The Family and the School Run: What would make a *real* difference?

Transport Studies Group

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Scoping Report

June 2000

AA Foundation for Road Safety Research

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The AA Foundation for Road Safety Research

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Registered as a charity (number 295573), the objectives of the Foundation are:

> to carry out, or procure, research into all factors affecting the safe use of public roads;
>
> to promote and encourage the safe use of public roads by all classes of road users through the circulation of advice, information and knowledge gained from research;
>
> and
>
> to conceive, develop and implement programmes and courses of action designed to improve road safety, these to include the carrying out of any projects or programmes intended to educate young children or others in the safe use of public roads.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Summary

The school journey is a key element of children's travel patterns, and one that often has a major impact on the travel behaviour of parents as well. The overall proportion of pupils travelling to school by car has increased by more than sixty per cent since the mid 1980s. The integrated transport white paper highlights the school run as a priority area for action and an increasing number of initiatives are being taken to improve alternatives to the private car.

This Chapter starts by setting out the background to the commissioning of the current study which aims to look more widely at the issues associated with the 'school run' than those traditionally addressed by transport planners and researchers. The project is in the form of a scoping study, which is intended to:

- *set out the current situation;*
- *scope the nature of the problem and possible solutions;*
- *and, provide recommendations for further research in this area.*

The study objectives have been met by:

- *undertaking an in-depth analysis of the current patterns of travel to/from school;*
- *examining school travel in the broader context of children's lifestyles;*
- *investigating factors influencing car use; and*
- *identifying the barriers to change and possible solutions.*

The main focus of the first part of the study was a literature review and examination of existing data on relevant topics. A limited amount of additional analysis was also carried out on the 1995–97 National Travel Survey data set, the latest available in electronic form. This was followed by a small amount of new exploratory survey work to examine the factors which influenced the decision to drive a child to school and to identify the barriers to change. Questions were also added to an omnibus survey in order to gain a national picture of children's travel patterns, activities and barriers to change. Finally, a one-day workshop was held towards the end of the study, bringing together a range of policy makers, practitioners and others with an interest in children's travel and the school journey.

1.1 Background

The school journey is a key element of children's travel patterns, and one that often has a major impact on the travel behaviour of parents as well. Over the course of a year, around one-third of all the journeys made by children are for education purposes (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), 1998a), and during term time this represents their main weekday travel activity.

In recent years, many groups have expressed concern about the growth in the use of cars for the school journey, and about the contribution that such journeys make to peak period traffic congestion and local air pollution. There are also worries that children who are ferried everywhere by car have less opportunity for physical activity as part of their daily routine, and are not developing the road skills they need as pedestrians or cyclists. For those who do cycle or walk to and from school, there is concern at the numbers of children killed or injured, and growing anxiety about the threat to personal security posed by strangers. As a consequence, the integrated transport white paper (DETR, 1998b), highlights the school run as a priority area for action.

Over the past two decades there has been a considerable rise in car ownership and use in Great Britain and a corresponding rapid decline in bus usage. These trends have had negative impacts on the provision of alternatives to the car, for two main reasons:

- Reduced bus patronage has led to reduced levels of service; and
- Walking and cycling have become more dangerous due to increased traffic flows.

Other recent policy developments have tended to increase reliance on the private car. Parents now have more choice as to where they send their children to school, which is tending to result in enlarged school catchment areas and an increase in average trip lengths. In addition, local authorities are only required by law to provide free transport to those pupils attending their nearest appropriate school and travelling more than the minimum walking distance (i.e. two miles for children under the age of eight and three miles for older children). Direct public transport services may not exist, or be very expensive, thereby further encouraging car use.

There is also a strong link between the school journey and the journey to work, since many parents drive their children to school on their way to work. Here the need to escort a child may be a barrier to the adult leaving their car at home. Thus authorities adopting 'green transport plan' policies aimed at discouraging adults from driving to work may need to provide better facilities for children to travel to school before the parent can leave his/her car at home.

The latest National Travel Survey report (DETR, 1999a) indicates that, on average, 36 per cent of 5–10 year olds and 21 per cent of 11–16 year olds travel to school by car. The overall proportion of pupils travelling to school by car has increased by more than sixty per cent since the mid 1980s. If past trends continue, then the proportion driven to school will continue to grow in the future.

In recognition of these problems, an increasing number of initiatives are being taken to improve alternatives to the private car for the school journey. Many of these were prompted by a national demonstration project to promote Safe Routes to School run by Sustrans and funded in part by the Government. The aim of this is to demonstrate that safe walking and cycling routes can reduce the number of parents who feel the need to drive their children to school by introducing engineering measures and also education and consultation with teachers, parents and children to change attitudes to the 'school run'.

Safe (or Safer, as they are sometimes known) Routes to School (SRtoS) projects usually encompass much more than the physical measures needed to provide safe cycling and walking routes. They typically also provide a great deal of educational and awareness raising activity and often an examination of the factors which might deter people from walking and cycling.

More recently, the school travel focus has changed from safer routes for those walking and cycling to wider initiatives which cover all modes of transport. The role of educational, travel awareness and school policy measures is recognised as being as important as engineering measures in encouraging a change in behaviour and packages of measures or school travel plans (STPs) are now being encouraged.

Partly encouraged by the Sustrans work on Safe Routes to School, the Government has also been paying a lot of attention to school travel. At the end of 1998, the School Travel Advisory Group (STAG) was set up with Government departments, local authorities and others to lead dissemination of best practice and contribute to the development of policy. The Government has also produced guidance on STPs for local authorities wishing to introduce such initiatives and supported related guidance aimed at schools and parents produced by Transport 2000.

Introduction

Prompted by the increased attention given to school travel at a national level, local authorities are paying the issue increasing attention. Almost three-quarters of non-district authorities in England and Wales (i.e. Counties, London Boroughs, Metropolitan Boroughs and Unitaries) have implemented school travel initiatives (Bradshaw, 1999).

However, much of this activity is very recent and there are as yet few detailed monitoring results. There is also little understanding of the extent to which existing initiatives address parents' concerns about their child's journey to school. Their reasons for choosing to drive their children are complex and a better appreciation of this is needed in order to identify possible solutions.

This prompted the AA Foundation to commission the current study which aims to look more widely at the issues associated with the 'school run' than those traditionally addressed by transport planners and researchers.

1.2 Study aims and objectives

The project is in the form of a scoping study, which is intended to:

- set out the current situation;
- scope the nature of the problem and possible solutions; and
- provide recommendations for further research in this area.

Much of the research associated with children's travel to school has tended to focus on travel patterns in terms of travel mode, time and distance and the factors which influence the choice of different modes. There has been some research into parents' and pupils' attitudes to different modes and the changes they would require to persuade them to change mode. There is also a limited amount of work on the relationship of school escort journeys to other journeys, particularly the links with the journey to work.

Little attempt has been made to look at the wider community setting of the school journey, nor how it relates to other aspects of children's and parents' lifestyles. The reasons why parents choose to drive their children to school are complex, so the solutions needed to make a difference to the situation may vary from place to place according to the particular circumstances of the local community.

There is also a need for a greater understanding of the way in which the school journey compares with the other types of journey made by children. There are important issues here not only in terms of current fitness levels among children but also in terms of the implications for the future, given that children who are driven to all their activities are developing inactive and car dependent lifestyles at an early age.

The study objectives have been met by:

- Undertaking an in-depth analysis of the current patterns of travel to/from school;
- Examining school travel in the broader context of children's lifestyles;
- Investigating factors influencing car use; and
- Identifying the barriers to change and possible solutions.

1.3 Issues addressed in the study

The study needed to look not only at how children travel to and from school but also at how mode choice for the school journey affects the rest of the household and other domestic arrangements e.g. whether the school escort journey is linked to other trips and whether there are differences in the mode used for different household types. It is important to remember that the factors which influence mode choice for the journey to

school are complex, ranging from the opportunities offered by multiple car ownership and the perceived lack of alternatives to the other commitments and attitudes of those available to escort a child to school. Research by Valentine (1997) has shown that the amount of independence parents will allow their children is often influenced by local 'norms' and clearly this is likely to have an impact on modal choice for the school journey.

The study also looked more closely at the range of different barriers which must be overcome to encourage greater use of alternatives to the car for the school journey and children's other travel. It examined existing initiatives to consider the extent to which they are meeting parents' requirements and therefore removing some of the barriers.

In creating a new balance of advantage for the family, solutions need to be found which enable **not** driving a child to school to be the sensible option.

1.4 Research methods

1.4.1 Literature and data review

The main focus of the first part of the study was a literature review and examination of existing data on relevant topics. Documents were reviewed not only in terms of the relevant information they could provide but also in terms of whether there was sufficient information to enable a full analysis of particular topics or whether additional research was required.

The data analysis relied for the most part on existing sources of published data but a limited amount of additional analysis was also carried out on the 1995–97 National Travel Survey data set (the latest available in electronic format) to provide information not otherwise available.

1.4.2 'Expert' interviews

At the start of the project a number of organisations that were known to have some involvement, or interest, in the issue of school travel were identified. It was felt that these organisations would be able to provide information that could be valuable for this study. The organisations contacted included suggestions from both the study team and the AA Foundation. Interviews were held with four of the organisations but for the remainder discussions were undertaken by telephone. The discussions were fairly wide ranging and provided an opportunity for organisations to make suggestions as to what the study could cover.

Organisations were contacted by fax or letter initially. The main aim was to find out about their involvement in this area and their views on the kind of solutions that may be appropriate but it was also a good opportunity to draw people's attention to the existence of the current study. There was a lot of research on school travel being undertaken at the time of this study and the study team were keen to ensure that the current research complements rather than competes with other studies.

1.4.3 Exploratory household interview survey

Whilst the study concentrated for the most part on an analysis of existing data and literature, there was also a small amount of new exploratory survey work. The aim of this was to examine the factors (e.g. concerns about road safety/personal safety, convenience, other commitments, etc.) which influenced the decision to drive a child to school and to identify the barriers to change. The surveys also looked more widely at the modes used for the child's other journeys and at how the mode used for the child's journey to school was influenced by the activities of other members of the household. In addition, this provided an opportunity to gain the views of parents as to what would make a difference for families and the 'school run'. The interviews, therefore, also contributed to the development of solutions and the identification of areas for further research.

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As this was a scoping study, the total number of interviews was small but households from a number of categories were chosen so that preliminary comparisons could be made and areas for further research identified. A total of twenty interviews were undertaken in June and July 1999 with families who had children between the ages of nine and fourteen and always or usually drove them to and from school. Five families were recruited from each of four schools:

- a rural primary school in Hertfordshire (HRP = Herts, Rural, Primary);
- a secondary school in a medium-sized town in Hertfordshire (HMS = Herts, Medium sized town, Secondary);
- a primary school located about two miles from the centre of Leeds (LCP = Leeds, City, Primary); and
- a secondary school in the same part of Leeds (LCS = Leeds, City, Secondary).

Although the number of interviews undertaken was small, the choice of schools allowed some information to be obtained for different types of area and for different ages of children. The interviews also included a range of different family backgrounds. The Hertfordshire participants were all two parent families and were predominantly from high income groups with high levels of car ownership – all but one of the families owned two cars. The Leeds parents were more mixed with most coming from lower income groups. There were several one parent families and car ownership was much lower (see Table 1.1). On average, the Leeds children lived closer to school and made slightly fewer trips over the course of the diary week.

Table 1.1 Summary of information about the families who completed diaries

	Hertfordshire	Leeds
No. of interviews	10	10
Average car ownership	2.1	1.4
% living with both parents	100%	50%
Average distance to school	2.9 miles	1.1 miles
Average no. of trips in diary week	29.2	24.8

One child in each of the participating families was asked to complete a travel diary for a week, showing all their journeys, the mode used and who accompanied them. In addition, the adult in the household with the main responsibility for escorting the child to and from school was asked to complete a travel diary for one day. They were asked to select a day when they took their child to and from other activities as well as school. Most of the adults involved were mothers although the sample also included one father and one other adult who lived in the household. The average age of the children involved was just over 11, thirteen were female and seven were male.

Interviews were then held with each of the households to discuss issues relating to the child's travel and activities and more generally about transport. A copy of the topic guide used is included as Appendix A. These interviews lasted about an hour and it was left to the discretion of the parents whether or not their child was present during the interview. In most cases the interviews only involved the adult who had completed the diary but in about a third the child was also present for at least part of the interview and in one or two cases both the father and mother were present. During the interviews, participants were asked to draw their route to school on a map. They were encouraged to talk about any difficulties they encountered on the route both from the point of view of themselves as drivers and from the point of view of their child being able to use other modes.

Participants were asked to mark on the map the location of the various activities that their child participated in and to discuss why particular locations were chosen for various activities. The interviews also addressed a number of other issues, including any concerns that parents might have about their children's travel habits and more general views about car use and transport issues.

1.4.4 National survey

The exploratory interviews provided a detailed understanding of the issues involved for a small number of households. In order to gain a national picture of children's travel patterns, activities and barriers to change questions were added to an omnibus survey undertaken by Taylor Nelson Sofres, a market research company. A copy of the questionnaire used is included as Appendix B. The fieldwork took place in September 1999 and consisted of face-to-face interviews conducted in home mainly in the evenings and at week-ends. Taylor Nelson Sofres interviews approximately 2,100 adults (1,100 women and 1,000 men) each week in Great Britain (south of the Caledonian Canal). Addresses are randomly selected from the Post Office Address File (PAF) and interviewers are required to interview residents according to interlocking quotas on sex, working status and the presence of children. Up to four calls are made on each selected contact.

For the purposes of this research, questions were only asked of those in car-owning households with children of school age, which represents approximately 20 per cent of the sample, or around 400 interviews each week. There was a desire to look at the situation in Scotland separately from that in England and Wales but the number of interviews obtained in Scotland in one week would have been too small to allow for this. To try and get round this problem questions were added to the omnibus interviews for an extra week in Scotland.

An initial gross sample of 2,250 (2,100 from the full national survey and an additional 150 for the extra survey in Scotland) was obtained. Only car-owning households with one or more children aged 5 to 15, not at boarding school, were required for this research. A quarter of the original sample did not own a car and over 70 per cent of the car owning households did not include children who were not at boarding school. Once these households have been excluded there were a total of 476 households eligible for inclusion in this survey, of which 73 were in Scotland.

Table 1.2 provides some basic information on the respondents. In terms of social class the sample is roughly evenly split between social class ABC1 and C2DE. This means that the ABC1s are somewhat over-represented but this is because a higher proportion of the C2DE category was excluded as they did not own a car.

As the interviews were undertaken with the adult who answered the door to the interviewer it was necessary to include a question as to the respondent's relationship with the child as it was felt that non-parents might not be as aware of some of the issues as parents were. In fact, as Table 1.2 shows, 85 per cent of the respondents were the parent of the child to whom the questions related. The majority of these (92 per cent) were living with a partner, including a small number who were the step-parent of the child in question and the rest were single parents. About two-thirds of the non-parents were older brothers or sisters, less than 10 per cent were grandparents and the remainder had another relationship to the child.

Table 1.2
Respondent details

Social class ABC1	213 (45%)
Social class C2DE	263 (55%)
Parent of child	405 (85%)
Other relationship	71 (15%)
Father	144 (30%)
Mother	261 (55%)
Other male	33 (7%)
Other female	38 (8%)

Respondents with more than one child were asked to answer the questions on behalf of the child whose birthday was next so that they were referring to only one child when answering the questions. Fifty-eight per cent of the children were primary school aged (5–10) and 42 per cent were secondary school aged (11–15). This reflects the situation nationally. The children were roughly evenly divided between the sexes but there were slightly more girls than boys (51 per cent compared to 49 per cent).

1.4.5 Workshop

In addition to the interviews a one-day workshop was held towards the end of the study, bringing together a range of policy makers, practitioners and others with an interest in children's travel and the school journey. The aim of the workshop was to discuss the findings of the research, to review the preliminary ideas proposed in the scoping study and to consider how to take those ideas forward. The findings from the household interviews and the preliminary results of the omnibus survey were presented at the workshop so it provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about the study as well as giving their views on the ideas being developed. Appendix C contains a list of the people who attended (and organisations represented at) the workshop.

1.5 Structure of this report

The various strands of the research have covered many of the same issues so the report has been divided into two parts which draw on findings from all the relevant aspects of the research rather than describing each stage in the project separately. Part I (Chapters 2 to 5) looks at what is happening now. Part II (Chapters 6 to 9) goes on to look at what can be done to change the situation, looking both at initiatives which are currently being implemented and at potential future solutions. This structure allows for a clear progression from the current situation to proposals for the future. Each chapter starts with a summary highlighting the main issues covered.

Chapter 2 begins by examining why current trends are causing concern using information drawn both from the literature review and the survey work carried out as part of this research. **Chapter 3** begins by looking at how children currently travel to and from school. Comparisons are made between pupils of different gender and ages (primary/secondary) and from different backgrounds (household structure/income/car ownership) and different areas (large, medium and small urban and rural). Information is drawn from National Travel Survey data, the Omnibus survey and the literature review.

Chapter 4 looks more widely at family life and children's travel and **Chapter 5** at the reasons for car use. Both these chapters are based mainly on the findings from the Omnibus survey and household interviews but also incorporate elements of the literature review.

Chapter 6 examines the effectiveness of current initiatives. It describes the types of initiatives that are currently being introduced based on the results of surveys for DETR and others and information from the surveys carried out as part of this project. **Chapter 7** goes on to examine what might make a real difference presenting ideas for solutions developed in the course of the research and also drawing on some of the feedback provided by participants in the workshop.

Chapter 8 discusses some ways in which the ideas developed in the course of the study might be taken forward. **Chapter 9** finishes the report by summarising the main conclusions.

Chapter 2 School journey issues and objectives

Summary

Data on school journey accidents show that the modes most often used for short distance journeys to school – walking and cycling – are also those which account for a high proportion of casualties relative to their share of journeys. Although a lot of attention is paid to the issue of safety on the school journey only around 17 per cent of all child casualties and 10 per cent of child fatalities occur on the journey to and from school. However, parents' perceptions of safety and security are very different from those demonstrated by the statistics. A vicious circle arises whereby parents believe the roads are too dangerous for their child to go to school unaccompanied and so drive their child to school, contributing to the amount of traffic and increasing the risk for those walking and cycling. It may be that in the short term, changes in people's perceptions of the safety of walking and cycling are the most obvious impacts of a school journey initiative.

As school journeys (at least in the morning) coincide with the peak hour for the journey to work, they make a significant contribution to congestion and the associated environmental problems at a time when many roads are operating at, or close to, capacity. School journeys are of particular concern in terms of their impact on air quality as many of the journeys are short local journeys.

