



## **Arriva Medway Bus Service Report**

**A report reviewing how Arriva in Medway work to meet the requirements of all young people living in Medway.**

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## Introduction

In 2017 the 'Make Your Mark Ballot' in Medway returned that for young people the most important issue to them was Transport. Arriva is one company providing transport services for the majority of young people within the Medway towns, whether that is journeys to their place of education, work, or social activities.

This report, written by Thomas Baldock MYP on behalf of Medway Youth Council, a representative body of the young people of Medway, has the purpose of raising to Arriva the feedback we have compiled, alongside solutions and responses we would like considered.

This report consists of the responses to the various surveys carried out, it is important to stress that this report will continue to develop as even more young people become involved. When it decided it can go no further it will be complete and released for any young person to access; this will then be a resource that can be accessed and be used in any future campaigns in this area and others around this country. We hope this will be a successful endeavour as a partnerships approach between transport companies and the young people of Medway.

Empowerment has a profound impact on creating many positive effects within our community, companies who engage with us will be able to say that had been part of a scheme that led to a society left in a better place than when it had been found.

*Thomas Baldock MYP*



## Survey Introduction

Most of this report is based on the surveys put to young people. It is important to say that the feedback from students will build on going, and surveys will continue to remain open, accessible with feedback feeding into this report.

Two surveys have been released so far with an outreach of around 120 young people covering a wide area of Medway. These online surveys are being promoted on social media; to expand these may also take other forms to provide a comprehensive and legitimate view from young people.

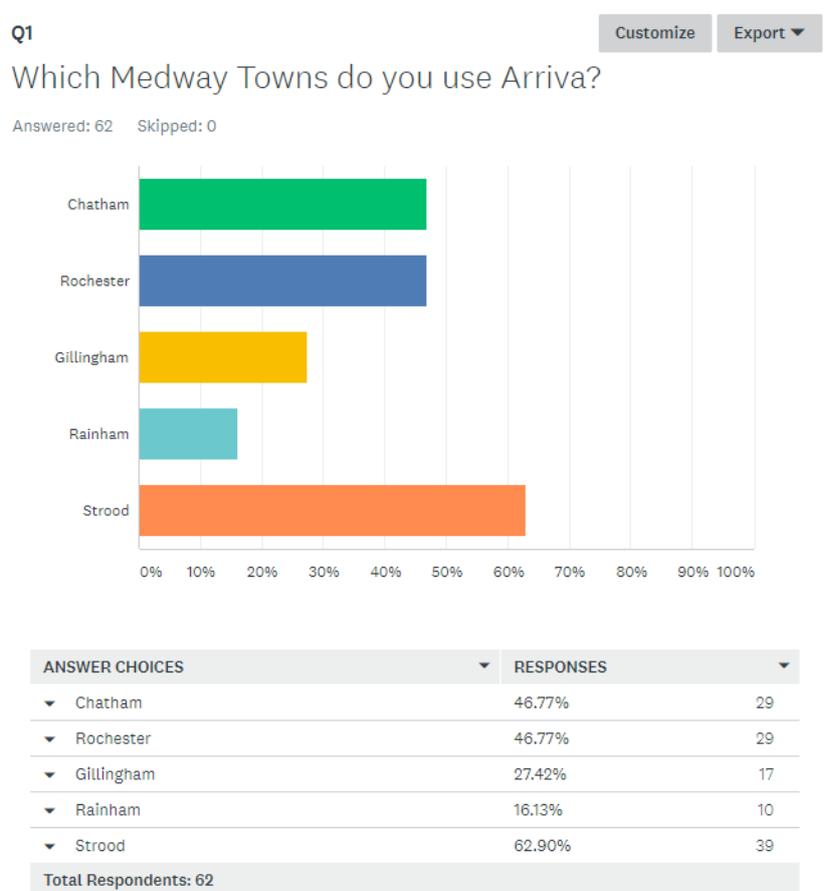
### *First Survey*

- 1) What is your bus service number? e.g. 653
- 2) How do you pay for travel?
- 3) How many times in the week is the bus usually late?
- 4) What do you believe the reason to be for lateness?
- 5) What other issues do you have with the bus services?
- 6) What would you like to see changed about the Bus services?
- 7) If the bus is late or does not turn up, how do you get to your place of education?
- 8) Do you believe public transport in Medway has allowed you to access the most opportunities?
- 9) Any further comments you have about Medway Transport:

Second Survey: this was launched to build on the feedback from the initial one, to provide more detailed information from young people within Medway.

