre and all city libraries. Alternatively, hard copies can be posted to you by contacting me on the details below.

If you have any further queries or would like to feedback your comments, please contact:

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Community Planning  
in Aberdeen