The increasing use of cars for school journeys also has important implications for children's health in terms of their physical fitness and their psychological well-being. Recent surveys have revealed lower levels of physical fitness among children and this may be as a result of being driven everywhere and not walking or cycling as children did in the past, so they have less opportunity for physical activity as part of their daily routine.

It would appear that local authority attempts to deal with school travel issues are motivated by a combination of economic, health and environmental concerns, but the primary motivation is economic, namely the need to reduce congestion. More recently the White Paper on Integrated Transport acknowledged that concern with the 'school run goes deeper than a wish to reduce congestion' and it pointed out that the reduction in walking and cycling to school is creating unfit and car dependent children.

The legislative background to the provision of school transport has not changed substantially since the criteria for provision of free school transport were set out in the 1944 Education Act. This is despite the fact that education legislation changes have affected school transport provision considerably in recent years, especially through the increased parental choice of schools and the opting out of schools from local authority control. Overall in the UK, an estimated 16 per cent of the school population receive free transport – 24 per cent of secondary pupils and 5 per cent of primary school pupils.

2.1 What are policy makers' concerns?

The Integrated Transport White Paper (DETR, 1998b) highlighted some of the concerns which are motivating policy makers to pay particular attention to school transport issues:

'The concern goes deeper than a wish to reduce congestion by discouraging parents from taking their children to school by car, although the benefits for the morning rush hour would be considerable. Not walking or cycling to school means that children get much less exercise and builds in car dependency at an early stage in a child's

development. These children will find it harder as adults to use cars responsibly and will have fewer opportunities to develop the road sense they need as pedestrians or cyclists.' (p. 145)

The White Paper also acknowledges parents' concerns about the safety of their children. This section starts by discussing the safety issues relating to the school journey before examining some of the other concerns raised in the White Paper.

2.1.1 Accidents on the school journey

The figures in Table 2.1 might suggest that it is safer for children to travel to and from school by car rather than by bike or on foot. However, the total number of casualties has actually risen and this is mainly accounted for by an increase in the number of slight accidents involving car/taxi and bus/coach occupants. The total number of casualties involving pedestrians and cyclists has dropped slightly and pedestrians now form a smaller proportion of the total.

Table 2.1 School pupil (aged 5–6 inclusive) casualties in road accidents on the way to or from school (fatalities in brackets)

	1992		1998	
Pedestrian	5,031	(29)	4,824	(16)
Cyclist	1,092	(4)	1,030	(4)
Car/taxi occupant	1,280	(3)	1,684	(4)
Bus/coach occupant	535	(1)	894	(0)
Minibus occupant	108	(0)	75	(0)
Other road user	90	(3)	138	(2)
Total	8,136	(40)	8,645	(26)

Source: Personal Communication from DETR and TRL

The modes most often used for short distance journeys to school – walking and cycling – are also those which account for a high proportion of casualties relative to their share of journeys. In 1998, 12 per cent of the total school journey casualties were cyclists and 56 per cent were pedestrians whilst these modes accounted for 1 per cent and 50 per cent of all journeys to school respectively. Those cycling to school, in particular, are obviously disproportionately at risk of being involved in an accident whilst those travelling by public transport or car are involved in proportionately few accidents relative to the number of journeys by those modes.

School journeys by bus tend to be longer than those by car (see Section 3.1.2) thus the proportion of casualties among bus users is even lower than might be expected relative to the amount of use made of this mode. It should be noted in Table 2.1 that the overall numbers of casualties for bus/coach occupants are actually lower than for pedestrians, cyclists or car/taxi occupants suggesting it is the safest mode of travel to school. It is also worth mentioning that although a lot of attention is paid to the issue of safety on the school journey only around 17 per cent of all child casualties and 10 per cent of child fatalities occur on the journey to or from school. The school journey accounts for around a fifth of the total distance travelled by children and a third of their trips.

As with all statistics these accident figures should be treated cautiously as there are a number of problems with them. It is widely acknowledged that road accident casualties are not always reported to the police, especially when the injuries are slight (see for example James, 1991). It is therefore likely that the actual numbers of casualties on school journeys are higher than these figures. There is also likely to be a modal bias in the reporting of accidents with slight accidents to pedestrians and cyclists being less likely to be reported than those involving vehicles and which may need to be reported for insurance purposes.

School journey issues and objectives

There is a problem with defining the 'journey to school' as often children (especially pedestrians) go to and from school via the shops or a friend's house so do not travel by the most direct route. There is also some controversy about how the mode of travel is classified. For example a child killed or injured while waiting at a bus stop for the bus to arrive would be classified as a pedestrian casualty whereas it could be argued that this should be a bus/coach casualty. There are no statistics available on the number of accidents on the 'point-to-point' journey to school by different modes. It would be useful to be able to compare, for example, travel by bus, including the walk to and from the bus stop and the wait at the bus stop, with travel by car, including, perhaps, the need to cross a road after being dropped off. This would allow a much clearer indication of the relative safety of different modes.

The police keep records of all reported casualties. These records include the age of the people involved, the modes used, the location and the time of day. Therefore, for a given area, it ought to be possible to identify the number and severity of accidents associated particularly with the journey to and from school. It should be noted, however, that there is often a problem of statistical significance with the comparison of accident data (due to the small numbers involved) and to avoid this it would probably be necessary to obtain several years' worth of data both before and after the implementation of measures. This may not be possible and there are other problems with accident data as discussed above which should be considered. It is also possible that the introduction of a Safer Routes to School initiative may heighten awareness about accidents and lead to a greater level of reporting. It may therefore be more useful to collect data on people's perceptions of road safety as a proxy for accident data.

2.1.2 Perceptions of safety and security

The risks that parents perceive are very different from those demonstrated by the statistics. Parents' perceptions of school bus transport are based on the large-scale media attention given to minibus and coach accidents. A growing number of parents choose to drive their children to school because they are concerned about road safety (ironically the statistics suggest that car travel is actually less safe than public transport). A vicious circle arises whereby parents believe the roads are too dangerous for their child to go to school unaccompanied and so drive their child to school, contributing to the amount of traffic and increasing the risk for those walking and cycling.

Parents also fear for the personal safety of their children – the charity, Kidscape, reported (Walker, 1993) that parents fear their children are more at risk from abduction than from drugs, horror videos or violence on television. Here too the perceived risk of 'stranger danger' far outweighs the actual risks – children are far more likely to be harmed by a member of their own household than by a stranger.

Unfortunately, given these perceptions, many parents, particularly those of younger children, are reluctant to allow their children to travel unaccompanied. In one study (Hillman *et al.*, 1990) traffic danger was by far the most significant concern but 20 per cent of parents cited fear of molestation as the reason they choose to accompany their children home from school. The same study showed that only 20 per cent of junior boys and 10 per cent of junior girls are allowed to use buses on their own. In another study (Bradshaw, 1993) the most common reason for accompanying children to school was the personal safety of the child, cited by over half of those parents who walked their child to school and almost 40 per cent of those who drove their child. Road safety reasons were cited in a third of the responses from those who walked their child, compared with only about 10 per cent of those who drove their child to school. A number of other studies (Institute of Education, 1996; Sissons Joshi MacLean and Carter, 1997) have cited 'stranger danger' as parents' greatest fear.

Another personal safety issue which may influence the mode chosen for the school journey is bullying. In a large survey of pupils aged 12–17 in the UK, 10 per cent reported that they had been bullied 'at least once a week' (Salmon, James and Smith, 1998). Anecdotal evidence suggests that some bullying is likely to affect travel modes for school journeys resulting in some parental car escort trips replacing travel by other modes. No evidence of research in this area, however, has come to light.

Personal safety, like road safety, is an issue that is hard to measure. The initial surveys for most Safer Routes to School projects ask pupils to identify places where they feel unsafe (both from a road safety and personal safety perspective) and there has been some work asking pupils more generally whether they feel safe using particular modes.

As well as acting as a proxy for statistical data, perceptions about safety and security are very important in their own right, as people's attitudes and, thus, their behaviour are influenced by their perceptions. Thus, it may be that in the short term, changes in people's perceptions of the safety of walking and cycling are the most obvious impacts of a school journey initiative.

2.1.3 Congestion and environmental problems

School escort journeys account for up to 20 per cent of peak-hour traffic in some areas (DETR, 1999a). As school journeys (at least in the morning) coincide with the peak hour for the journey to work, they make a significant contribution to congestion and the associated environmental problems at a time when many roads are operating at, or close to, capacity. If car use for the school journey continues to grow, this is likely to contribute to severe levels of congestion in some places.

Related to this is the link between the school journey and the journey to work since many parents drive their children to school on their way to work (see Section 4.3) and the need to escort a child may be a barrier to the adult leaving their car at home. Thus authorities adopting policies aimed at discouraging adults from driving to work may need to provide better facilities for children to travel to school by walking, cycling or public transport to act as an incentive for the parent to leave their car at home.

National Economic Research Associates (Dodgson and Lane, 1997) have produced estimates of the cost of road congestion to road users based on a detailed disaggregation of the road network into 25 different types of road and nine different time periods in the week. Their method thus takes account of the fact that congestion varies between different parts of the country, and also between peak and off-peak times of the day and days of the week but it does only apply to motorised road users. Congestion costs were defined as the 'extra costs road users incur because the existing British road network is congested'. This report estimated the total cost of road congestion to road users in 1996 as £7 billion, of which congestion during the morning peak (which school journeys contribute to) accounted for around 9 per cent, which seems somewhat lower than might be expected.

There are also a whole range of environmental problems associated with increasing car use – global warming; air pollution (carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxides, hydrocarbons, particulates); traffic noise and vibration; and community severance being the most important ones. School journeys are of particular concern in terms of their impact on air quality as many of the journeys are short local journeys. Such journeys are responsible for proportionately high levels of emissions since catalytic converters do not start immediately after cold-starts. Where the sole purpose of the journey is to drive a child to school (and studies suggest that between 40 and 70 per cent of school escort journeys are – see Section 4.3) then there will be two cold-starts each day if the child is driven morning and afternoon.

2.1.4 Health and well-being

The increasing use of cars for school journeys has important implications for children's health in terms of their physical fitness and their psychological well-being. There have been large decreases in children's freedom to travel independently in recent years, so children have far fewer opportunities to do things on their own. It has been suggested (Kegerreis, 1993) that this loss of freedom could be adversely affecting children's emotional and social development, depriving them of the opportunity to experience different environments and different types of people than those they encounter in their school and home lives.

It has also been suggested that it is affecting their physical well-being too. Recent surveys have revealed lower levels of physical fitness among children and this may be as a result of being driven everywhere and not walking or cycling as children did in the past, so they have less opportunity for physical activity as part of their daily routine. Walking to school represents a significant proportion (40 per cent) of the distance walked by all children each year, making its contribution to children's overall levels of physical activity all the more important. Today's inactive children are likely to become tomorrow's inactive adults. Recent research by the Institute of Child Health (Woodroffe *et al.*, 1998) concluded that by driving their children to school, parents are increasing the risks of obesity and undermining their children's health in later years. For example, physical activity in childhood directly reduces the risks of osteoporosis and hip fracture in old age.

Another concern is that children who are ferried everywhere by car have less opportunity to develop the road skills needed as pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, as drivers in later life they may be less aware of the need to show consideration to other groups of road users.

2.1.5 Implications for the future: children's perceptions of different modes

Children develop travel habits at an early age and it has been argued that there is a need to target children before they develop car dependence. Meaton and Kingham (1998) undertook a study of younger children to determine at what age this was. They interviewed 140 children between the ages of five and eleven and found that image associations between modes of transport and different sections of society are established as young as seven. They concluded that the next generation will be even more wedded to their cars than previous ones and suggested that what is needed is a 'complete package of innovative campaigns targeted at all sections of society'.

The influence of the car is even clearer in older children. Lex (1995) conducted a survey of children aged between 13 and 16 in order to find out their attitudes towards cars and motoring. The results found that youngsters are already as dependent on the car as their parents with 90 per cent of girls and 75 per cent of boys saying that they would find it difficult to adjust to lifestyles without a car. Most of the respondents expected to be driving their own cars by the time they are 19, with over half wanting to own a sports car.

Another study (Solomon, 1998) undertaken recently aimed to highlight to policy makers just how far society's values (and young people's values in particular) have shifted in favour of the car. In this study a group of 75 lower sixth formers from Hertford were asked about the importance they attached to various 'coming of age' rights. Sixty percent ranked driving first, 26 per cent ranked drinking first, 13 per cent ranked voting as most important. When asked whether they would rather have the vote or the driving licence if they could have only one, 76 per cent said they would prefer a driving licence. This research concluded that travel by car has become a 'cultural norm rather than a travel choice and long-term multi-disciplinary solutions are required since this is no longer just a transport issue but much wider'.

Clearly children's views of different modes are influenced by the opportunities they have for experiencing them. This is borne out by some research at the University of Brighton (Cahill *et al.*, 1996) with pupils in Year 5 (age 9/10) and Year 7 (Age 11/12). They asked 'What form of transport do you most like using to travel about?' There were clear differences between children from car-owning and non-car-owning families with almost 50 per cent of the former but only about 20 per cent of the latter choosing car. They also asked the pupils if they wanted to own a car when they were older – four times as many children from non car-owning families said that they did not want to own a car than those from car-owning families. This study concluded that children's attitudes are influenced by experience and are key to transport policy in the early twenty-first century.

Habits developed in childhood are hard to break in later life. People who have little or no experience of modes other than the car as children are less likely to choose alternative modes as adults. This has implications, both in terms of the potential ability of initiatives such as TravelWise to impact on people's travel behaviour in the future and also on the potential future market for public transport. The latter is mainly of concern for operators, but could also be important for local authorities in that it may mean the difference between 'socially-necessary' services being commercially operated or supported by the authority.

2.2 What are parents' concerns?

The survey work carried out as part of this research provided the opportunity to ask parents themselves about the impact of car use on their children. The following sections discuss some of the concerns raised in the household interviews.

The extent to which some of these concerns are shared more widely by parents was tested in the national survey. The questionnaire contained a series of statements that related to the impacts that high use of the car for school journeys might have on children or on the parents themselves. Parents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

2.2.1 Developing appropriate skills

In the household interviews, several parents felt that their children had not developed the skills they needed to cross roads safely because they rarely had the need to use these skills. This appeared to be a particular problem in the rural area where children rarely walked anywhere (except as a leisure activity when they were on country footpaths or in pedestrianised areas) because few, if any, of the places they went to were within walking distance.

'I think all children nowadays because they are ferried around by car, they don't know how to cross roads...because everything is done with an adult generally...if we take [child to town she's] actually in a pedestrianised area so again, they're not crossing roads.' (HRP3)

Concerns about their children's ability to deal with traffic were also raised by parents in more built up areas.

'I've noticed when I'm out with her she doesn't always take into consideration the traffic.' (HMS2)

In the national survey the statement about the impacts of car use which received the highest level of agreement related to road safety. Over a third of parents either agreed strongly or slightly with the following statement: 'I worry that my child doesn't know how to cross roads because he/she usually travels by car rather than walking or cycling.'

Those whose children attended schools in small towns or large villages were much more likely to agree with this statement than those who lived in large towns or cities – 47 per cent compared to 30 per cent.

In the household interviews this concern extended to a more general feeling that children were not 'streetwise' in terms of their ability to cope with difficult situations they might encounter when out and about or had difficulty in finding their way around because they were always driven everywhere.

'Children aren't brought up in the same way as they were so they're not as aware and as street wise as they were when I was younger.' (HRP4)

'...he's always been driven round places and now all of a sudden he's using his bike more and he hasn't got a very good sense of direction because you get in the car and you arrive wherever you're going and you don't take any notice, especially if the route's varied according to if you're avoiding traffic...' (HMS3)

One or two parents even felt that by being driven everywhere their children might be missing out on some of the things they themselves had experienced as children.

'...when we were little we got buses and we learned about life...If there was a regular service to school and it was reliable I would use it....I think that they are absolutely cosseted being driven from door to door.' (HRP2)

Others recognised that the constant chauffeuring might have consequences for the children but felt that this was unavoidable.

'I think they're protected too much now probably but I think it's a sign of the times, society has made it like that, it's made it that you have to protect your children because you'd never forgive yourself if anything happened...' (HMS2)

2.2.2 Health and fitness

Parents were also asked if they were concerned about the fact that being driven around so much meant that their children had less physical activity than they might do otherwise and that this might have an impact on their health and fitness.

Most of the parents interviewed, particularly those in Hertfordshire, felt that the fact that their children participated in activities such as swimming or dancing meant that they had plenty of physical activity and that therefore this was not a concern. Some mentioned that they actually encouraged their children to join clubs or take lessons which involved being active, rather than something like art or chess, so that it would provide an opportunity for them to keep fit.

'I salve my conscience by the fact that they do so much sport. I think if they didn't I'd have to make them do sport because I don't think I can change my driving them around quite so much.' (HRP2)

'They're not as fit as they could be but they both do a lot of sport else I actually would be concerned about that...' (HMS5)

The children of the parents interviewed in Leeds were more likely to spend time 'playing out'. Many did walk for some of their journeys so again most parents felt that they got enough physical exercise.

'...we go to the park. We've got a dog so we end up going to the park quite a lot. Week-ends are usually spent doing some sort of walking or something. No, it doesn't really concern me. They're pretty fit.' (LCP5)

The only parents who seemed concerned that their children might not be undertaking enough physical activity were the ones whose children were interested in more sedentary pursuits.

'I do wish [son] did more walking because he does love being on the computer...' (HMS1)

Often it was the television rather than the car that was regarded as the main culprit in terms of discouraging children from being active.

'I think [son] would be a lot more active if it wasn't for the opportunity to watch Star Trek and other things.' (HMS1)

In the national survey, the statement with the lowest level of agreement related to children's health and fitness. Less than a fifth of parents agreed with the statement: 'I don't think that my child gets enough physical activity because he/she usually travels by car rather than walking or cycling.' Over 70 per cent of parents disagreed with this statement which supports the evidence from the household interviews which suggests that a lot of parents feel their children's other activities such as ballet and swimming provide the physical activity they require.

2.2.3 Children's independent travel

There were differing views as to the need to allow children to travel independently and the extent to which parents allowed this. A common theme was that parents were much happier for children to travel independently if they were with a friend and would not like them to be completely alone.