- 1) Which Medway Towns do you use Arriva?
- 2) Which issue is most important to you?
- 3) Do Arriva communicate delays effectively?
- 4) If buses fail to show, are you prevented from accessing education/training/employment?
- 5) What other issues do you have with Arriva bus transport in Medway?
- 6) What ideas do you have for improvements to Arriva Medway?

## The response to the survey



To ensure that representation was as accurate, and as legitimate, as possible respondents were asked in which Medway Town(s) they use Arriva services. Chatham and Rochester both received an equal number of responses; Strood was the most popular surveyed with Rainham being the least. The most important conclusion from this aspect of the on-going report is that it has taken account of views on Arriva from across Medway.

Although this will become evident towards the end of the report it is worth mentioning now that Arriva Medway has a challenging task to transport so many young people in and around Medway. The amount of routes and the often difficult conditions, socially, environmentally and economically have made for a hard task in providing these services. Despite the issues which will be outlined in this report we would like to give our appreciation and recognition to Arriva for which without, our lives would be made significantly more difficult.

Question 1) What is your bus service number?

Service	Response No
600	7
633	4
653	6
658	3
659	9
660	9
670	1
668	3
692	2
693	2
116	2
164	3
166	3
101	7
132	12
140	13
141	9
145	8
166	3
176	6
190	8
191	6
195	1
700	15

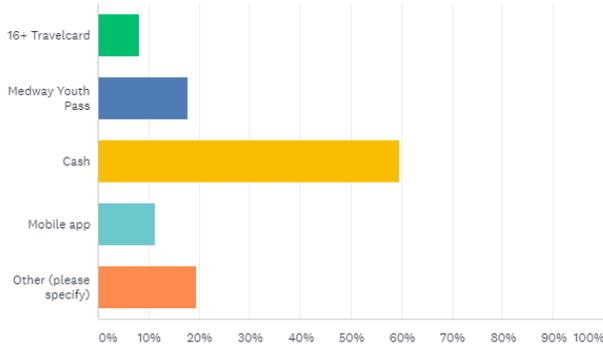
This is the range of Arriva Services which young people have submitted responses to the survey so far from. It is fair to suggest each student who submits a response is giving a good representation of the service for other young people using the routes.

The bus services cover a range of routes/destinations from the Rochester Grammar Schools to the Chatham to Bluewater route.

### Question 2) How do you pay for travel?

How do you pay for travel?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
16+ Travelcard	8.06% 5
Medway Youth Pass	17.74% 11
Cash	59.68% 37
Mobile app	11.29% 7
Other (please specify)	19.35% 12
Total Respondents: 62	

Nearly 50% of respondents pay for bus travel using cash, or combination with youth passes. An equal number of people used the 16+ Travelcard or the Medway Youth Pass.

This also increases the importance of the issue of correct change and vouchers as described in the terms of carriage, additionally the implementation direct debit also can be shown as another positive change.

The next largest method of payment was the Mobile app; this is promising as the Mobile App may provide a solution to the issue raised about the notification of buses being late.

Method	Responses	Percentage
16+ Travel Card	13	11%
Medway Youth Pass	20	17%
Cash	57	48%
Mobile App	21	18%
Other	17	14%
Total Responses	118	

### Question 3) How many times in the week is the bus usually late?

	0 TIMES	1 TIMES	2 TIMES	3 TIMES	4 TIMES	5 TIMES	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	11.29% 7	9.68% 6	19.35% 12	19.35% 12	16.13% 10	24.19% 15	62	2.92

The clear trend is that during the majority of the school week buses were late. Weekend services were not polled on this question, however the comment responses allowed for it to be clear that weekend services were equally unreliable. Over both services the average 'school-days' late was 4.

### Question 4) What do you believe the reason to be for lateness?

An overwhelming 85% of respondents believe the reason for lateness was simply the bus not beginning its journey on time, as tracked by the mobile app. This is potentially a relief as the solution may not involve a cost to the bus companies, instead just pressure to ensure drivers are following shifts effectively.

