



**School Journeys -  
A Snapshot Survey of Children and  
Young People in Wales**

**Children's Commissioner for Wales**

**April 2024**



**Comisiynydd  
Plant Cymru**  
Children's  
Commissioner  
for Wales

# School Journeys – A snapshot survey of children and young people in Wales

## Introduction

During April 2024 we asked children and young people for their views on their journeys to school through a survey.

The survey was part of an ongoing series of topical questions we ask children and young people monthly to hear their views on a variety of issues, called Monthly Matters. It was shared directly with all schools signed up to our children's rights schemes for primary and secondary schools.

As part of the survey pack, children and young people were shown a video introducing the topic, and they were asked to consider some questions about their school journeys, including what they enjoyed about travelling to school and whether they feel safe whilst travelling to school. We suggested in our session outline that following this video, children and young people should have a few minutes to discuss their views with each other before answering the survey.

Schools had two options for completing the survey; children and young people could either do it independently, or a teacher could complete the survey on behalf of the group, answering a different set of questions to give an overview of the discussion.

In total, 891 individual children and young people aged between 6 and under and 17 answered the survey individually. A further 1,699 children took part in groups, with teachers and youth workers submitting a summary of their views. We received responses from 12 local authority areas.

Questions were developed by the Commissioner's experienced staff team, based on themes that had emerged from previous engagement exercises with children and young people and professionals.

## **Questions for children and young people**

### **Closed response questions**

#### **How do you get to school?**

Walk (386) – 42%

Car (365) – 40%

Scoot or Cycle (62) – 7%

I get to school a different way (43) – 5%

School bus (37) – 4%

Public bus (14) – 2%

Taxi (7) – 1%

Train (-)

#### **Do you feel safe when you travel to school?**

Yes (368) – 83%

Sometimes (67) – 15%

No (11) – 3%

#### **How easy is your journey to school?**

Really easy (195) – 45%

Quite easy (145) - 33%

Not easy or hard – in the middle (83) – 19%

Quite hard (12) – 3%

Really hard (3) – 1%

#### **Do you walk to your bus stop?**

Yes (22) – 60%

No (15) 41%

**Do you feel safe when you walk to your school bus stop?**

Yes (16) – 76%

Sometimes (3) – 14%

No (2) – 10%

**How easy is your walk to the school bus stop?**

Really easy (16) – 73%

Quite easy (4) – 18%

Not easy or hard – in the middle (2) – 9%

Quite hard (-)

Really hard (-)

**Do you pay to use the bus, train or taxi?**

Yes (12) – 57%

I don't know (5) – 24%

No (4) – 19%

**Free text questions**

Here we have included the top three answers given by children in each free text question

**Can you tell us why you don't always feel safe when you travel to school?**

The most common answers fell under the following themes:

- other members of the public / strangers / undesirable behaviour (not feeling safe)
- Kidnappers/ being taken
- feel like people are following me / being looked at / being followed

## **Why is your journey to school hard?**

The most common answers fell under the following themes:

- boggy/ muddy / puddles
- dog poo
- house is far away/ live far (walking)

## **Can you tell us why you don't always feel safe when you walk to your school bus stop?**

The most common answers fell under the following themes:

- people making them feel uncomfortable
- bus is late
- threats from other pupils
- crossing the road

## **What do you like about your journey to school?**

The most common answers fell under the following themes:

- Talking to and being with friends
- Boring/ nothing/ don't know
- Looking out of the window/ beautiful views/ nature (from car)

## **Is there anything that makes it hard for you to get to school?**

The most common answers fell under the following themes:

- No/ not really
- Traffic
- Weather – getting wet/being cold

## **Questions for teachers/youth workers**

**Out of the children who walk, cycle or scoot to school, how many feel safe on their journey?**

Most (24) – 53%

All (10) – 22%

Some (8) – 18%

Not many (2) – 4%

None (1) – 2%

**Out of the children who walk, cycle or scoot to school, how many feel their journey is hard**

Some (14) – 31%

Not many (13) – 29%

None (12) – 27%

Most (5) – 11%

All (1) – 2%

**Out of the children who get the school bus, how many feel safe on their journey from home to their bus stop?**

All (15) - 40%

None (9) - 24%

Most (9) - 24%

Some (3) - 8%

Not Many (2) - 5%

**Out of the children who get the school bus, how many feel their journey from home to their bus stop is hard?**

None (23) - 59%

Not Many (7) - 18%

Some (4) - 10%

All (3) - 8%

Most (2) - 5%

**Out of the children who get public transport or a taxi, how many have to pay to do this?**

None (27) - 66%

All (5) - 12%

Not many - (4) - 10%

Some - (4) - 10%

Most (1) - 2%

**Conclusion**

- School journeys frame the school day and the safety and accessibility of the school journey must be a key consideration in children's right to education.
- Whilst the majority of children and young people responding to the survey indicated that they feel their journey to school is safe and easy, open text responses highlighted some safety concerns about being followed or being worried about the behaviours of others.
- Some comments highlighted that traffic, not being able to cross roads and cars were contributors in making getting to school difficult.
- We've shared children's views from this survey with the Welsh Government and with councils across Wales.

## Wider context

- We are aware from wider engagement work and cases through our Children's Rights Advice and Assistance service that not all children have safe and accessible journeys to school. In March 2024, the Welsh Government published the "[Learner travel in Wales: analysis and evaluation: recommendations report December 2023](#)". In response, the Commissioner has [expressed](#) her disappointment in this final review. The Commissioner has committed to taking concerns regarding this review forward with the Cabinet Secretary, and is considering all options available to her office to examine the decision-making that has led to this review.
- Welsh Government, along with Local Authorities, will be considering views on 20mph guidance as part of [a national listening programme](#). This should include hearing the views of children and young people.
- We will also support Welsh Government to meet with children and young people to discuss the topic of 20mph in more detail. Given that road safety affects children and vulnerable adults disproportionately, we hope that Welsh Government reflects this within their engagement and considerations in revising guidance.