'...they only ever go off together, we don't allow them to do anything really on their own, if they want to go off in the town centre, they have to be with a friend and stay with that friend...we'll pick them up and drop them off there.' (HRP3)

'...he wants a bit of independence and he's starting to walk home with a friend on a Tuesday but I'll only let him do that if he's with a friend. I wouldn't let him do it on his own.' (LCP1)

Although the transition from primary to secondary school was clearly an influencing factor, particularly for the parents interviewed in Leeds, there was not usually a set age at which particular freedoms were granted, even within families. This was something that parents judged individually for each child depending on that child's own attitude and abilities (as well as the parents' views of particular modes) but younger siblings often had more opportunities to travel without their parents because they could be accompanied by an older brother or sister.

'She has an older brother and if he's at home, she's allowed to do more because she can do it with him...' (HRP2)

However, teenagers were not always willing to escort their younger brothers and sisters.

'I think the older they get the more ideas they have of what they want to do and what it's cool to do. I know my 16 year old doesn't particularly want to walk around with his 12 year old brother.' (HMS3)

The idea of how sensible or not a child might be was mentioned several times.

'I'm only happy for her to walk into [town] if she's with a friend and she generally only does that with one friend who's very sensible as she is.' (HRP2)

'...he's not a very sensible boy so we wouldn't let him [cycle on the road]' (HMS1)

'...she hasn't been very good safety wise at looking both ways on the road whereas her brother is a lot more sensible...' (LCS4)

Several parents commented on the difficulties of determining how much independence they should allow their child and judging whether they were ready to be allowed more freedom.

School journey issues and objectives

'...he's at that in-between stage, I feel, he's not a little boy anymore but he's not a big boy either..' (HRP5)

'...you don't want them to be at any more risk than you can help....it's difficult finding that line and that balance, really. They're all different, they've all got different amounts of common sense...at different ages.' (HRP5)

'I've felt forced to let her [walk back from school] to get her used to it for High School. I felt as if it was quite a big step...It was quite a hard decision to make but now I've made it I feel as though I've made the right one....' (LCP3)

'I feel it's quite a step really. We'll have to get a few friends together, get them all together, meet on a corner or something...but it depends on her really, if she wants to come with me she can do, if she doesn't then she can go on her own with her mates.' (LCP5)

However, particularly amongst the parents interviewed in Leeds there was an awareness that their children needed to have greater independence as they got older. Most of the primary school parents considered that their child would walk to secondary school and it was often the children themselves who were asking to be allowed to walk because that was what their friends did.

'They need that little bit of freedom, they need to find out what boundaries there are, to build up their own confidence.' (LCP4)

'All the others seem to [walk]...you can't mollycoddle them for ever...'(LCP5)

'You've got to let them go at a certain point but it's not easy...You can't take them everywhere. You can't be a permanent chauffeur, can you?' (LCS3)

'...because of her health and different things I think I've been too overprotective with her so I'm trying to let go a bit now...she's getting to the age that I think, well she's got to be given more freedom...' (LCS4)

Most of the parents interviewed in Hertfordshire seemed to accept that they would continue chauffeuring their children for most journeys. The majority of them did not seem particularly concerned that they were not providing their children with the opportunity to experience modes other than the car and that they were therefore making it more likely that their children too would be car dependent. There were even a couple of examples from the interviews in Hertfordshire where there was a clear expectation that the eldest child in the family would pass their driving test as soon as possible after their seventeenth birthday and then take over some of the chauffeuring responsibilities for younger siblings. This was viewed as the first opportunity that such children would have to travel independently.

'...his brother will have passed his driving test, I hope, by the end of the year so then he can take him home...' (HMS4)

Another difference was that the parents interviewed in Leeds seemed much happier about their children 'playing out' whereas one or two of those interviewed in Hertfordshire seemed to consider that unless children were participating in an organised activity they should not be out of the house.

'I hate seeing children wandering the streets, there's a lot of them just wander round en masse *on the estate and they're up to no good so we don't encourage [son] to play outside or wander around.'* (HMS1)

2.3 Policy objectives

2.3.1 Central Government transport objectives

Given that Local Transport Plans are likely to play an important role in encouraging the future implementation of school travel initiatives, it is useful to start a discussion on objectives by reviewing what the guidance on Local Transport Plans says (DETR, 1999b). This describes the objectives of a Local Transport Plan as:

- 'to protect and enhance the built and natural environment;
- to improve safety for all travellers;
- to contribute to an efficient economy, and to support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations;
- to promote accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car; and
- to promote the integration of all forms of transport and land use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system.'

2.3.2 Specific objectives adopted by local authorities

The engineering charity, Sustrans, carried out a review (Davis, 1996) of local authority interest in Safe Routes to School and similar initiatives. This review briefly assessed local authority motivation for adopting such initiatives and concluded that the *'primary reason from the traffic engineers' perspective is an increasing concern over the substantial growth in motorised parental school escort trips and the impact on road network capacity'.*

It would appear that local authority attempts to deal with school travel issues are motivated by a combination of economic, health and environmental concerns, but the primary motivation is economic, namely the need to reduce congestion. The following quote from a letter to Sustrans from South Cambridge District Council probably best sums up the general view of local authorities:

"The Council has consistently drawn attention to the way in which such journeys contribute to traffic congestion in Cambridge. If, additionally, more school children in the City could be encouraged to cycle to school there would be benefits in reduced congestion and pollution in Cambridge as well as more healthy children!"

This view is also evident in one of Surrey County Council's Transport Policies and Programme (TPP) submissions (Surrey County Council, 1996) for Safe Routes to School. Surrey cited a modal shift away from the private car as its primary objective with reducing the number of pedestrian and cycle casualties and improving air quality around schools also being important. All these objectives are quantifiable, and the document describes how the Council intends to measure them. A number of qualitative objectives for the project are also given, namely:

- To reduce the perceived risks associated with walking or cycling to school by making these modes more attractive
- To increase children's independent mobility and responsibility
- To improve the health of Surrey's children by increasing the amount of regular exercise through walking and cycling
- To reduce car dependency
- To gain public support and enthusiasm for SRS through a partnership between the highway authority, the population at large and private businesses
- To provide a core network for other pedestrian and cycle 'trip generators'.

The idea of reducing congestion being the prime objective has also been supported in the past by the government advice to local authorities seeking funding for such measures which suggested that Safe Routes to School can help in reducing peak time

congestion. However, more recently the White Paper on Integrated Transport (DETR, 1998b) acknowledged that concern with the 'school run goes deeper than a wish to reduce congestion' and it pointed out that the reduction in walking and cycling to school is creating unfit and car dependent children.

Other projects have focused more on the safety objectives of school journey initiatives. One of these is the Safe Routes to School initiative in the Highfields area of Leicester. The stated aims of the project are:

- To provide a safe environment for children to walk and cycle to school
- To create an environment such that parents may feel that it is safe for children to walk to school, and help foster independence and confidence in children
- To inform children of the problems associated with car use, particularly for short journeys in built up areas
- To reduce the number of car trips to school that could be walked or cycled
- To get children, teachers and parents involved in identifying the road safety problems in the area, and to help in the formulation of design solutions.

This last objective demonstrates how school travel initiatives can be used to encourage public participation in plans for local neighbourhoods, particularly from children whose views are rarely taken account of in the planning process.

A survey of local authorities in 1999 (Bradshaw, 1999) found that the most commonly cited objectives for school travel plans and initiatives were sustainability/reducing reliance on the car (96 per cent) and road safety/reducing accidents (93 per cent), closely followed by reducing congestion (91 per cent). Health was cited by 81 per cent of respondents and air quality improvement/target by 71 per cent. A few authorities listed other objectives. These included 'developing sustainable travel habits', 'community safety', 'education – environmental awareness', 'opening up new markets for the schools taking part', 'promoting independence and child development' and 'publicity'.

2.4 Who gets free school travel?

2.4.1 1944 Education Act

The legislative background to the provision of school transport has not changed substantially since the criteria for the provision of free school transport were set out in the 1944 Education Act. Under Section 55(1) of this Act, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have a statutory duty to assist the travel of certain pupils. Minimum walking distances, measured between the child's home and the nearest appropriate school, according to the shortest available route (not necessarily road), were established. These are two miles in the case of children under eight years of age and three miles in the case of older children. Above these distances non-attendance at school is justifiable if the Local Education Authority has not made suitable school transport arrangements.

Legislation was introduced in 1953 that permitted Local Education Authorities to charge a 'reasonable fare' for pupils living within the minimum walking distances and using vacant seats on school buses. The 1986 Education Act acknowledged for the first time the increasing safety concerns for those living within the minimum walking distances walking or cycling, to and from school. Section 53 of this Act allowed the LEA the discretion to provide free transport based on the age of the pupil and the nature of the route or alternative routes available.

However, apart from this, the provision of free school transport is still based on minimum walking distances and there has been no change in the basis of provision. This is despite the fact that education legislation changes have affected school

transport provision considerably in recent years, especially through the increased parental choice of schools and the opting out of schools from local authority control. These changes were introduced in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

2.4.2 Data on the statutory provision of school transport

Overall in the UK, an estimated 16 per cent of the school population receive free transport under the terms of the 1944 Education Act – 24 per cent of secondary pupils and 5 per cent of primary school pupils (Sian Thornthwaite Consultants Ltd, 1998). This is equivalent to approximately 1.3 million pupils nationally. Table 2.2 shows the proportion of pupils in receipt of free transport by the main mode used. Approximately 54 per cent of all those in receipt of school transport travel on contracted vehicles and around a third travel by local bus. Very small proportions of pupils (not shown in the table) use rail or mileage allowances. As would be expected the use of local bus is higher in the Metropolitan Districts but also in Northern Ireland where such arrangements account for 60 per cent of journeys.

Table 2.2
Proportion in receipt by main mode

	Contract (%)	Local bus (%)	LEA (%)	No. of pupils
Metropolitan Boroughs	37	62	<1	29,325
London Boroughs	43	3	51	2,142
Counties	70	24	2	337,678
Scottish authorities	76	21	2	38,934
N . Ireland authorities	8	60	27	117,236
All	54	34	8	525,315

Notes: Does not sum to 100 per cent as other modes not shown. Based on survey responses from 67 local authorities.
Source: 'School Transport' February 1998. Sian Thornthwaite Consultants Ltd.

The report recently published by STAG (DETR, 2000a) suggests that there is a high level of take-up among those entitled to free school transport which means that most pupils beyond the statutory walking distance do not travel by car. The National Travel Survey data does not support this. Section 3.1.2 shows that car use is still high among those living beyond the minimum walking distance to school, especially at primary school age. However, it is not possible to tell from this data whether or not pupils are attending their nearest appropriate school and therefore whether or not they are eligible for free school transport.

2.5 What policy developments have there been recently?

2.5.1 Introduction

Following a series of fatal accidents involving minibuses and coaches carrying school children in 1993/4 and the ensuing outcry from both the media and the general public, the government announced new safety legislation. This introduced compulsory lap-belts for minibuses and coaches used for journeys to specifically transport children on organised trips, including journeys to and from school. All minibuses and coaches have had to comply with the regulations since 1 October 1988. The 'three-for-two' arrangement, whereby three children aged 13 and under could be counted as two passengers in calculation of the carrying capacity of vehicles carrying only school children and a limited number of adult attendants, was abolished with effect from May 1996 where seat belts were fitted. It is obviously impossible to wear seat belts if three children are sitting in seats meant for two people. This arrangement had been a cause for concern for parents for some time as it was felt that it led to overcrowding making bus travel less safe.

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In recent years there have been a number of other developments in central government policy which, whilst not directly aimed at school transport, must also be considered of relevance to it. Legislation has been introduced requiring authorities in urban areas to produce Air Quality Strategies – these will almost certainly have to include measures for reducing car use and hence parental escort journeys to school may well be targeted. The Road Traffic Reduction Act requires local authorities to set targets for reducing car use and once again the school journey will almost certainly be included. This follows on from the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report on 'Transport and the Environment' published in 1994, which set out a number of objectives for a sustainable transport policy and also set a number of targets which should be met in order to meet these objectives. The targets of most relevance to school transport include: increasing the proportion of passenger-kilometres carried by public transport, reducing the proportion of urban journeys by car, increasing cycle use and reducing pedestrian and cyclist deaths.

International legislation has given local authorities commitments under Local Agenda 21, as agreed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and in Kyoto in 1998. Local Authorities have an obligation to improve the environment and reduce pollution, to which the reduction in car traffic to and from school would make an important contribution.

Safe Routes to School was one of the policy initiatives promoted in the current Government's White Paper on the Future of Transport (DETR, 1998b) published in July 1999. This stated that 'policies will help reduce the need for children to be driven to school by encouraging safer routes for walking and cycling'. There were also a number of other initiatives listed which aim to encourage more children to get to school other than by car. These include the recent setting up of a School Travel Advisory Group (see 2.5.2 below) with Government departments, local authorities and others to lead dissemination of best practice and contribute to the development of policy. School journeys are also to be included in broader national awareness campaigns.

The White Paper also introduced changes to the way in which local authorities will receive funding to spend on transport projects. From 1999 onwards one-year TPPs are to be replaced by five-year Local Transport Plans. The *'Guidance on Provisional Local Transport Plans'* (DETR, 1999b) published in April 1999 asks authorities to set out an integrated strategy for reducing car use and improving children's safety on the journey to school, and to set out how they will work with individual schools to develop school travel plans. Local authorities are also expected to include separate targets for modal shift on school journeys and plans for monitoring progress.

Other Government departments are taking an increased interest in school travel issues. *'Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation'* (Department of Health, 1999), the Government's White Paper on health set targets for reducing the number of accidents. It mentions the Safer Travel to School initiative which will encourage more children to walk and cycle to school and emphasises the importance of providing children with the opportunity to learn how to make decisions for themselves and to undertake physical activity as part of their daily routine.

The Healthy Schools Programme, jointly led by the Department for Education and Employment and the Department of Health also supports the Safe Routes to School concept. One aspect of the Healthy Schools Programme is the Safe and Sound Challenge which invites schools to send in proposals for developing initiatives which encourage the safe use of alternative forms of transport to the car. Winning entries receive prizes of up to £6000.

In the Summer of 1999, DETR launched a pilot programme of site-specific advice for schools developing travel plans. This offered the opportunity for around 40 schools from around the UK to take advantage of free practical assistance in setting up and running a travel plan.

The latest policy development was the Government's road safety strategy published in March 2000 (DETR, 2000b). This includes several paragraphs on travel to school and sets out some of the disadvantages for children themselves of the increasing use of cars for the school journey. The document reiterates the Government's desire for schools to develop travel plans and for local authorities to consider using the powers they have to create 20miles/h zones around schools. It also mentions a desire to make it easier to travel to school by bus but does not set out how this might happen.

2.5.2 School Travel Advisory Group (STAG)

The Government established the School Travel Advisory Group (STAG) in December 1998 'to lead the dissemination of best practice and raise the profile of school travel issues; and to identify practical means of influencing behaviour and develop a coherent approach to school travel' (DETR, 2000a). Its members include representatives of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), the Department of Health (DH), the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), parents, teachers and governors; public transport operators; business; road safety, child health and school transport experts; and a range of local authorities from around the country. STAG would like to see a return by 2010 to the level of walking, cycling and bus use in the mid 1980s.

In its first year STAG has played an important role in raising the profile of school travel and its working groups have produced an extensive research programme. This includes a pilot scheme to test the effectiveness of providing initial site specific advice to a selection of schools and colleges as a means of encouraging them to implement school travel plans. The research programme also includes work to: quantify special education transport needs; increase bus use for the journey to school; investigate factors which are leading to increased school journey lengths; establish a website and database on classroom materials; and to monitor the overall take-up of school travel plans. STAG recently published a report detailing its recommendations for future action. These include:

- Improvements to school facilities, including lockers, secure cycle storage and bus bays;
- Better use of the resources already devoted to statutory school transport, including consideration of charging non-entitled children to use services provided for schools;
- Agreement on a voluntary minimum standard for child discounts on school and local buses;
- Specific initial and in-service training for bus drivers – including safety issues and dealing with child passengers;
- Providing children with the opportunity to develop the skills, understanding and awareness needed to behave safely and responsibly in traffic, whether as pedestrians, cyclists or passengers on public and private transport;
- Improved enforcement of speed, parking and other traffic regulations;
- Driver awareness programmes to reduce dangers to child pedestrians and cyclists;
- Joint planning – the inclusion of school travel issues in Health Improvement Programmes and Local Transport Plans;
- Rewarding teachers and other school staff involved in the development and implementation of School Travel Plans;

- Training school governors in school travel issues, including potential liability and insurance matters; and
- Encouraging school inspectors to recognise the contribution that school travel initiatives can make to raising standards in schools.

2.6 What other proposals might have an impact on school travel?

2.6.1 Changes to school hours and terms

The staggering of school hours was suggested by the Government Working Party set up to review school transport in 1972 (DES, 1973) as one means of reducing the cost of school transport. The Government Working Party advocating the staggering of school hours reported that in some areas the number of buses needed could be substantially reduced with just a slight alteration, of say 15 minutes, to the starting and finishing times of some of the schools.

An earlier study in Southampton (Walshe, 1970) concluded that 'a stagger by schoolchildren could have little to contribute towards the solution of the early morning bus requirements'. In this case a stagger by schoolchildren was considered to be relatively inefficient compared to a stagger by others since only 15 per cent of schoolchildren use the buses and their use of the buses did not coincide with the very busiest times. In addition, schools themselves would be very reluctant to accept any alteration to school hours.

Assuming that the staggering of school hours could provide sufficient cost savings in terms of bus operations to persuade local authorities to encourage schools to adopt such a system, then there are a number of issues that need to be considered. Parents who currently drop their children off on the way to work by car in the morning may no longer be able to do so if they are unable to alter their working hours. This may encourage such parents to send their children by bus instead or allow them to walk or cycle but it could simply result in extra car journeys being made if the second household car (where one is available) is now used to transport children to school.

There may also be educational benefits in altering the school day to start earlier since children are believed to be more alert in the morning, especially in warm summers.

The other argument in favour of altering school hours is that currently children travel to school during the morning rush hour when roads are at their busiest and most polluted. If school hours could be altered sufficiently that children travelled to school outside the rush hour, then not only would congestion be reduced but potentially children's exposure both to accidents and harmful pollutants could also be reduced. However, although the number of accidents is high during the morning peak their severity is usually low due to the low speed of congested traffic. Children travelling when the speed of traffic is higher may in fact be at greater risk. It would, therefore, seem that the main contribution that a change in school hours could make to improving safety would be by encouraging a change of mode away from the car. Further investigation is required into the extent of any change but there have been no major attempts to revise school hours since the proposals in the seventies. This is despite the fact that the 1988 Education Reform Act gave schools that opted out of local authority control the powers to determine their own starting and finishing times.