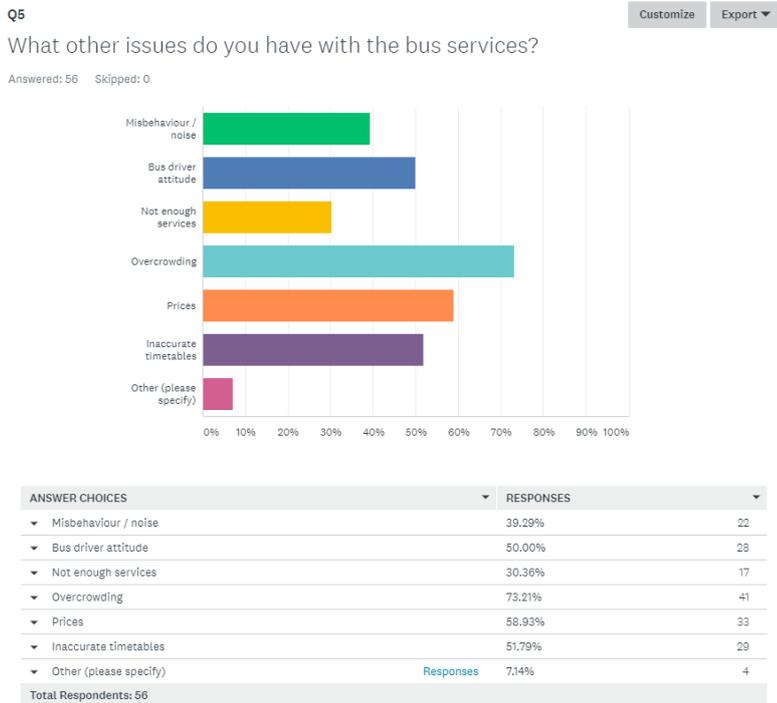
Although 'traffic' was another common issue raised, respondents didn't really know the specific location or causes of congestion. This suggests that congested roads are not repeat issues.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Weather	23.21% 13
Mechanical Issues	16.07% 9
Bus not beginning journey on time	85.71% 48
Bus driver checking tickets carefully	14.29% 8
Traffic (please give road or location where this problem begins)	19.64% 11
Total Respondents: 56	

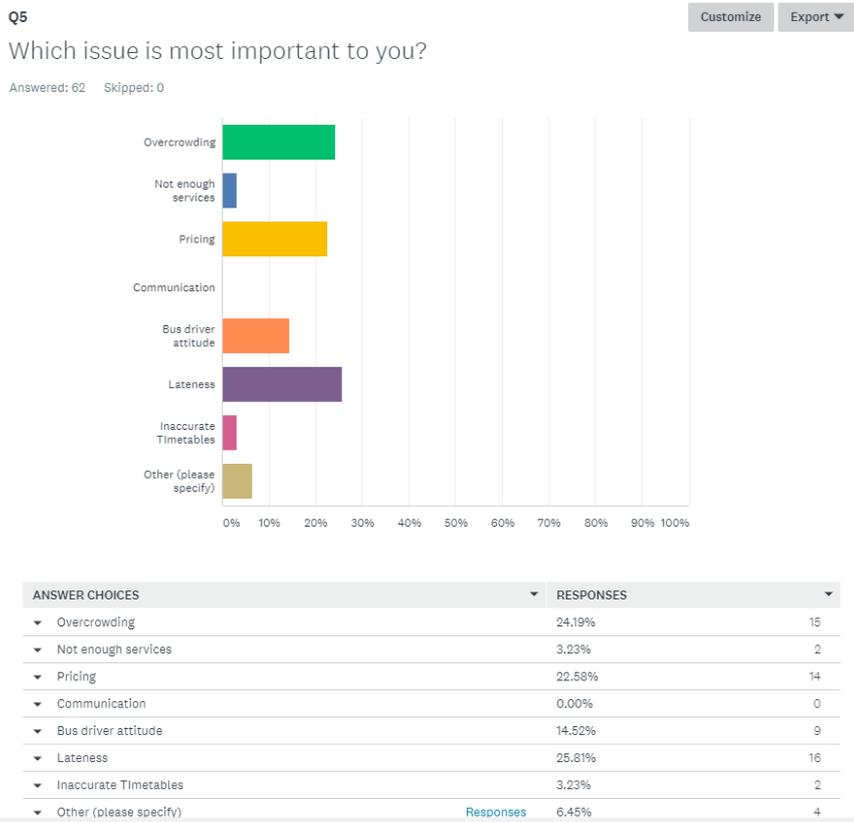
### Question 5) What other issues do you have with the bus services?