More recently, there have been proposals to change school terms and hours which have potential implications for the costs of school transport services and the likelihood of children being driven but which have not been put forward for transport reasons. Prompted by concerns about 'learning loss' over the long summer holiday, a small number of local authorities have been considering changes to the pattern of the school year and have proposed adopting a five term year. If some schools in an area change to the new system and others do not, it may be harder to co-ordinate routes that serve more than one school as the route may not always be required by both schools.

Depending on which new proposal is adopted, there may be an increase in the number of school days during the winter when there are fewer hours of daylight. This could lead to an increase in the overall amount of car use if parents are concerned about their children travelling alone in the dark. Alternatively, an increase in the number of school days in summer might have a positive effect in encouraging more walking and cycling.

In addition, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, has recently announced that he wants secondary school pupils to stay at school until 5pm to take part in music and sports activities and supervised homework and revision lessons. Such a change could potentially have a positive impact on car use for the school journey as it would reduce the need for children to take books home to do their homework, thus making it easier for them to walk or cycle. However, it would also mean that the journey home from school would coincide with the evening peak for commuting trips resulting in added congestion at that time if car use remains at current levels and a more concentrated demand for public transport services. There may be an increase in car use as there will be a higher number of days when it will be dark at the end of the school day.

2.6.2 Putting clocks forward by an hour

The issue of children travelling to and from school in the dark has been discussed in connection with proposals to put clocks forward by one hour all year round, known as Single/Double Summer Time (SDST). This has been suggested as a way of saving as many as two thousand road accident injuries a year (LTT, 1993). There were some concerns that, unless school hours were altered, many children would have to travel to school in the dark in winter, with a resulting increase in the risk of accidents at that time of day. This might discourage parents from allowing their children to walk or cycle to school. However, Hillman (1988) points out several factors which suggest that the clock change could have a positive impact on the safety of the school journey. His arguments include the fact that children are more likely to be taken to school by car than collected and that children tend to go straight to school whereas on the way home they are more likely to dawdle or go to other places. This suggests that safety improvements due to an increased hour of daylight on winter afternoons will more than offset the disbenefits of more dark mornings. In any case he points out that the three weeks of the Christmas holidays coincide with the darkest period of the year and he concludes that school hours could be set to minimise the amount of travel that needs to take place in the dark. Hillman argues that a combination of altering school hours and putting clocks forward one hour all year round could help reduce the number of school journeys which need to take place in the dark, thus reducing accidents for those walking and cycling and encouraging others to do so.

During the 'British Standard Time' (BST) experiment carried out in the UK between 1968 and 1971 clocks were not put back to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) in the autumn, thus matching the SDST proposal for part of the year. Broughton and Stone (1998) analysed accident data from this period to show that the BST experiment had a sizeable effect on road safety. The reduction in casualties in the lighter evenings exceeded the increase in the darker mornings so there was a net reduction in casualties. Broughton and Stone wanted to look more closely at the effect of light level on the accident rate so they used astronomical data to classify accidents according to whether they had occurred in daylight, twilight or darkness. They then went on to use this information and two very different statistical models to test the likely effects on road casualties of adopting SDST and concluded it would result in a clear reduction in the number of people killed in road accidents, particularly pedestrians.

2.6.3 Charging for school transport

Even before the recent education reforms there had been proposals for changing the system and Thornthwaite (1990) cites a number of arguments put forward in favour of charging for school transport. The cost of providing free school transport has risen dramatically since 1944. This is mainly due to factors such as the reorganisation of secondary schools in the comprehensive system and falling school rolls. These factors have led to fewer schools serving larger catchment areas, whilst at the same time the urban population has decentralised meaning that higher proportions of pupils are now entitled to free transport.

Another argument against the current system of provision is that it takes no account of the ability to pay, or of the costs incurred by parents living within the statutory walking distances of schools paying for transport. This is despite the fact that it is now widely recognised that three miles is an unrealistic distance for children to walk to and from school. There are a number of inequities in the current system of provision. The main one is that children living on one side of the cut off line and having to pay full fares may use the same bus stop as those living on the other side who are entitled to free school transport. There is also the inequity of free school transport provision for children attending single sex or denominational schools provided they live more than the walking distance from the nearest appropriate school.

Thornthwaite supports earlier calls (DES, 1973) in favour of charging for school transport at a flat fare rate. This would enable parents to exercise a far greater freedom of choice in selecting a school, since it would no longer be dependent on their ability to pay for transport costs as is currently the case.

Chapter 3 The current situation – how children travel to and from school

Summary

Over half of all 5–10 year olds walk to school and over a third are driven so the use of bus or other modes is very low. Both car use and walking are less common for secondary age pupils, who make much greater use of public transport. At primary school age female pupils are slightly more likely to be taken to school by car or to walk whilst male pupils are slightly more likely to travel by bus. The difference in car use at secondary school age is even more noticeable with 22 per cent of female pupils but only 18 per cent of males using the car for school journeys.

Both age groups are more likely to walk home from school in the afternoon than to school in the morning. Whilst almost a quarter of secondary school pupils are taken to school by car only 16 per cent are collected. For secondary school pupils local bus is the most common mode in rural areas – 35 per cent travel on local bus services with another 17 per cent on private hire vehicles. Walking accounts for only 17 per cent of secondary school journeys in rural areas compared to 47 per cent in the largest urban areas.

Household car ownership has a clear effect on the mode used to travel to school, particularly for primary school age pupils. Almost 80 per cent of 5–10 year olds walk to school in households without a car, compared to 30 per cent in households with two or more cars. It is interesting to note that walking is still the predominant mode of travel to secondary schools even in households owning two or more cars. However, at primary school level children from such households are more than twice as likely to be driven to school as to walk. Car use is highest in rural areas for all categories of car ownership.

In the national survey, only 14 per cent of pupils who attended schools which had a specially provided school bus service were driven to school compared to 31 per cent at schools which had a good public bus service. The majority of those who travelled by car to secondary schools with a specially provided school bus service lived within three miles of school and therefore would not have been eligible for free school transport. Car use was much higher among pupils not attending the nearest school (and who therefore would not be eligible for free school transport no matter how far away they lived) – 55 per cent compared to 23 per cent for other pupils.

Summary of the Current Situation

Car use for the school journey is:

- *Higher for primary school pupils than for secondary school pupils*
- *Higher for female pupils than for male pupils*
- *Is less for the journey home from school than the journey to school*
- *Is lowest in the largest urban areas*
- *Is highest in the most rural areas for all categories of car ownership*
- *Is highest in households owning two or more cars*
- *Is higher for children from single parent households with one car than for those from one car owning households where there are two parents*

Congestion and the school run

- *It is reported that education escort trips make up 20 per cent of the car driver trips on the road at the busiest part of the morning peak (08.50) during term-time*
- *Further analysis revealed that there is a 37 per cent reduction in car driver trips at peak times during the school holidays BUT*

- *Less than three-fifths of this reduction (55 per cent) is due to the absence of school escort journeys*
- *39 per cent of the trips removed are commuting/business or other work-related trips and 8 per cent are other escort trips and personal business trips.*
- *The average distance of education escort journeys by car (2.8 miles) is only around a quarter of the average distance for car driver commuting journeys (9.8 miles), which make a correspondingly larger contribution to the reduction in miles travelled during peak hours. There is a 26 per cent reduction in car miles during the am peak in August compared with June.*
- *69 per cent of the total mileage reduction is due to the reduction in commuting/business/work related trips and only 28 per cent to the reduction in education escort trips.*

3.1 What can we learn from the National Travel Survey?

3.1.1 Introduction

Data collected as part of the National Travel Survey (NTS) in 1995–97 was reviewed to provide an analysis of how a number of factors effect the way in which children travel to and from school. Although more recently published data is available, 1995–97 is the latest data set available in electronic format on which new analysis can be carried out. The sample analysed contains data from 23,167 individuals in 9,688 households. This includes a total of 3,463 children in the relevant age groups.

The analysis has focused on journeys that have an education purpose. These are defined as 'journeys made by school children or students to their schools or colleges'. The National Travel Survey defines a journey by both a **purpose from** and a **purpose to** variable. There is also a single journey **purpose** variable which is defined by what the person did at the **end** of a journey '(unless it was to return home or occasionally to return to usual place of work, in which case it was the activity from which they were returning)'. This means that if a child returns straight home from school the purpose would be defined as education, but if they visit friends on the way home from school the purpose would be defined as visit friends. Any analysis of education journeys based simply on the single purpose variable would not include these trips.

Therefore this analysis has been based on all journeys which have either a purpose from education or a purpose to education, to ensure that journeys in both directions are equally represented. As there are some differences between the mode used for the journey to school and the journey from school, a comparison of the two has also been included. Most of the analysis has been carried out with data on journeys to and from school combined in order to provide a sufficient sample size.

The analysis starts by looking at the school journey for all children but then concentrates only on children from car owning households in order to allow comparisons with the Omnibus data which includes only car owning households. In most cases the analysis has been undertaken separately for 5–10 year olds and 11–15 year olds. These age ranges were chosen as they correspond approximately with the age ranges of primary and secondary school pupils respectively. Most pupils transfer from primary to secondary school at age 11. This usually involves travelling to a different location, often further away and may therefore involve a change in the mode used for the school journey.

Before concentrating on the current situation it is useful to consider how the mode used for the school journey has changed over the past few decades. Table 3.1 uses information from the published NTS data to illustrate how car use for the journey to school has more than doubled since the 1970s. Until the mid 1980s more children travelled to school on public transport than by car. The fact that car now accounts for a far greater proportion of trips than public transport is due more to the increase in car

journeys than a decline in public transport use. Public transport use has decreased only slightly and car use has increased mainly at the expense of walking and cycling. Bicycle use for the school journey is now almost negligible and there has been a sharp decline in walking. However, it should be noted that walking is still the most common mode used for the school journey. Figure 3.1 shows the current mode split for the school journey.

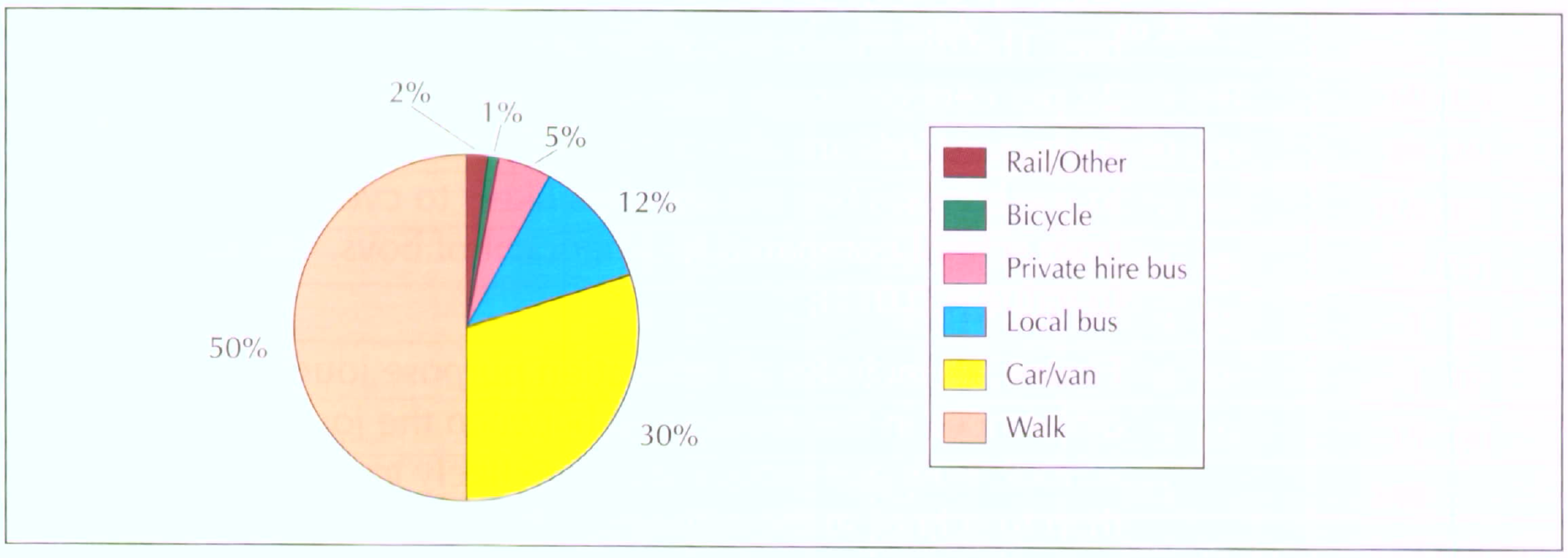
Table 3.1 Journeys to/from school by main mode – 5–15 year olds (%)

	1975–76	1985–86	1989–91	1993–95	1995–97
Walk	61	57	56	53	50
Car/Van	12	17	22	26	30
Public transport[1]	22	21	17	18	17
Bicycle	4	3	2	2	1
Other	1	2	2	2	2
All modes	100	100	100	100	100

Notes: [1] Public transport includes private hire bus and local bus.
Because of rounding up/down totals do not always add up to 100.

Source: NTS

Figure 3.1 Mode used for education purpose journeys – 5–15 year olds (1995–97)



3.1.2 All children

Table 3.2 shows a breakdown of the mode used for education purpose journeys by age and sex. It shows clear differences in the mode used for education purpose journeys by the two different age groups. There are smaller differences between male and female pupils. Over half of all 5–10 year olds walk to school and over a third are driven so the use of bus or other modes is very low. Both car use and walking is less common for secondary age pupils, who make much greater use of public transport. A quarter of secondary age pupils travel by local buses but cycle and rail use is very low for all age groups. These differences are illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Mode used for education purpose journeys by age

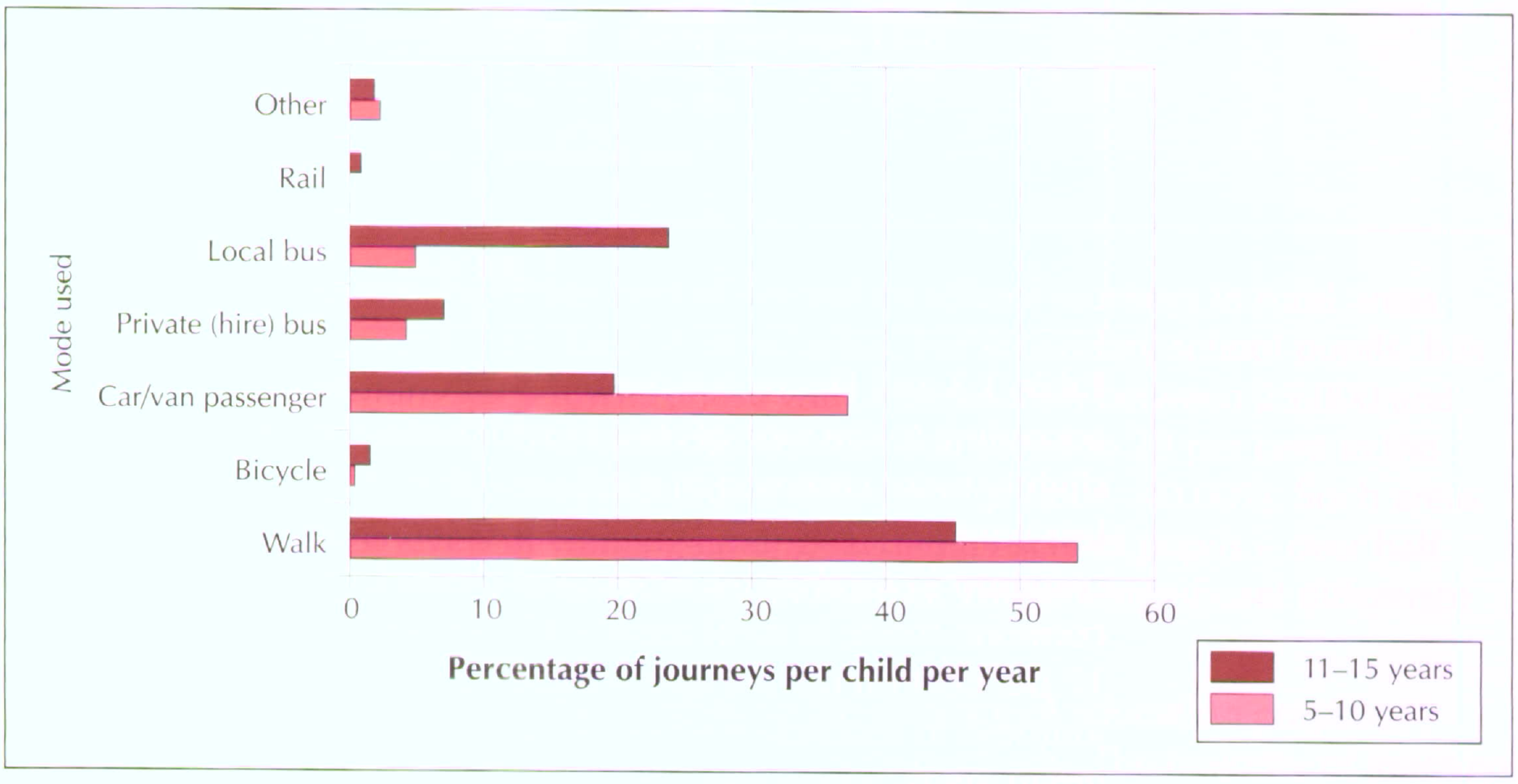
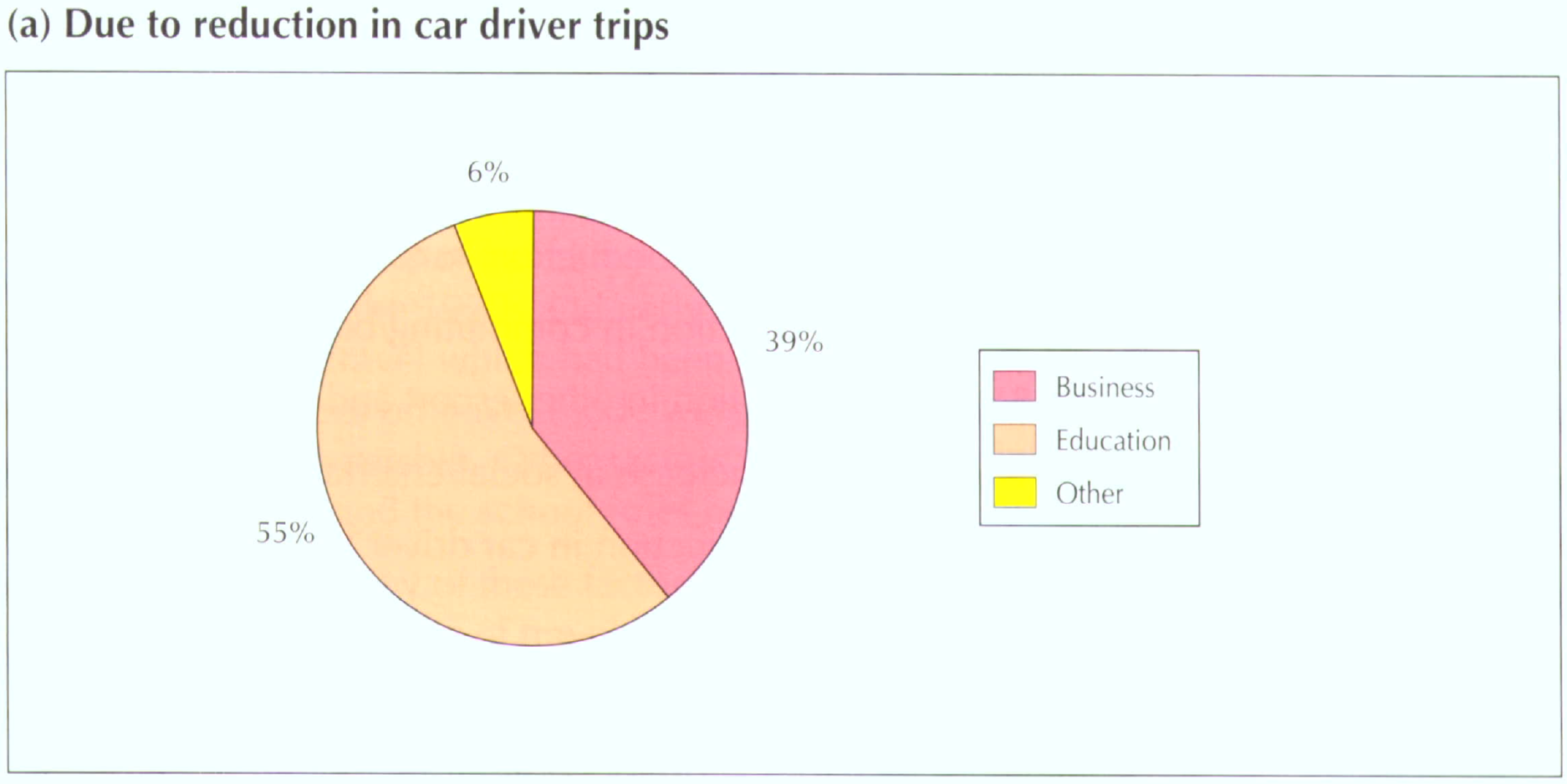


Table 3.8 Comparison of car driver journeys during the am peak (0800–0859, Monday to Friday) in June and August (journeys that month per 1000 respondents aged 17+)

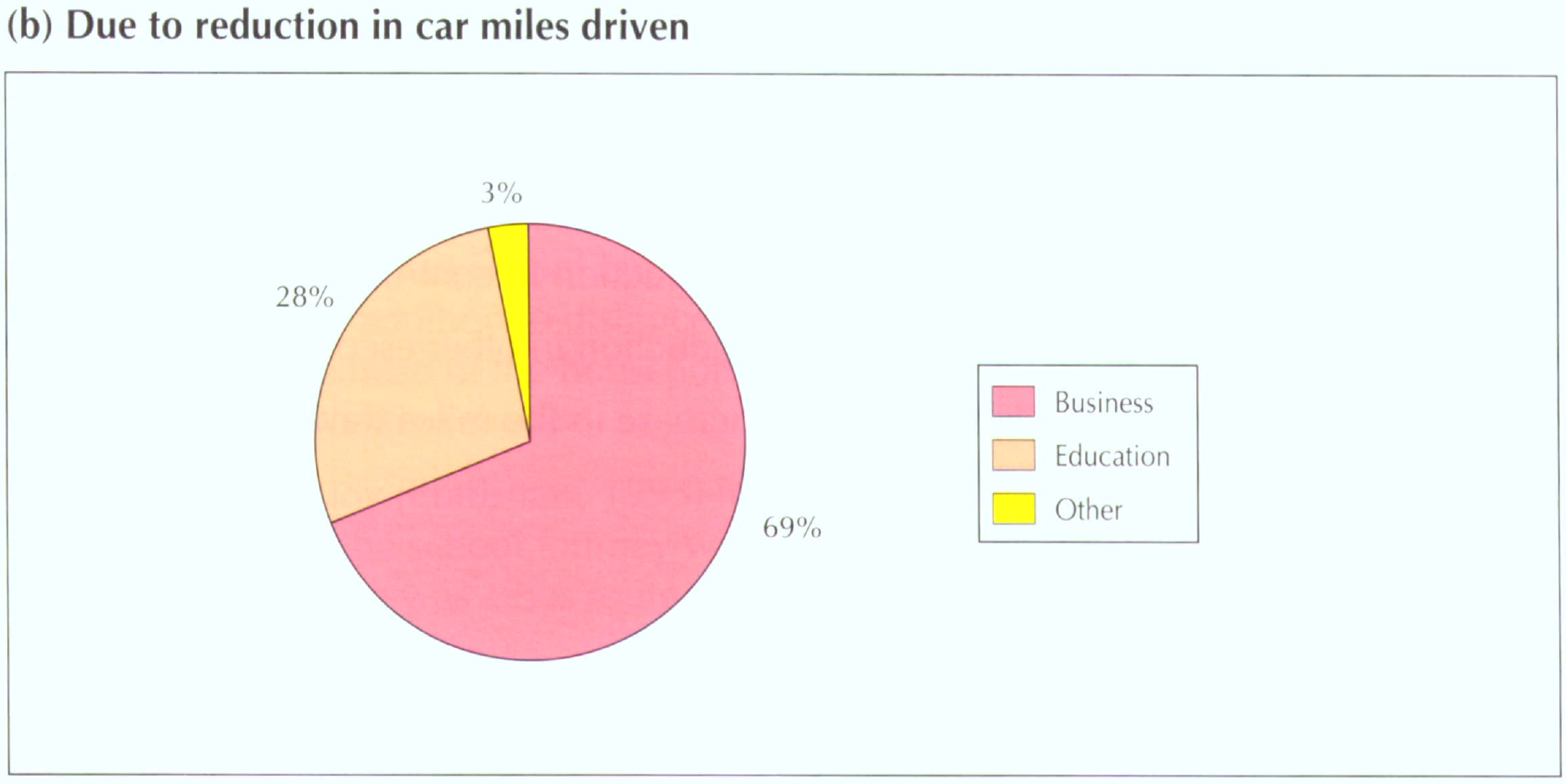
Purpose	Escort Education	Commuting	Business	Other Work	Escort Other	Shopping	Social/ Entertainment	Personal Business	Sport/ Other	Education	Total
A: June (n = 1499)	199	375	49	61	83	32	21	33	11	5	869
B: August (n = 1359)	19	280	43	38	72	32	30	18	10	5	548
C: Change in No. of Trips (B–A)	–180	–95	–6	–23	–11	0	9	–16	–1	0	–321
D: % change (C/A)	–90%	–25%	–12%	–38%	–13%	0%	41%	–47%	–3%	10%	–37%
E: % contribution to reduction	56%	29%	2%	7%	3%	0%	–3%	5%	0.1%	–0.2%	–
F: Av. Length (miles)	2.77	9.81	16.84	8.61	5.20	5.50	10.47	5.68	10.83	10.08	8.43
G: June Mileage (AxF)	552.5	3677.9	820.1	528.4	430.2	176.1	223.5	189.5	115.6	47.1	6760.9
H: August Mileage (BxF)	53.0	2750.3	718.7	329.4	375.0	176.1	315.9	100.3	111.6	51.9	4984.1
I: Change in Mileage (H-G)	–499.5	–927.7	–101.4	–199.0	–55.2	0	92.4	–89.2	–4.0	4.8	–1776.78
J: % change (I/G)	–90%	–25%	–12%	–38%	–13%	0%	41%	–47%	–3%	10.3%	–26%
K: % contribution to reduction	28%	52%	6%	11%	3%	0%	–5%	5%	0.2%	–0.3%	–

Figure 3.8 The contribution of different journey purposes to the reduction of peak congestion in August compared with June

(a) Due to reduction in car driver trips



(b) Due to reduction in car miles driven



3.4 What did our surveys tell us?

The national omnibus survey made it possible to investigate issues relating to escorting and children's travel which were not readily explored using the NTS data. Table 3.9 summarises how those responding travelled to and from school.

Table 3.9
Mode of transport* used to travel to and from school

	To school	From school
Walk – alone	7%	8%
Walk – with similar age	23%	24%
Walk – with adult	28%	28%
Bicycle	3%	3%
Lift from mother	22%	21%
Lift from father	10%	8%
Lift from other	5%	7%
Bus	16%	18%
Other	2%	2%
Total	476	476

*Respondents were asked to mention all forms of transport that are used regularly, that is, at least once a week, so the percentages do not sum to 100.

As might be expected from national figures there are some differences between the morning and the afternoon in terms of the modes used for the school journey, with walking and bus use being slightly more common for the journey home from school and car use less common. Overall, walking is the most common mode for the school journey – almost 60 per cent of pupils walk to school at least once a week. Thirty-seven per cent of pupils are given a lift to school one or more days a week, most commonly by their mother. Three per cent of pupils cycle to school at least once a week and 16 per cent use the bus. As this question gave respondents the opportunity to list all the different modes used at least once a week, it provides some indication of the proportions of pupils who regularly vary their travel mode to school. The totals sum to 116 per cent for the journey to school and 119 per cent for the journey home suggesting that less than a fifth of pupils regularly vary their travel modes for the school journey.

There were some big, if perhaps not always surprising, differences in the modes used by different categories of respondents. For example, 42 per cent of children from social class ABC1 were driven to school and 38 per cent were driven home but only 26 per cent of children from social class C2DE were driven either way. Whilst it is perhaps not surprising that children from ABC1 households are more likely to be driven it is interesting to note that this social class accounts for all of the difference in the amount of car use in the afternoon compared to the morning. This suggests that campaigns to discourage people from dropping their children at school on the way to work should be aimed at this group.

As might be expected, there were differences in car use related to levels of ownership – with 28 per cent of pupils from one car households driven to school but 43 per cent of those from households with two or more cars.

Children in Scotland were also less likely to be driven to school – only 22 per cent were ever driven compared to 34 per cent for England and Wales and there were big differences according to age with 43 per cent of primary school pupils but only 18 per cent of secondary pupils ever being driven.

Distance obviously made a difference too. Car use is higher for longer distances but, worryingly, a fifth of those who lived within half a mile of their school were given a lift

at least once a week. The highest level of car use was at distances between two and three miles when over half of pupils were driven. After this distance, car use declined and there was a much higher use of bus – 63 per cent of journeys over three miles were by bus compared to 36 per cent by car.

All those who live more than three miles from school (two miles for pupils under 8) and attend the nearest appropriate school are eligible for free school transport which probably explains the high use of bus at this distance. This idea is supported by the fact that only 14 per cent of pupils who attended schools which had a specially provided school bus service were driven to school compared to 31 per cent at schools which had a good public bus service. This suggests that it is not only the existence of public transport services but also the fact that they are provided specifically for pupils at that school which encourages their use. It is also likely that many of those with a specially provided school bus service will be eligible to use it free of charge if they live more than the statutory minimum walking distance to school. The numbers are too small to allow for a detailed disaggregation of the data. However, it does appear that the majority of those who travelled by car to secondary schools with a specially provided school bus service lived within three miles of school and therefore would not have been eligible for free school transport.

In the national survey car use was much higher among pupils not attending the nearest school (and who therefore would not be eligible for free school transport no matter how far away they lived) – 55 per cent compared to 23 per cent for other pupils. It was also higher among pupils not attending their first choice of school – 41 per cent of them travelled by car compared to 32 per cent of other pupils.

Interestingly, there were very high levels of car use (46 per cent) among pupils which attended schools where there was a ban on parents stopping at school gates to drop off/pick up children. This suggests that such bans may have been introduced to try and tackle problems of congestion outside the school in places were large numbers of pupils are driven to school. However, they are perhaps having a limited effect since a high proportion of parents are still choosing to drive to these schools.

It appears that the provision of measures or facilities related to transport such as those listed in the questionnaire does have some impact on car use for the school journey. Thirty-two per cent of pupils at schools which provide one or more measures are driven to school compared to forty-two per cent at schools which do not provide any.

Chapter 4 Family life and children's travel

Summary

Leisure journeys actually account for a much higher proportion of the total distance that children travel (and therefore probably the time they spend travelling) than the school journey suggesting there is a need to look beyond the 'school run' when examining children's travel. Car use for leisure purpose journeys is more than double that for education purpose journeys. In the national survey, 86 per cent of the pupils who attended organised activities were given a lift at least once a week and only 35 per cent ever walked to any of their activities. This suggests that, if the concerns about the school journey extend beyond traffic congestion to issues such as physical activity and independence, then more attention needs to be paid to the other journeys that children make.

Car drivers are more likely to make linked trips than non-car drivers. Overall more trips are linked to other purposes (such as shopping or leisure) than to commuting but men are more likely to go on to work than women.

There was a general feeling that children nowadays have far more opportunities to participate in lots of activities than their parents did, that this was due, at least in part to the car, and that many aspects of family life would be very difficult, or impossible, without a car. Parents also had some concerns about the impact that such high levels of car use might be having on their children. There was a general feeling that children's lives are a lot more organised now than they were when the parents themselves were children and that this involved a lot more driving. Recent research from the USA suggests that mothers spend more time driving than the average parent spends dressing, bathing and feeding a child.

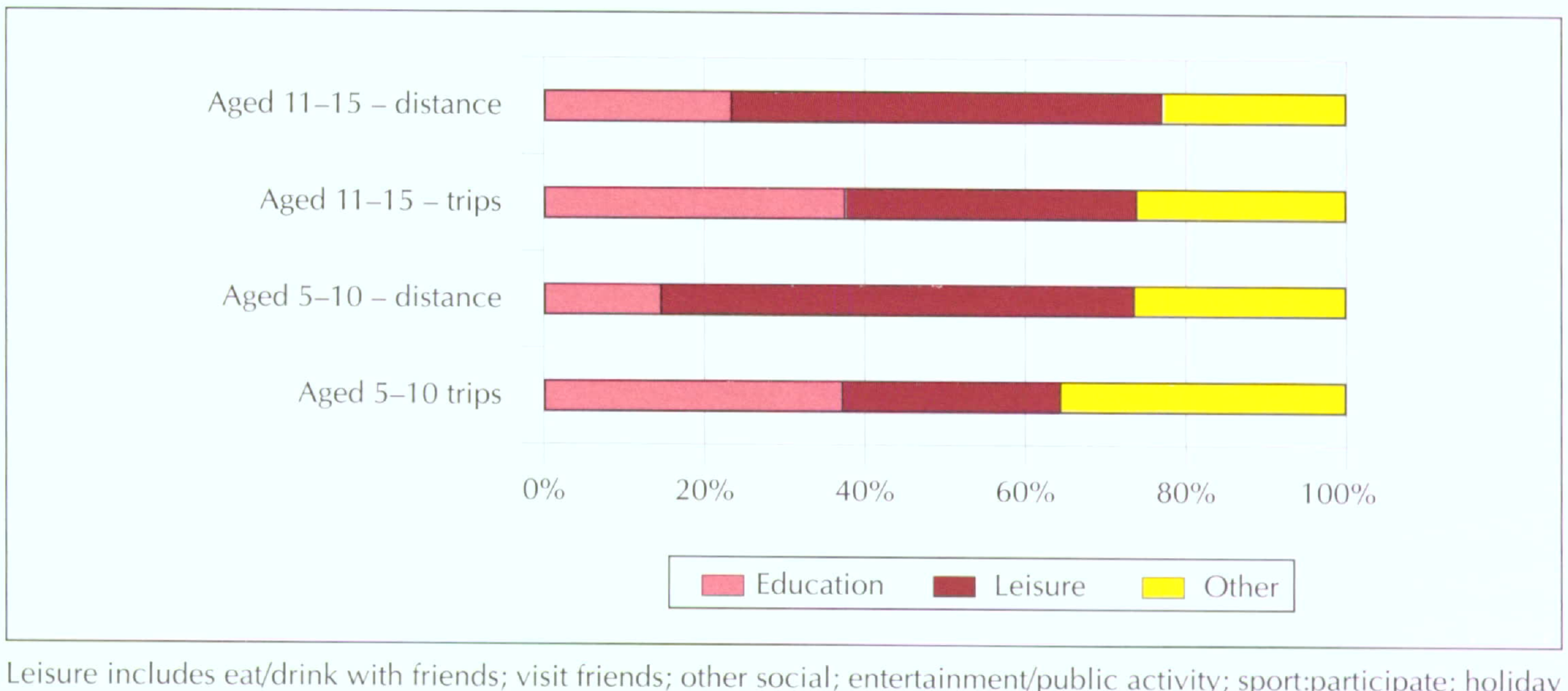
It was clear that in some households, very complex scheduling was needed to fit in all the journeys involved in accompanying children to and from several activities a week.

From the national survey it was clear that many people were choosing to travel further to school than they might really need to and this has implications for children's other journeys. In the household interviews, some of the parents were aware that the location of their children's friends and hence where they would choose to participate in social activities was influenced by their choice of school location. The parents in rural areas recognised that as their children got older the amount of chauffeuring they would have to do was likely to increase as they would need to be taken by car to most of the places they wanted to go. Many parents were choosing to live in less accessible areas even though they recognised the implications this might have for themselves or their children.

4.1 Children's travel

The school journey is obviously an important part of children's travel requirements since it is compulsory for children of school age to attend school. In fact a third of all journeys made by children are for education purposes as Figure 4.1 shows. However, children make about the same number of journeys for leisure purposes – this includes visiting friends and participating in sports and other social activities. As Figure 4.1 shows these leisure journeys actually account for a much higher proportion of the total distance that children travel (and therefore probably the time they spend travelling) suggesting there is a need to look beyond the 'school run' when examining children's travel. Some of this distance will no doubt be on outings when the whole family would travel together anyway but some of it will consist of travel to sport and other organised activities not too far from home. In fact, school age children travel almost three times as far on leisure journeys as they do on education purpose journeys.