The average number of issues young people had with the bus was 3; overcrowding being the most selected, followed by pricing and inaccurate timetables.



For young people using Arriva Medway the biggest issue to them was ‘Overcrowding’ followed by ‘Prices’ and ‘Inaccurate Timetables’. It is hoped that with this report Arriva Medway will be able to work alongside Medway Youth Council in promoting and creating improvements to services.

Medway Arriva could be a flagship project whereby the collaboration with customers (young people) and the companies leads to a net improvement in the experience and quality of transport within Medway.



One reason for a second survey was to broaden the detail of responses from the first survey.

When asked about which issues were most important to young people individually, ‘Lateness’ was the most significant, followed by ‘Overcrowding’, ‘Pricing’. This suggests a whole spectrum of opinion on which issue affects young people individually.

Furthermore it means the challenge for making change is large as one solution will not fix all however the report evidences issues which are linked, such as lateness and incorrect timetables, and it is desired that these changes can be made.

Question 5 Additional) What other issues do you have with Arriva bus transport in Medway?

*The following are a few of the most repeated issues by young people according to the survey*

- 'There are not enough services and they fail to communicate when buses are late'
- 'Prices keep going up. A lot of buses are late and/or don't follow the timetable'
- 'Inconsistency regarding letting people on the bus. Some bus drivers cram lots of people on, whereas others will not let most of the people at my stop on, even though there is a suitable amount of room left'
- Rudeness of staff and lack of change available
- 'Constant overcrowding for example having a 101 bus as a single-decker knowing that at times such as rush hour it will not be able to fit everyone when promised a double decker.'

Question 6) What would you like to see changed about the Bus services?

*The following are a selected range of comments from young people; some responses were similar so only original responses are included*

- 'On time buses, tolerant bus drivers whom drive the bus even if they are 1 or 2 people over the limit.'
- 'Cheaper bus fare for under 18s, a more reliable service in Medway in general, extremely loud kids told to leave the bus if they continue to shout'
- 'A clear indication of when the bus will arrive and notification if it is late or not coming'
- 'Less arrogant drivers, buses staying at stops until timetabled times when early, to allow people who are on time a chance to make it.'
- 'More accurate timetables for the bus service that can be relied on by school children'
- 'Possible return of the 657, a second bus that came to Lordswood. When that went was when the more overcrowding began'
- 'Ensuring that there are enough buses that are large enough to take the large amounts of students who use the bus services to school and back safely'
- More services on crowded routes

## Question 7) If the bus is late or does not turn up, how do you get to your place of education?

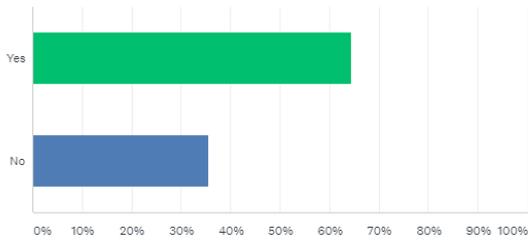
The response to this question clearly shows that when buses do not turn up or are late people are prevented from accessing education training and employment.

*'We will take steps to minimise the effect of the delay. Provided we do this we will not be liable for delays caused by the event, but if there is a risk of substantial delay you may contact us to end the contract and receive a refund for any products you have paid for but not received.'*

The steps have not been taken far enough as young people are increasingly losing out of crucial education/training time.

Q7  
If buses fail to show, are you prevented from accessing education/training/employment?

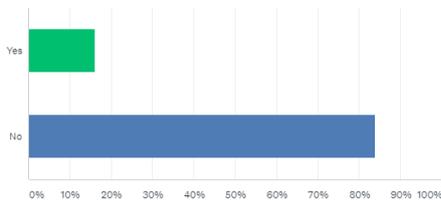
Answered: 62 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	64.52% 40
No	35.48% 22
TOTAL	62

Q6  
Do Arriva communicate delays effectively?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 0

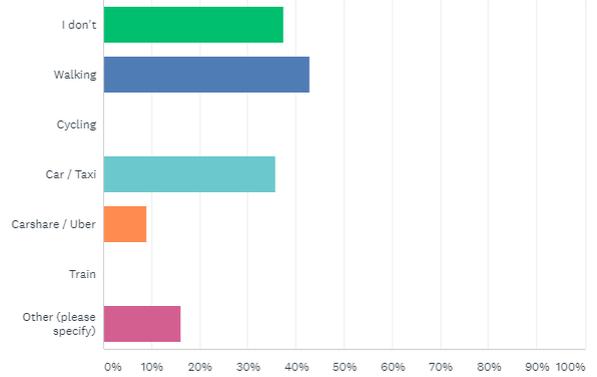


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	16.13% 10
No	83.87% 52
TOTAL	62

Q7 Customize Export

If the bus is late or does not turn up, how do you get to your place of education?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I don't	37.50% 21
Walking	42.86% 24
Cycling	0.00% 0
Car / Taxi	35.71% 20
Carshare / Uber	8.93% 5
Train	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	16.07% 9
Total Respondents: 56	

*"However, events outside our normal control may cause us to alter some or all of the service as necessary. We do our best to overcome delays and to keep you informed"*

Despite the terms stating delays are being informed to customers, unfortunately it appears that communication of delays is not effective.

This is important to the issue of restrictions to education/training/employment. If young people are not informed of delays, other arrangements cannot be made to ensure they arrive on time.

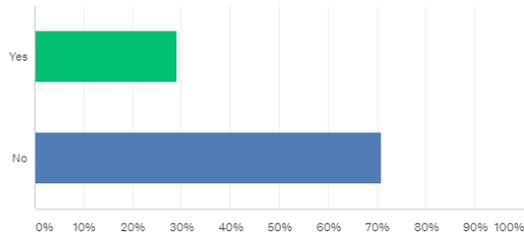
## Question 8) Do you believe public transport in Medway has allowed you to access the most opportunities?

Q8

Customize Export

Do you believe public transport in Medway has allowed you to access the most opportunities?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	29.09% 16
No	70.91% 39
TOTAL	55

Overwhelmingly young people believe that public transport in Medway has not allowed them to access the most opportunities.

This question also provides a measure for any future improvement as an increasing % of those saying 'Yes' shows progress has been made.

### Any further comments you have about Arriva Medway

*The following are a selected range of comments from young people; some responses were similar so original responses are included*

- 'Generally, the services are quite poor and there are some areas in Medway, such as Medway Valley Park which are incredibly sparsely served'
- 'It's over priced and the buses don't turn up on time pretty much constantly'
- 'The buses are so unreliable, my parents might as well be throwing their money away instead of paying my bus ticket'
- 'The buses in Gillingham, in the morning, are usually out of service and so I have to walk to Chatham to get a bus that I know will take me to school.'
- 'It's good that it's there and accessible to most areas of Medway, however the prices and times are still of dire quality'
- 'A lot of very necessary bus services have been cancelled which has effected a lot of people's journeys'
- 'Realistically I'd like my bus to be on time, in an ideal world I'd like youth bus prices reduced. A basic request, I'm sure everyone agrees with, but it's what needs to be done'
- 'More accurate on timing'

### What ideas do you have for improvements to Arriva Medway?

The following is a selection of the most frequently suggested ideas, by young people, for improvements:

- Accurate timetables
- More communication between company and students/customers
- Make school bus passes for a yearly price which is a reduction of normal prices
- Make sure they have change, are on time, if there are any delays inform how long and why.
- Reduced prices and improved cleanliness

Points for action for the Youth Council (only):

Having been briefed on the views of young people in response to transport, there are several possible actions that could be taken in order to affect change.

- **Meeting with Youth council to brainstorm solutions to issues raised by this survey, as well as getting more specific views on the options provided in the survey.**
- **Having a response from Arriva/Bus companies in regards to this survey.**
  - This will show young people that decision makers take an interest in improving services and that their opinions have been heard
- **Meeting with the relevant decision makers to propose solutions to the problems raised by young people and hear their views.**
- **Reporting findings on social media/news outlets to improve relations between companies and young people**
- **Raising awareness that a huge amount of people 'do not' access education following a no show of the buses.**
- **Expanding the survey / publishing report**

Actions we would like to be considered by Arriva Medway:

**Response from Arriva (Medway) regarding this report**

*As young people feeling of our voice not being heard is a frustration; and the reason for the existence of organisations such as Medway Youth Council.*

Publishing a statement or media release to show that this report was heard by Arriva would go a significant way in showing that young people have a voice which is heard. It also provides recognition that the issues young people have with Arriva Medway have been represented to them.