Figure 4.1
Travel by school age children by purpose



Leisure includes eat/drink with friends; visit friends; other social; entertainment/public activity; sport:participate; holiday base; daytrip/just walk

Other includes commuting; business; other work; shopping; personal business; escort; other non-escort

Source: NTS 1995–97

Figure 4.2 uses National Travel Survey data to compare the number of journeys that children make by different modes for different purposes. This shows that car use for leisure purpose journeys is more than double that for education purpose journeys. There is correspondingly much less use of other modes and children therefore have even less opportunity for independent travel in their leisure time than they do on the school journey.

Figure 4.2
Children's use of different modes for education and leisure purpose journeys

See Figure 4.1 for definitions of 'leisure' and 'other'

Source: NTS 1995–97

4.2 Travel to other activities

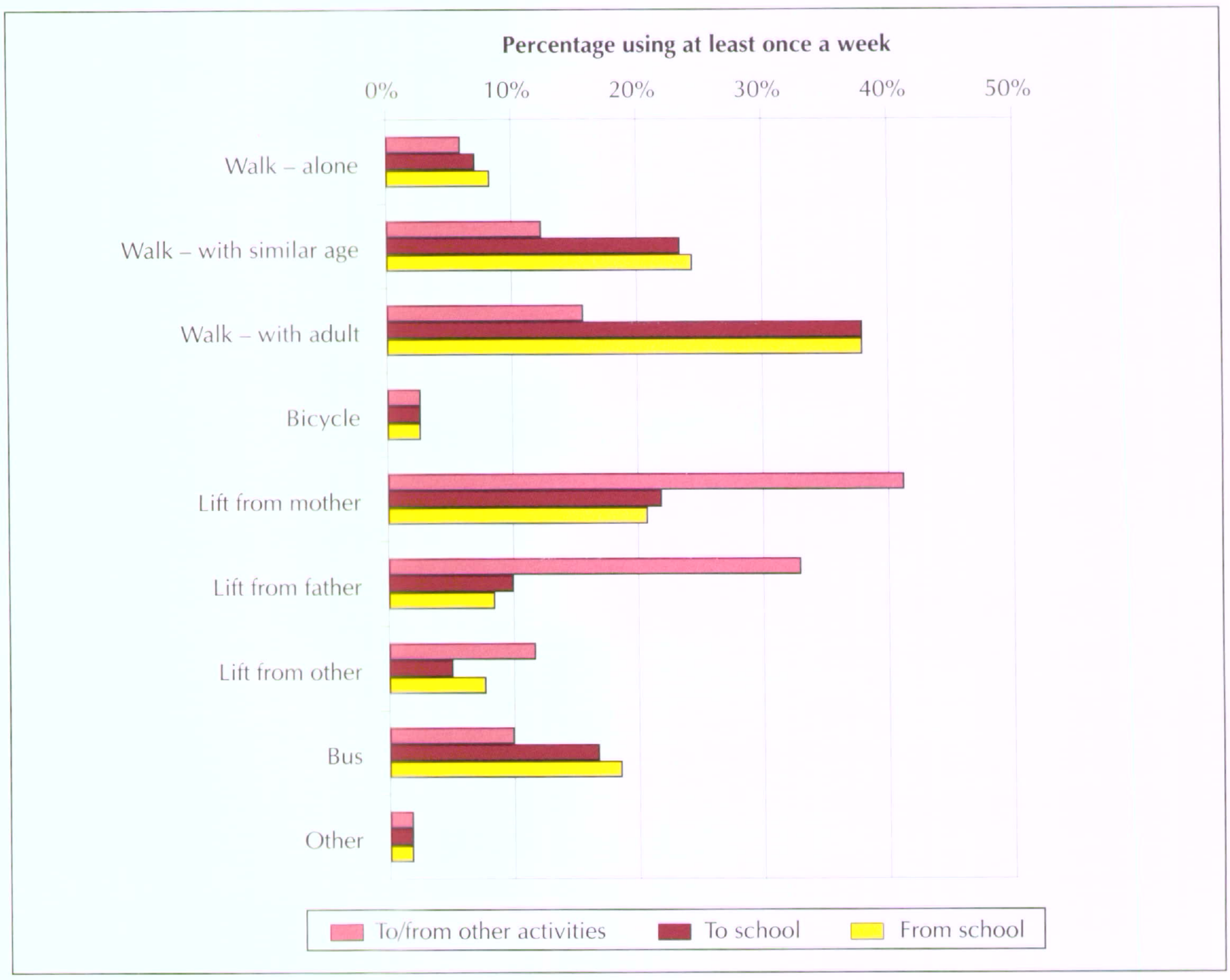
Respondents to the national survey were asked how often their child attends organised sport, leisure or social activities (e.g. sports clubs, dancing or music lessons, Scouts, Guides etc.) apart from those at school or during school hours. Their responses are shown in Table 4.1. Children from social class ABC1 were more likely to attend organised activities – only 26 per cent did not attend any compared to 38 per cent from social class C2DE.

Figure 4.3 uses data from the national survey to illustrate the extent to which children in car owning households rely on lifts to various organised activities.

Table 4.1
Frequency with which child attends organised activities outside school

	Total
Once a week or less often	27%
Twice a week	21%
3–5 times a week	17%
6 or more times a week	1%
Does not attend any	33%
Total	476

Figure 4.3
Travel to and from school and other organised activities



Source: National survey data

Although quite a lot of attention is being paid to the way in which children travel to school, it is clear from Figure 4.3 that car use to travel to and from other activities is even higher than it is for the school journey. Eighty-six per cent of the pupils who attended organised activities were given a lift at least once a week and only 35 per cent ever walked to any of their activities. Bus use was also lower than it was for school journeys – only 10 per cent of children in the sample ever travelled to any of their other activities by bus – but cycle use at 3 per cent was the same as for school journeys. This suggests that, if the concerns about the school journey extend beyond

traffic congestion to issues such as physical activity and independence, then more attention needs to be paid to the other journeys that children make. There are even greater levels of car dependency for such journeys than there are for the school journey. It is also interesting to note in Figure 4.3 that although the mother has greater responsibility for lifts on the school journey fathers get more involved in giving lifts to other activities.

Children from ABC1 households were more likely to be driven to their other activities – almost three-quarters of them were compared to 60 per cent from C2DE households. There were also differences related to car ownership – just over 60 per cent of children from one car households were driven to their other activities and almost three-quarters of those from households with two or more cars.

Table 4.2 provides details of the modes used for different journey purposes in one week for the 20 children from the households interviewed in Hertfordshire and Leeds. Although the numbers in some of the cells are very small, it is possible to compare the overall numbers of journeys by mode and purpose. The Hertfordshire children make a higher percentage of their trips by car – 83 per cent compared to 74 per cent for the Leeds children. (This difference is statistically significant, p value = 0.007). The remainder of the Leeds children's journeys are almost all on foot with this mode accounting for almost a quarter of their journeys compared to 11 per cent in Hertfordshire. (This difference is also statistically significant, p value = 0.001). However, the Hertfordshire children are slightly more likely to cycle or use the bus although the number of trips by either of these modes is very small. In terms of trip purpose, the Leeds children make more trips to visit friends and family or go shopping and fewer trips to sport and other organised activities.

Table 4.2
Journey purpose by mode (household interviews)

(a) for Hertfordshire children

	Car	Walk	Bike	Bus	Other	Total (%)
Home	99 (83%)	16 (13%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	–	120 (41%)
School	56 (98%)	–	–	1 (2%)	–	57 (20%)
Visit friends/family	14 (74%)	2 (11%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (11%)	19 (7%)
Shopping	14 (78%)	–	1 (6%)	3 (17%)	–	18 (6%)
Leisure	9 (69%)	2 (15%)	2 (15%)	–	–	13 (5%)
Sport	17 (85%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	–	20 (7%)
Other activities	14 (74%)	5 (26%)	–	–	–	19 (7%)
Other	11 (65%)	5 (29%)	–	1 (6%)	–	17 (6%)
Accompany parent	9 (100%)	–	–	–	–	9 (3%)
Total (%)	243 (83%)	31 (11%)	7 (2%)	9 (3%)	2 (<1%)	292

(b) for Leeds children

	Car	Walk	Bike	Bus	Other	Total (%)
Home	70 (69%)	29 (28%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	–	102 (41%)
School	42 (81%)	9 (17%)	1 (2%)	–	–	52 (21%)
Visit friends/family	15 (63%)	7 (29%)	–	–	2 (8%)	24 (10%)
Shopping	18 (69%)	8 (31%)	–	–	–	26 (10%)
Leisure	8 (73%)	2 (18%)	–	1 (9%)	–	11 (4%)
Sport	14 (9%)	1 (9%)	–	–	–	15 (6%)
Other activities	7 (88%)	1 (12%)	–	–	–	8 (3%)
Other	7 (88%)	1 (12%)	–	–	–	8 (3%)
Accompany parent	2 (100%)	–	–	–	–	2 (<1%)
Total (%)	183 (74%)	58 (23%)	2 (<1%)	3 (1%)	2 (<1%)	248

4.3 Links between adult escort trips and other types of journey

Dix and Read (1993) examined school travel in detail as part of the Wycombe Transportation Study following concerns raised during public consultation exercises about the traffic congestion associated with schools. Their surveys found that half of the primary pupils and a third of the secondary pupils in High Wycombe arrived at school by car and that the majority (64 per cent) of the car drivers who take secondary school pupils to school then go on to another location. Of these some 65 per cent (over 40 per cent of the total) go on to work, 33 per cent to another school and 3 per cent go shopping or visiting. A study in Leeds (Bradshaw, 1993) found that almost 60 per cent of parents continued on to work after dropping their child at school and the figures would suggest that only about a third to two-fifths of parents made a special journey just to take their child to school.

Interestingly, national statistics (DETR, 1998a) show a slightly different picture. Table 4.3 shows the destination of the next journey following escort education journeys. This indicates that a much higher proportion of adults undertaking education escort journeys return straight home afterwards.

Table 4.3 Purpose of next journey following escort education journeys, by sex

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Work or business	18	13
Escort education	0	3
Shopping	6	8
Personal business	0	2
Other	6	8
Home	67	67
Total	100	100
Journeys per person per year	16	59

Source: 1995–97 NTS

It should be noted that Table 4.3 includes all education escort journeys (i.e. not just car drivers). A more detailed analysis of the data is shown in Table 4.4. This shows that car drivers are more likely to make linked trips than non-car drivers. Overall, more trips are linked to other purposes (such as shopping or leisure) than to commuting but men are more likely to be going on to work than women.

Table 4.4 Purpose of next journey following am escort education journeys, by sex and car use

	Male (%)	Female (%)	All (%)
Car/van driver			
Work or business	19	18	19
Other (exec. Home)	16	26	23
Home	65	55	58
Total	100	100	100
Trips per person per year	*12*	*28*	*21*
Non car/van driver			
Work or business	15*	5	6
Other (exec. Home)	10*	17	17
Home	75	77	77
Total	100	100	100
Trips per person per year	*4*	*31*	*18*
All			
Work or business	18	12	13
Other (exec. Home)	14	22	20
Home	67	67	67
Total	100	100	100
Trips per person per year	*16*	*59*	*40*

* = very small sample size

Source: 1995–97 NTS data

The results of a recent study in Edinburgh (Hall, 1998) suggest that the morning school escort journey is more likely to be linked to other trips (57 per cent compared to 36 per cent in the afternoon). This study also found that the car was more likely to be used where the school escort journey was combined with another trip purpose – 46 per cent of linked trips in the morning were by car compared to 37 per cent of all the morning school escort journeys. This indicates the convenience of the car when carrying out more than one journey purpose in a trip-chain. Where the accompanying adult goes on to work, there is an even higher use of the car – 60 per cent of all such trips are by car.

This study found some clear differences between males and females in terms of their involvement in the school journey. Mothers carry out a greater proportion of school escort journeys than fathers (71 per cent compared to 12 per cent for the morning journey), are more likely to walk (56 per cent compared with 29 per cent of fathers) and are more likely to return home after dropping the child at school (45 per cent compared to 12 per cent of fathers). A high proportion of fathers (88 per cent in the morning) combine the school escort journey with another trip purpose – 75 per cent of these are going on to work. They are also more likely to use the car for the school escort journey (71 per cent compared to 42 per cent of mothers). In the afternoon, only 18 per cent of mothers' had come from work compared to 71 per cent of fathers. However, fathers only undertake 6 per cent of all escort journeys in the afternoon. Many of these differences can be explained by the fact that women are less likely than men to be in full-time employment.

Car ownership levels also make a difference to the proportion of trip-chains that are complex. (A complex trip-chain is one involving one or more trips e.g. 'home-school-work- home'). In one car households where the child is driven to school, 68 per cent of car journeys to school are complex compared to 82 per cent in households with two or more cars. A higher percentage of the complex trip chains in two car households include work. Households where both parents are working are likely to have higher income levels and therefore be more likely to own two or more cars which may partly explain the greater levels of complex trip chaining in two car households.

4.4 The role of the car in family life

4.4.1 Importance of car ownership and use

Several of the participants in the household interviews mentioned the fact that having to complete the diary made them realise how much they use the car. Few of them made any long trips but many tended to make lots of short trips to take children to and from school and other activities, to go to the shops and to visit people in the local area. This meant that some parents were doing a lot of mileage each week.

'It probably adds up, about 6,000 a year. I probably only go a five mile radius but there's a lot of journeys.' (HRP5)

'Just over 200 miles a week...most of the mileage is chauffeuring really.' (HMS3)

'I'm sure we spend a fortune on petrol on just lots of really short journeys.' (LCS2)

There were some differences between the views of the parents interviewed in Hertfordshire and those interviewed in Leeds as to whether or not it was possible to survive without a car. This might be expected given that the options for using alternatives were more limited in Hertfordshire particularly for those at the village school. Most of the Leeds parents had experienced periods of their adult life when they did not have a car for various reasons and knew that they could cope without one. However, they were just as likely to suggest that their children's quality of life would be affected if they did not own a car now. There was a general feeling that children

nowadays have far more opportunities to participate in lots of activities than their parents did, that this was due, at least in part to the car, and that many aspects of family life would be very difficult, or impossible, without a car.

'...you learn to manage really well when you haven't got the car but I think like most people when you've got it, you do use it.' (LCS2)

'Now we're geared up to the car really. We wouldn't be able to take on all the things we do, if they had to do it by a slower means of transport.' (HMS3)

It was evident that many of the participants felt that having a car allowed them to provide their children with opportunities that they did not have at the same age, particularly the opportunity to participate in activities outside school. However, whilst there was a clear recognition that there were many positive aspects to car ownership and that quality of life might be reduced without a car, parents also had some concerns about the impact that such high levels of car use might be having on their children. These were discussed in Chapter 2.

In the household interviews, the amount of time spent accompanying children to other organised activities was particularly an issue for the parents in Hertfordshire. Their expectation that children should join in lots of organised activities seemed to be much higher and the options even for older children travelling unaccompanied were more limited. There was a general feeling that children's lives are a lot more organised now than they were when the parents' themselves were children and that this involved a lot more driving. Various explanations were offered as to why children participated in so many activities.

'They get encouraged to do all sorts of things and it's very hard, you can't say no because you feel you're holding them back. So it's outside pressure, it's not necessarily pressure from us as parents, it's pressure from clubs and teachers outside encouraging them on.' (HRP2)

'These things are all suddenly made available for your children to do and...it's there so they want to do it. ...There's this 'all my friends are doing it' thing and in fact all their friends probably are and so, of course, they want to do it, so then you feel guilty if you don't let them do it.' (HRP5)

4.4.2 Impact on the parents

One parent considered herself to be lucky because her daughter did not currently expect to be taken to and from lots of activities.

'She's not fussed about doing anything at the moment so I have it relatively easy...some parents are charging here, there and everywhere.' (HRP1)

In other households, where children participated in lots of activities, parents (usually the mother) spent a lot of time escorting them. They sometimes felt that this had impacts on other aspects of family life or their own lifestyle. For the most part such impacts seemed to be accepted in good nature as part of modern parenting but some parents suggested that perhaps their children took the availability of lifts too much for granted. There was little evidence to suggest that parents resented this and a suggestion that those who lived in rural areas viewed this as part of the price they paid for choosing to live where they did.

'Between 3.15 and 7 o'clock I'm a chauffeur. It's nightmarish, I don't even actually have time to feed them these days.' (HRP2)

'...because I'm not working [daughter] thinks I'm just here now to chauffeur her and her friends about.' (HMS2)

'...we hardly have time for our lives because their social lives seem to take over life...Unfortunately, if you live somewhere like this you have to decide that if you're going to live here then when your children want to do something you've got to be prepared to take them.' (HRP5)

Recent research from the USA (Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1999) suggests that mothers spend more time driving than the average parent spends dressing, bathing and feeding a child.

Almost a quarter of parents contacted for the national survey agreed with the following statement: 'I spend too much time chauffeuring my child to school and other activities and I'd like him/her to be more independent so that I could have more time for myself.' Since almost 70 per cent of parents disagreed with this statement it would seem that the majority of parents who drive their children to school and other activities are quite happy to give up their time to do this.

It was clear from the household interviews that some parents actually quite enjoyed certain aspects of their role as chauffeur.

'It's not as bad as it sounds really because in between me driving, if I'm forced to stay there I get to read the newspaper for half an hour or whatever.' (HRP2)

Others did try to limit their children's activities because of the impacts on themselves and the children.

'I'm quite strict on running around an awful lot in the week....they're tired and it gets to a point where I'm just exhausted.' (HRP3)

Travel was rarely a consideration when choosing the location of particular activities. Often other factors, such as the recommendation of a particular teacher, were more important, but there were some examples where parents had chosen particular locations which would reduce the impacts on themselves.

'Her friend going was a consideration because it meant we could share the driving because her friend is there as many nights as she is.' (HRP2)

4.4.3 Scheduling activities

It was clear that in some households, very complex scheduling was needed to fit in all the journeys involved in accompanying children to and from several activities a week. This was particularly the case when there were several children in the household who each take part in lots of activities.

'I have a timetable for the term to make sure it works because I have to get a meal in somewhere as well.' (HMS3)

In some cases this involved liasing with other families too.

'It's not just [husband] and me either. It's my friend and her husband because she has three children who do just as much as mine but often at the same place. At the beginning of each week we have a conference call and we work out who's doing what, where, when and why...and how we can help each other out...it's a necessity I'm afraid because I don't think I could manage it all on my own.' (HRP2)

4.5 Locational decisions

4.5.1 School

Table 4.5 shows that the majority of the children in the national survey lived very close to school, particularly in Scotland where over half lived within half a mile of their school and almost three-quarters lived within a mile. However, at the other end of the scale the proportion of pupils travelling over 5 miles to school in Scotland was almost twice that in England and Wales. Only 38 per cent of pupils in England and Wales lived within half a mile of school but over half lived within a mile.