**Academic Ticket and Pricing Transparency** *(Solution Item 1)*

On Arriva buses we request the creation of an academic ticket; this would be specific to a single route and only usable in term time. Furthermore it would be payable by direct debit.

The benefit of this is the removal of issues around having the correct change. Direct debit also allows peace of mind that the ticket has been paid for automatically.

It would be charged annually or pro-rata depending when issued, e.g. mid-term.

Potentially the cost of this ticket should be lower than the equivalent ticket; it has many benefits such as allowing Arriva to retain money if lost by incorrect change.

*Ticket prices are one of the biggest recurring issues for young people regarding public transport. Whether they feel it is a high price for a poor service, or a barrier to opportunities such as education.*

Having a transparent pricing structure can increase the sympathy of young people, leading them to understand the value of the service. Therefore promoting how prices are set will help create more confidence and trust in young people that the prices are fair.

In cases when buses are significantly late during school times we would like waiving of the fee for travel to be considered. Being late to school carries a cost to students, such as loss of learning time. We should not be asked to pay if the situation was within the control of bus companies.

Not collecting payment for travel would also increase the efficiency of the service, allowing it arrive closer to the time which was timetabled, as well as encouraging companies to run on schedule.

This should be only for school times as travel is essential.

**Mobile App Late Notifications:** *(Solution item 2)*

*In this survey alone it showed around 30% used the Mobile App to pay, a much larger number of people use the app to track the buses. Not all bus stops have monitors which display real-time information about the ETA of buses.*

*An issue shown in this survey is that there is not enough communication between Arriva and young customers; improving this is should be an effective way in creating a better service which young people can enjoy.*

We would like to see the Arriva Mobile App push notifications to users if the bus is going to be late or if it is not going to turn up and include a reason why. Improved communication can help alleviate the stress of a bus being late or failing to show and will go a long way to improving the satisfaction of young people with their bus service.

Furthermore if it is clear a bus will be late, it allows young people to make arrangements such as alternative travel so they are still able to access education.

### Timetable Adjustments:

*Reliability can be judged against the timetables released. This is one case study of a bus repeatedly failing to follow the timetable.*

Week 1							
Robin Hood Lane (660)	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Average	Average Late
Timetabled	07:44	07:44	07:44	07:44	07:44	07:44	
Actual	07:52	07:53	07:45	07:50	07:48	07:49	00:05
Rochester Grammar Schools	08:00	08:00	08:00	08:00	08:00	08:00	
Actual	08:13	08:15	08:03	08:10	08:03	08:08	00:08
Week 2							
Robin Hood Lane (660)	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Average	Average Late
Timetabled	07:44	07:44	07:44	07:44	07:44	07:44	
Actual	07:48	07:47	07:48	07:43	07:54	07:48	00:04
Rochester Grammar Schools	08:00	08:00	08:00	08:00	08:00	08:00	
Actual	08:07	08:06	08:04	07:59	08:14	08:06	00:06

Where this is a recurring issue we would like the timetable to be reviewed to more accurately reflect the travel time.

Simply pushing forward the stated time of arrival; this would reduce the amount buses are 'late' as they arrive at a more reliable time; it allows young people to plan their time better for arriving to a bus stop.

### Encouraging bus depots to release services on time:

*92% of young people according to this survey believe the reason for their buses being late is because the buses do not begin their journeys on time. This can be tracked by using the mobile app. In this case it seems it is within the control of bus companies rather than external factors such as traffic to affect the time of arrival.*

We would like more emphasis on releasing bus services so that they depart, and arrive at the scheduled time.

In cases such as a driver being unavailable or bus stock being broken and it is not possible to avoid releasing a service late, communication must be improved to alert users; so they can make alternative arrangements for travel as to avoid missing out on education.

Arriva Terms & Conditions feedback:

**Arriva Terms of Carriage:** (<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/about-us/conditions-of-carriage/>)

- 1- 'However, events outside our normal control may cause us to alter some or all of the service as necessary. We do our best to overcome delays and to keep you informed <sup>1</sup>but cannot be held liable for any loss, damage, costs or injury that you may suffer as a result.'
- 2- 'If the driver has insufficient change, you may be offered a change voucher for redemption on your next journey. We will not redeem change vouchers that have been defaced or altered in any way. <sup>2</sup>

**Arriva Terms and Conditions:** (<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/terms-and-conditions/>)

- 1- 'We are not responsible for delays outside our control. If our supply of the products is delayed by an event outside our control then we will contact you as soon as possible to let you know and we will take steps to minimise the effect of the delay. Provided we do this we will not be liable for delays caused by the event, but if there is a risk of substantial delay you may contact us to end the contract and receive a refund for any products you have paid for but not received.'

**Arriva: 'Our promise and your rights'** (<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/about-us/our-promise-and-your-rights/>)

- 1- We try to run all our buses on time but, if your service leaves early or is more than 5 minutes late and we are to blame, please contact Customer Services
- 2- We try to run all our buses on time but, if your service leaves early or is more than 5 minutes late and we are to blame, please contact Customer Services
- 3- You can download the free Arriva Bus App for iPhone and Android handsets from our website or your usual app supplier. Features include a journey planner, bus times, a live map to see exactly where your bus is in real time and a link to the Arriva m-ticket. You can also store your favourite locations, bus stops and journeys. Everything you need to find and catch your bus – in the palm of your hand!

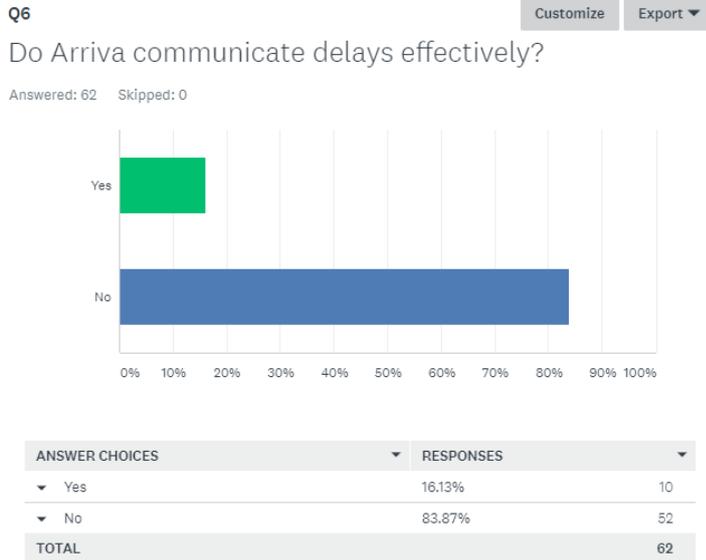
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<sup>1</sup> Issue Item 1

<sup>2</sup> Issue Item 2

## Conflicts with Conditions:

### Issue Item 1: 'We do our best to overcome delays and to keep you informed'



According to this survey of young people within Medway using the Arriva service, when buses are delayed 84% do not receive effective communication.

Where people do receive communication this is through the Mobile app<sup>3</sup> or through bus shelter displays.

The majority of bus stops will not have these informative displays however most young people have their phones with the app. With the mobile app it could be fantastic for push notifications to keep people up to date with late buses.

### Issue Item 2: 'If the driver has insufficient change, you may be offered a change voucher for redemption on your next journey'<sup>4</sup>

Although no specific questions were asked about the issue of change, young people used the comment boxes to repeatedly raise the problem of bus drivers having incorrect change and therefore themselves or Arriva losing money. The creation of a new 'academic ticket' could seek to reduce this problem for young people.

<sup>3</sup> See solution item 1

<sup>4</sup> See Solution Item 2

### Conclusion:

The first aim of this report is to identify the issues young people have with one Transport Company within Medway, Arriva. As this report has developed it has provided analysis of each issue and begun to develop solutions to these issues.

This report has now reached the conclusion stage as in a wide range of Medway Towns young people have been consulted and given their views through the survey, this information was all compiled and will be delivered to the decision makers.

It is hoped that the Medway Youth Council and representatives of the organisation will be given the opportunity to meet and work with the key decision makers to help implement any change which will have the outcome of producing a better service across Medway.

### *Authors note*

I thank all those who were involved in helping to promote the surveys, which without would not have made this report possible. I also thank the current leadership of Medway Youth Council and the cabinet for giving guidance for the best direction to take this report.