Table 4.5
Distance to school

	Scotland	England and Wales	Total
Less than half a mile	55%	38%	39%
1/2 up to 1 mile	19%	25%	25%
Over 1 mile up to 2 miles	5%	13%	13%
Over 2 miles up to 3 miles	7%	9%	9%
Over 3 miles up to 5 miles	2%	8%	7%
Over 5 miles	12%	5%	6%
Don't know	–	1%	1%
Total	73	403	476

As might be expected, primary school age children were more likely to live very close to their school than secondary school age children. Overall, 77 pr cent of five to ten year olds and 45 per cent of eleven to fifteen year olds in this sample lived within half a mile of their school. Both of these figures are higher than those from National Travel Survey data (58 per cent and 33 per cent respectively) which suggests that for some reason this sample is biased towards pupils who live nearer to school.

Despite this almost a third of the respondents said that the school their child attended was not the nearest for a child of that age. Children in Scotland were more likely to be attending their nearest school – 86 per cent of them were compared to 67 per cent in England and Wales. Older children were also slightly more likely to be attending their nearest school – 70 per cent of 11–15 year olds were compared to 67 per cent of 5–10 year olds. As might be expected over 90 per cent of those travelling less than half a mile to school but only a third of those travelling over 2 miles were attending the nearest appropriate school.

Around two-fifths of the English pupils attended schools in large towns or cities (15 per cent in the central areas and 27 per cent in the suburbs) and around a quarter each in medium sized towns and small towns/large villages (see Table 4.6). In contrast, only around a quarter of Scottish pupils attended schools in large towns or cities and two-fifths were in medium sized towns. These differences reflect the fact that there are fewer large urban areas in Scotland. Only a very small proportion of pupils overall attended schools in rural areas. This is probably because there are few schools in rural areas and even where people live in rural areas they are likely to travel into the nearest town or large village to attend school. In fact none of the journeys over 5 miles in this sample were to rural schools but 70 per cent were to schools in medium sized towns or small towns and large villages which would support this idea. Almost all of those attending schools in rural areas were attending the nearest appropriate school compared to less than 60 per cent in the largest urban areas.

Table 4.6 Location of child's school

	Scotland	England and Wales	Total
Large town/city central (pop. Over 250,000)	8%	15%	14%
Large town/city suburban (pop. Over 250,000)	18%	27%	27%
Medium sized town (pop. 25,000 to 250,000	41%	27%	28%
Small town/large village (pop. 3,000 to 25,000)	29%	26%	26%
Rural area	3%	5%	5%
Total	73	403	476

The majority of the children in the national survey (85 per cent) were attending their first choice of school, 12 per cent were not and in 3 per cent of cases the respondent did not know. The proportion of children attending their first choice of school in Scotland was higher than in England and Wales – 94 per cent compared to 84 per cent. There were also variations with distance with 92 per cent of those living within half a mile of school but only about three-quarters of those travelling over two miles to school, attending their first choice of school.

It was clear that many people were choosing to travel further to school than they might really need to. A quarter of those attending their first choice of school had chosen a school other than the nearest appropriate one. Around 70 per cent of those who had not got their first choice of school were travelling to a school other than the nearest appropriate one. It is not entirely clear whether this was because they were unable to get a place at the nearest school or because their subsequent choice was also a school other than the nearest but Table 4.7 does give some indication of the reasons for choosing a particular school.

Almost half of those who were attending their first choice of school said that the school's proximity to home was a factor which influenced their choice of school. This contrasts with the fact that around three-quarters of those who were attending their first choice of school were also attending the nearest school to home suggesting that although many pupils do choose to attend their nearest school there are other factors which influence the choice of school. One of the most important of these is clearly the school's reputation. This was cited by 44 per cent of those attending their first choice of school and was even more important for those who had not been able to get a place at their child's first choice of school. Almost 60 per cent of these respondents cited the school's reputation as a factor which influenced their first choice of school, making it

the most important factor for this category of school and far more important than any of the other factors. However, 53 per cent of those not attending their first choice of school also gave the school's reputation as a factor which applied to the school their child now attends. This suggests that even though they have failed to get the child into their first choice of school they have still managed to get them into a school with a good reputation and transport considerations are less important.

Table 4.7 Factors that influence school choice according to preference

	Child is attending first choice of school	Child is not attending first choice of school	
	School they attend	First choice school	School they attend*
Nearest school to home	47%	18%	14%
School's reputation	44%	58%	53%
Within walking distance	35%	19%	30%
Brothers/sisters there	19%	8%	9%
Other children in area travel there	10%	6%	3%
Special facilities available	7%	11%	17%
Religious preference	7%	3%	3%
Direct bus available	7%	4%	7%
On parent's route to work	2%	3%	–
Wanted private education	2%	–	3%
Other factor	6%	5%	1%
Total	422	54	54

*3% of those who did not get a place at their first choice of school said that the only reason they attend their current school is because there were no places available at their school of first choice.

Table 4.8 shows a comparison of the factors that influenced school choice for pupils in Scotland compared to those in England and Wales. This includes both the factors cited by those attending their first choice of school and the factors given for their first choice of school by those who did not get into that school. From Table 4.8, it is clear that the school's proximity to home and whether or not brothers and sisters or other local children travel there are less important factors in Scotland than in England and Wales. Whether the school is within walking distance and the availability of a direct bus route are more important factors in Scotland than in England and Wales. There appears to be some contradiction between the proportions citing 'nearest school to home' and those citing 'within walking distance'. However, this could be accounted for by the fact that people may be willing to send their child to a school other than the nearest as long as it is within walking distance.

Table 4.8 Factors that influence school choice according to area

	Scotland	England and Wales	Total
Nearest school to home	23%	48%	46%
School's reputation	46%	43%	43%
Within walking distance	43%	33%	34%
Brothers/sisters there	10%	19%	18%
Other children in area travel there	8%	10%	9%
Special facilities available	3%	8%	8%
Religious preference	7%	7%	7%
Direct bus available	14%	6%	6%
On parent's route to work	–	3%	2%
Wanted private education	1%	2%	2%
Other factor	1%	6%	6%
Total	73	403	476

The age and sex of the child also had a slight influence on the factors chosen with school's reputation being the most important factor at secondary level and for boys but the proximity of school to home being the most important factor for primary pupils and girls. For those travelling less than half a mile to school, the school's proximity to home was also more important than its reputation.

In the household interviews, the distances travelled to the Hertfordshire schools tended to be longer than to the schools in Leeds where most of those interviewed lived within two miles of school. Several of those at the village primary school were travelling five or more miles and had chosen it over other nearer schools because it had a very good reputation. One indicated that they had considered the travel implications when choosing the school but the general view was that the quality of the school compensated for the extra travelling involved.

'I really had to think very hard because I knew it was going to be a long drive every day and I knew there was no public transport so it was down to me and could I do it...but actually the advantages of having the children in such a brilliant school far outweighed everything else. We'd be prepared to pay the taxis each day if necessary.' (HRP2)

Some parents were aware that the location of their children's friends and hence where they would choose to participate in social activities was influenced by their choice of school location.

'....because we don't go to the village school and the children don't have activities in the village, they don't know anyone. All their friends are to do with [school they attend]...they have no desire to join anything in this village' (HRP1 – lives in another village about five miles from HRP).

In one case, the second daughter in the family had wanted to choose a different secondary school from her older sister but it was several miles from home in the opposite direction to her sister's school. Her mother was not keen on any of her children using public transport and would not have been able to fit in both secondary schools as well as taking her youngest child to primary school so she considered there to be no other option but for both older girls to attend the same secondary school.

4.5.2 Home

Respondents to the national survey were asked about the extent to which they had considered the availability of good schools when choosing their home location. Their responses, shown in Table 4.9, reveal some quite noticeable differences between Scotland and the rest of the country. Almost 60 per cent of respondents in England and Wales said that the availability of good schools was either extremely or fairly important when choosing their home location compared to only just over 40 per cent in Scotland. Fourteen per cent in England and Wales and 31 per cent in Scotland said that the availability of good schools was not very or not at all important. In both cases over a quarter of respondents said that this factor was not relevant at the time they choose their home. Unfortunately, the limited space on the questionnaire did not allow any further detail to be collected here so there is no information on how long people had lived at that address. It was therefore impossible to know whether people felt it was not relevant because their children were not of school age when they moved or because they did not have any children at the time. It would be interesting to know how many of those answering not relevant already had children (or planned to do so) to see whether the issue really was not relevant or just not considered.

Table 4.9 Importance of good schools when choosing home location

	Scotland	England and Wales	Total
Extremely important	19%	30%	29%
Fairly important	23%	29%	28%
Not very important	22%	9%	10%
Not at all important	9%	5%	5%
Not relevant at the time	27%	28%	27%
Total	73	403	476

In the household survey, interviewees were asked whether they had considered the availability of schools and other activities for children when choosing their home. Most of the parents in Leeds had considered the fact that there were schools within walking distance so that they would be able to walk if the car was not available and their children would be able to become more independent as they got older.

'I did want to be able to walk if I didn't have a car or anything...' (LCP5)

The parents in rural areas recognised that as their children got older the amount of chauffeuring they would have to do was likely to increase as they would need to be taken by car to most of the places they wanted to go. One parent even welcomed this as a way of keeping a check on what her children were up to.

'We do have a concern as to when they're older and what there is for them in this immediate area...there isn't so we're going to become much more of a taxi service than we are already...' (HRP1)

'...at least we still have some control over who they see and what they're doing really....we have to have the control because we're driving.' (HRP3)

Many of those in more built up areas felt that their children would be able to make more of their journeys independently once they reached a certain age.

One of the Leeds secondary school parents who currently lived several miles away was just about to move closer to the school. One of the main reasons for this move was so that her daughter would be able to walk to school and to friends' houses in the area. At the moment the daughter does not have any friends locally and has to be taken by car if she wants to visit her friends near school. Her mother recognises that the change of location will have advantages for both of them.

'I'll actually be glad when she doesn't need me to take her because it's a bind.....I think she gets fed up of having to wait for me to take her everywhere as well.' (LCS3)

One of the parents at the village school was currently looking for a new house because they wanted something larger but less expensive which would probably involve moving to a different area. They were trying to link this with when their children needed to change schools but other than that they had not considered how their choice of location might influence their children's journey to school.

'We're just trying to get our basics sorted out, how they get to school is going to be another problem.' (HRP4)

Several of the Hertfordshire parents cited cost as being a significant factor in their choice of home location with properties in rural areas being much cheaper than ones of a similar size in many of the towns in the area. This meant that many parents were choosing to live in less accessible areas even though they recognised the implications this might have for themselves or their children.

'We looked for a house in [town] where it would have been easier for the kids to have travelled...to what they've got to do but we couldn't find anything we wanted at the right price.' (HRP5)

'..buying in [town] proved a real problem and housing [here] tended at the time to be an awful lot cheaper.....there were about three houses we could afford in [town] that were big enough for us when we looked.' (HMS3)

'....it would be very difficult for us to afford a house [in town], it's very, very expensive...but no, they're stuck, wherever they go, they have to be taken...if their friends want to come I pick them up because it's not fair on their friends' parents to cart them all the way out to our village....they're very isolated really.' (HMS4)

The influence of cost on home location is very interesting in the light of a recent *Guardian* article (Coughlan, 1999) which suggests that a school with a good reputation can add 10-15% to property prices in the area. If this is true, it has implications for a wide range of different issues not only in terms of transport but also in terms of social inclusion policies and access to education.

4.5.3 Workplace

Another locational issue related to where those parents with jobs worked. One parent in Leeds who had continued working in another town even after they moved away, stressed the difficulties of finding employment which could be combined with family responsibilities.

'Because of being a working mum, they fit in really nicely with my hours, they let me start at half-past nine, they let me finish at half-past two on my half day. They let me do twenty hours a week. I don't think I could go to another employer and get that and they're pretty good if it's school sports day they'll let me swap around.' (LCP1)

Another mother felt she was unable to move jobs because her children went to school in the town where she worked. If she was no longer able to give them a lift on her way to work they would be unable to travel in easily from the village where they lived.

'...I can't get another job. I have to stay working where I am to ferry them backwards and forwards...' (HMS4)

There was another example in Leeds of a child being sent to a school in another town, at least in part, because her mother worked in that town and so would be able to give her a lift. However, in this case, there were better opportunities to use public transport if the lift was no longer available.

Chapter 5 Why do parents take their children by car?

Summary

Women are more likely to be responsible for ensuring that children get to school and on time than men. The growth in two and more car households over the past decade has increasingly meant that more women have access to a car. There is also increasing evidence that there may be pressure among parents to be seen to be escorting their children to school. Another aspect of modern lifestyles which may have an important bearing on some parents' decisions to drive their children to school is the decline of geographically close-knit kinship networks.

Often parents' views on whether they would let their child walk to school and to other places were influenced by whether or not they were walking with someone else and who that someone else was. The 'walking bus' was felt to be an excellent idea for primary pupils, but most felt that it was not appropriate for secondary age pupils and several parents could see potential problems. Another issue raised in connection with walking was that the children themselves had become so accustomed to going everywhere by car that they really did not like walking and it was hard to persuade them to do so.

On the whole cycling was viewed as being very dangerous due to the levels of traffic on the roads. Another problem with cycling was the difficulty of transporting bags and equipment needed for various activities at school. Where bus services were available they were sometimes viewed as being unsuitable for various reasons, such as the behaviour of other children on the bus, the attitude of bus drivers or simply the cost. Several parents expressed reservations about the feasibility of car sharing, particularly given the need to combine the school run with other commitments.

It was clear from the household interviews that there is a whole range of factors which influence the decision to drive a child to school. Some parents described how the presence of pre-school age children could sometimes limit the options available by making it more difficult to walk. Other parents described the difficulties of having children at two different schools some distance apart. The speed and convenience of the car was cited by many of the respondents but it was particularly important for those parents who had to balance family responsibilities with a job.

In the household interviews there were some parents, even of secondary school age pupils, who emphasised concerns about safety when describing their reasons for driving. Opinions were divided as to whether children were more at risk from traffic or from abduction by strangers. In the national survey, there was clearly greater concern about traffic than there was about strangers with 27 per cent citing traffic danger as the bigger concern and only 13 per cent stranger danger. Where there were specially provided school bus services respondents were more likely to say that they were not concerned about either traffic or strangers – 28 per cent said this compared to 15 per cent from schools with a good public bus service. Only 19 per cent of pupils from households where neither traffic or strangers were a concern were driven to school compared to around a third from other households.

5.1 Changes in society

The literature review identified various ways in which changes in society and the resulting impacts on family life may be influencing the mode used for the school journey.

The growth in two and more car households over the past decade has been associated with the sharp rise in education escort trips by car (DETR, 1998a). Women are more likely to be responsible for ensuring that children get to school and on time than men (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Carter, 1997; Dixey, 1998) and second car ownership has meant that more women have access to a car, giving them the opportunity to drive their child to school.

There is also increasing evidence in the literature that there may be pressure among parents to be seen to be escorting their children to school. Dixey (1998), for example, cites a study in which this was seen as a sign of 'good parenting'. Parents largely feel that the environment has become more hostile since their own childhood (Lee and Rowe, 1994). Contemporary parents claim that they impose more severe restrictions on their children's use of public space than they experienced during their own childhood, because of fears for their children's safety. Despite the evidence of research showing that 65 per cent of parents were aware that the probability of their child being snatched is low or fairly low, they chose to restrict their children's play in public space because the potential consequences of not doing so are so horrific that they are not prepared to take even a low risk (Valentine, 1996).

Rather than trying to supervise their children's outdoor activities, the literature suggests that parents are increasingly encouraging children to spend their time either in the home with friends or taking part in activities organised by adults in order to have more control over their safety (Wyness, 1994, Buchner, 1990). This seemed an acceptable price to pay for keeping some control over their children and discouraging them from engaging in activities that they had little knowledge of.

> *The street, if you like, was brought into the home where parents were able to keep an eye on who their children were associating with* (Wyness, 1994, p. 206)

It has also been noted that many parents accede to their children watching more television than they would like as a compensation for the loss of independent mobility beyond the home (Hillman, Adams, and Whitelegg, 1990).

An aspect of modern lifestyles which may have an important bearing on some parents decisions to drive their children to school is the decline of geographically close-knit kinship networks. Families are more spatially separated than in previous generations when parents could rely on grandparents and other families members for direct support. There is some evidence of a decline in some residential areas of social support networks. In Zurich, research noted the lack of social support, particularly parents knowing few other adults in their neighbourhood including potential people to act as child-minders (Huttenmoser, and Degen-Zimmermann, 1998), and so also the opportunity for, at the least, shared trips for school journeys.

Comments made by several of the parents in the household interviews reiterated this idea of society having changed since their own childhood, and that this therefore made it necessary for them to drive their children to school and that the use of alternative modes was more difficult. It was felt that in the past other people in the community were more likely to be keeping an eye on unaccompanied children and that parents used to have more time to accompany their children if they still felt the need to.

'In the old days if you walked to school, you were policed by every neighbour, if they saw you walking to school and you were misbehaving they had the right to smack the back of your legs, tell you off. Whereas now, nobody looks out for your child on the streets. It's just you so between your house and wherever they're going there's a huge void.' (HRP4)

Why do parents take their children by car?

'...the trouble is life seems to be different now, everybody seems to be going off somewhere after school...they're going off to work or they're going off to care for somebody so they seem to need their car to go in a different direction.' (HRP5)

5.2 Reasons for car use identified in the surveys

5.2.1 Range of reasons

In the national survey, respondents from households where the child usually travelled to school by car were asked why the car was used. This was an open question so respondents could give as many reasons as they wished and they have been divided into categories as shown in Table 5.1. The responses sum to only slightly more than 100 so most people clearly only gave the first reason they thought of. However, as discussed below it was clear from the household interviews that there are a whole range of factors which influence the decision to drive a child to school.

Table 5.1 Reasons for car use (open response question)

Reason	Percentage of all who are driven to school
Quicker/more convenient	38
On way to or from work	21
No other transport/no school transport	20
Weather	11
Safer	9
Too far to walk	7
Too young to go to school alone	4
Pick up others	2
Other	6
Total who are driven to school	15

In the national survey, the most common reason given for using the car in preference to other modes of transport is that it is quicker or more convenient. This reason was given by 38 per cent of respondents, almost twice as many as cited any other reason. The next most common reasons were on way to or from work (21 per cent) and no other transport/no school transport (20 per cent). Eleven per cent of respondents said the weather was a reason for driving their children to school – this may be where people only choose to drive their children when the weather is bad and they walk the rest of the time. Only nine per cent of respondents said they drove their child because it was safer and only seven per cent because it was too far to walk. Four per cent said their child was too young to go to school alone and two per cent said they drove because they picked up others. There were a few other reasons such as it is cheaper than the bus, the school is a long way away and they know the child will reach school on time.

There was a parallel open response question for those from car owning households who did not drive their children to school asking them why the car was not used for the school journey. In this case, by far the most common reason was that the school was too close to home or it was not far to walk. This was given by 45 per cent of respondents. The only other responses that were listed by more than a handful of respondents were the car is not available/do not drive (16 per cent) and transport is provided (10 per cent). There were a few responses that suggested other commitments prevented parents from taking their children – 6 per cent said that the parents were at work before school time, 1 per cent had another child to take elsewhere and 1 per cent had to leave very early. Others suggested that they would perhaps drive if it was not so difficult – 1 per cent gave no parking at school or they are discouraged

from driving as reasons for not using the car. However, there were also a few responses that suggested more positive reasons for not using the car – children prefer to walk (5 per cent), they use local bus service (5 per cent), not necessary (4 per cent), prefers to go with friends (3 per cent), cycles to school (2 per cent), healthier to walk (2 per cent), old enough to go alone (2 per cent) and better for environment (1 per cent).

5.2.2 Other children in the family

Other children in the family have an influence on the mode chosen in two main ways. Some parents described how the presence of pre-school age children could sometimes limit the options available by making it more difficult to walk.

'I think a lot of mothers are in cars because they've got other children that they can't leave...basically they've got to take two or three other kids with them...it's a mobile crëche.' (HRP4)

'We moved into this house the day after my daughter was born and so if we walked it was too much to push her and the other one who was only 18 months older than her. It's all uphill all the way to school. It's very hard work with a double buggy and then they started going three times a day with nursery and everything. Nowadays it takes about twenty minutes if we walk but when they were little it took forty minutes or so to get there and if you only had two and a half hours of them being at nursery, you had no time to do anything once you got back.' (LCP2)

Other parents described the difficulties of having children at two different schools some distance apart. This was usually discussed in the context of not being able to walk even quite short distances to school with one child because there was not enough time left after driving another child to school further away.

'My son's school begins and finishes at very similar times to my daughter's. I haven't got time to do both children – there's no bus for him so he has to go by car...it's about 6 miles away so by the time I get back from him I usually have maybe 5 minutes if I'm lucky to get my daughter sorted out.' (HRP4)

This last quote leads on to another issue which seems to be a big influence on the mode used to take children to school – lack of time.

5.2.3 The time factor

The speed and convenience of the car was cited by many of the respondents but it was particularly important for those parents who had to balance family responsibilities with a job. Most of the mothers interviewed in Leeds worked either full or part-time and many drove their children even very short distances to school because of the need to go on to work themselves immediately afterwards and the difficulty of having to fit a number of commitments into a busy schedule.

'Most of the driving is convenience, it's not that it's long distance, it's just the time factor and building that in and getting them up in time.' (LCS5)

'It's a matter of having to get to work from school really. I suppose I could walk to school, it's not far but I have to be somewhere at a certain time....' (LCP5)

'I could probably walk [child] up there and walk back to collect the car and that would probably only take 10 minutes, but 10 minutes in the morning is quite a lot...I want to be able to drop [child] off and get straight off to work without the hassle of having to come back here.' (LCP4)

'...it takes me three minutes to drive there and it takes me twenty minutes to walk...' (LCP2)

5.2.4 Concerns for the safety of the child

In both Hertfordshire and Leeds there were some parents, even of secondary school age pupils, who emphasised concerns about safety when describing their reasons for driving. Opinions were divided as to whether children were more at risk from traffic or from abduction by strangers. Even some of the parents who were aware of the relative risks were more concerned about stranger danger than the risk of an accident.

'I'm not worried about child molesters particularly because I think that's so rare.' (LCP2)

'I think it's that safe element, that's most important. I think that's top of my list.' [Interviewer asks whether it is safety from traffic she worries about.] 'I think, mostly it is because yes, alright there are the other aspects of life...where the nasty man's going to come along and grab me and take me away but I think you have to get that into perspective. The chances of anything like that happening are pretty remote...I think it is just traffic really.' (HRP5)

'I'm not worried about her with the traffic, she knows how to cross the road, just people.' (LCS3)

'To me it's more a safety thing. I would be worried about her walking home on her own. I think she's too young to do that....I just would never ever want anything like that on my conscience and you just can't be sure that there isn't some stranger watching and just waiting to snatch her away....which might sound silly because there'd be more traffic accidents really than there would be these odd people, when you think about it.' (HMS2)

More than one parent in Leeds mentioned that they had started taking their child to school because of the dark mornings at the start of the school year and having got into the habit stayed with it.

'....my main concern is he's safe....because he would have to walk quite a bit of the way on his own. When he started in September it was still dark mornings, there was no way I was going to have him walking from here all the way up on his own when it was still quite dark.' (LCS2)

In some cases there were traffic-free routes available which children could use to walk or cycle all or part of the way to school and which would have reduced their risk of being involved in an accident. However, parents were often reluctant to let their children use these as they felt such routes were too quiet and secluded and therefore their children's personal security could potentially be at risk.

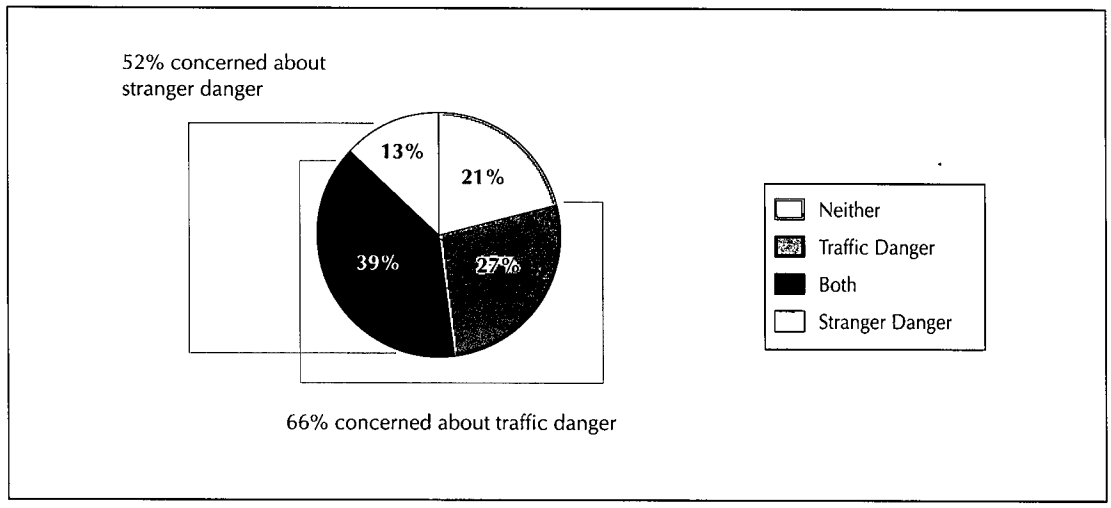
'...there's hardly any roads to cross....this is sort of woodland park but you just don't know who's going to be there....when you're walking down it seems a long way from top to bottom if you're actually walking, there's no houses en route, *there's just fields you see...and you're an awful long way from calling if you needed help.'* (HMS3)

In the national survey, parents were asked which of the following statements was most appropriate to describe this child's journey to school: a) Neither 'traffic danger' nor 'stranger danger' are of particular concern; b) 'traffic danger' is a bigger concern; c) 'stranger danger' is a bigger concern; and d) both are of equal concern. Their responses are shown in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.1.

Table 5.2 Parental concerns about the child's journey to school (traffic danger vs. stranger danger)

	Scotland	England and Wales	Total
Neither	23%	21%	21%
Traffic Danger	32%	26%	27%
Stranger Danger	11%	13%	13%
Both	35%	40%	39%
Total	73	403	476

Figure 5.1
Parental concerns about the child's journey to school



This shows that there is clearly greater concern about traffic than there is about strangers with 27 per cent citing traffic danger as the bigger concern and only 13 per cent stranger danger. Almost two fifths said that both were of concern compared to one fifth who said that neither were of concern. Respondents in Scotland appeared to be somewhat more concerned about traffic and less concerned about strangers than those in England and Wales.

The perceived risks of danger to children contrast strongly with the actual situation. In 1994, for example, 202 children aged between 5 and 15 were killed while walking and cycling, compared to 6 children murdered in that year by strangers. A further 97 children were killed travelling as passengers in cars (Sustrans, 1996). However, it must be recognised that these figures do not include the other risks that parents fear from strangers such as rape and serious assault.

It seems that those whose children attend school in suburban areas have the most concerns about their child's journey to school. Only 13 per cent felt that neither traffic danger or stranger danger was a concern compared to around a quarter of parents whose children attended schools in other areas. People with children at schools in suburban areas were also the most likely to be concerned about stranger danger whilst those whose children went to school in small towns or large villages were the most concerned about traffic danger.

Certain of the measures or facilities provided at a child's school seemed to have an impact on concerns about their journey. For example, where there were specially provided school bus services respondents were more likely to say that they were not concerned about either traffic or strangers – 28 per cent said this compared to 15 per cent from schools with a good public bus service.

Concerns about the child's journey to school clearly influence the mode used. Only 19 per centof pupils where neither traffic or strangers were a concern were driven to school compared to around a third from other households. Some of this difference is due to age as concerns were more likely to be expressed for children of primary school age. However, there were still differences in car use among secondary school age pupils according to the respondent's concerns about the school journey. Only 11 per cent from households where neither traffic nor strangers was a concern were driven compared to over 20 per cent from other households.

5.2.5 School hours

In some of the household interviews the school start and finish time influenced the mode that parents used to take their children to school. This was particularly the case for the secondary school in Hertfordshire which started at 8.30am (half an hour earlier

than most other schools nearby) and finished at 3pm (again, earlier than most local schools). This meant that several parents were able to drop their child at school on the way to work which would not have been possible if they started later. They could also collect them without getting caught in the 'school run' traffic for the other schools in the area. It was clear that had the school operated more conventional hours then some children currently driven to school would come by other modes.

'I couldn't have dropped them off at nine o'clock then because I had to start [work] at half past eight so they would have had to walk.' (HMS2)

Another feature at this school was that children could stay on after the end of the school day and work in the library until 4.30pm (until recently it was 5pm). This meant that in some cases it was also easier for parents to combine their journey home from work with collecting the child from school and one or two parents particularly mentioned this feature as being something they had liked about the school when selecting it for their child. It also meant that if the parent was collecting more than one child and one of them had an after-school club, the others could wait for them in the library so the parent only had to do one journey.

'...they go to the library if they haven't got an after-school club on and I time my collecting according to when the last club finishes so they wait around for each other.' (HMS3)

'They finish school at three but I don't finish work until five so we're very lucky with [this school] that they have an open school policy, they sit in the library and do their homework...this is why I picked [it]. (HMS4)

5.2.6 Other factors

Some of the parents interviewed for the household survey and who lived in more rural areas felt that driving their children to school really was the only option due to the distances involved and the lack of alternatives. One even mentioned that her son had missed school on one occasion because she was unable to start her car.

There were a few examples of reasons that were more to do with what parents wanted their role to be or what they thought others felt it should be.

'...in the afternoon I just like to be there to pick them up. I don't know it's a mumsy thing....I'm here, I'm available so that's why as well.' (HMS2)

'...my parents never took me, I don't think it was the done thing then was it? I think fashions have changed, haven't they? Everyone takes their child to school now....' (HMS1)

'I think it's just expected of the parents to drive them to school....' (HMS2)

One mother simply wanted to make sure that her child got to school on time.

'I know that he's getting to school on time...he's never had a late mark.' (LCS2)

5.3 Alternative modes and their limitations

5.3.1 Walking

From the household interviews it was clear that often parents' views on whether they would let their child walk to school and to other places were influenced by whether or not they were walking with someone else and who that someone else was.

'...you don't want them walking home with the wrong type because the minute they come out of school, you see them all smoking....you don't want their influence on them.' (HMS1)

The idea of the 'walking bus' was discussed with some parents. Although this was felt to be an excellent idea for primary pupils, most felt that it was not appropriate for secondary age pupils and several parents could see potential problems.

'Where it might fall down is some people work and can't do it, and others feel perhaps they're doing too many turns or the behaviour of the children becomes a problem' (HRP4)

Another issue raised in connection with walking was that the children themselves had become so accustomed to going everywhere by car that they really did not like walking and it was hard to persuade them to do so.

'They would moan if I said they had to walk to school.' (HMS2)

Some of the Leeds parents did occasionally walk with their children to school and were aware of other problems that might put some people off walking, in particular, the lack of places for children to leave anything, even coats, at school.

'The only time they whinge is if it's pouring and we get very wet and that's only because they haven't got anywhere to put wet things at school.' (LCP2)

One parent had walked recently during Walk to School Week and mentioned how much she enjoyed it.

5.3.2 Cycling

Some of the parents felt that cycling would be a safer option than walking – *'the bike's a lot quicker to escape'* (HRP3) – but this was where their main fear was stranger danger rather than traffic. On the whole cycling was viewed as being very dangerous due to the levels of traffic on the roads.

'...my son would love to cycle...but no way would we let them cycle because I hate them being on the roads even with a helmet...' (HMS1)

Another problem with cycling was the difficulty of transporting bags and equipment needed for various activities at school.

'There's a big problem with my children cycling to school, with the fact there's only one or two days a week they could possibly do it because they have games kit, they have cooking which involves carrying large amounts of ingredients and things...they have instruments...' (HMS3)

One of the Leeds parents said that one of the main reasons she did not cycle is because the children were not able to leave their bikes at school.

'I'd be quite happy to go on a bike, as long as they can leave them there, because then I could ride back here and it's only a matter of a few minutes...' (LCP5)

The lack of secure storage facilities for bicycles was an issue at both the primary and secondary schools in Leeds.

5.3.3 Public transport

Parents raised various problems with using public transport. In the rural areas, services were infrequent and often viewed as unreliable. Another problem was the fact that many rural bus services operate a 'hail and ride' system for most of their routes where passengers may stop the bus at any point and there are no marked bus stops. This was felt to be something that made it more difficult to allow children to use buses unaccompanied, as the worry that the bus might not stop for their child compounded their fears about the bus not turning up. The lack of designated bus stops also means that there is nowhere to display bus timetable information and therefore makes it harder for people to find out about bus services.

Why do parents take their children by car?

'...there don't seem to be any particular designated stops. I think you're expected to just put your arm out at the side of the road and it will stop, which is a bit iffy for children because I can't then say, you stand at this bus stop and there will be a bus along at ten past, it's all a bit hit and miss....I need to make sure that they're safe and I can't rely on the buses I'm afraid.' (HRP2)

'...when he was going home on one particular occasion he stood, he got soaked because it was raining...he had to wait over an hour because one bus just didn't turn up and they're only every hour.' (HMS4)

Where bus services were available they were sometimes viewed as being unsuitable for various reasons, such as the behaviour of other children on the bus, the attitude of bus drivers or simply the cost. None of the children who completed diaries were eligible for free school transport, either because they lived within the statutory minimum walking distance or had chosen a school other than the nearest appropriate one.

'She hates the bus. All the children smoke...a bit of bullying....I would rather pick her up.' (HRP3)

'I don't think it's for every child because all sorts of things go on, on school buses.' (HRP4)

'...drivers have been known to drive off without the children, left them there....If they don't have a bus pass or money on them at the time, they're not allowed on and then they walk, don't they, which I think is appalling really.' (HRP3)

'...there's no point paying for [the bus] if I can drive right past the school to get to work...and picking them up, it's so much easier for me to come this way and pick them up and know that they're with me and we're all in together rather than have them coming in dependent on buses.' (HMS3)

'There is a bus that comes through our village but because I choose for them to go to [that school] I would have to pay and it would be about £230 per term...obviously it's not an option.' (HMS3)

Even in Leeds where there were relatively good levels of public transport, it was not always viewed positively because of the lack of flexibility offered or the need to wait for a bus.

'It's not the actual journey itself, I think often the journey on the bus doesn't take that much longer. It's just the fact of having to wait around.' (LCS2)

Some parents regarded dedicated school bus services more favourably than public service buses. One parent commented how the need to use a school bus when the child went to secondary school would provide the opportunity for her to experience greater independence in a safe way.

'For us, that is one of the advantages of her going to [that school], she'll get more independence by having to go on a bus on her own and it'll be a fairly controlled environment because she'll be going on a school bus that'll go from the bus stop to the school and back again. It's not as if it's a public service bus. We wouldn't have been so happy about her going to another town on a service bus.' (LCP4)

Parents were less likely to be willing to allow children to travel by bus where the journey involved changing buses as they felt the potential for something to go wrong was higher (e.g. the child might get on the wrong bus when they needed to change). This supports the findings of other research which found that almost a third of parents cited a direct route as one improvement needed before they would allow their child to travel by public transport (Bradshaw, 1993).

5.3.4 Car sharing

The idea of car sharing was viewed very positively in theory.

'...it's good because it means you're not running every day and if you are worried about your children in any way, it's a kind of safe environment. You know who's with them.' (HRP4)

However, this same parent was one of several who expressed reservations about the feasibility of car sharing, particularly given the need to combine the school run with other commitments.

'....the other problem in the afternoon is that the different children are doing different things so you're not always coming home. Even if they don't have activities, they may be going to a friend's house or they may have a friend coming...' (HRP1)

'They have sent out letters about car sharing which doesn't apply to me because I do so much else...even driving the children to school I've got the dogs in the car and I'm generally going off somewhere else...' (HRP2)

'I don't want to volunteer because if their children aren't ready when I need to go, I can't stop and wait for them.' (HRP4)

5.4 Barriers to change

It was clear from the household interviews that – while many parents would welcome the opportunity not to undertake the 'school run' on a daily basis – the barriers deterring parents from letting their children use alternatives to the car are varied and often very complex. It may only be after one barrier has been removed that another becomes apparent.

For example, providing new pedestrian crossings and safe routes to school may encourage a parent, who was previously worried about road safety, to consider allowing their child to start walking. However, once they start to seriously consider this option, they may become concerned about the possibilities of abduction on the school journey and other measures may be required to remove that barrier too – before a switch of mode occurs.

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate the range of barriers that may be inhibiting the use of alternative modes by children, based on what parents said in the household interviews. The figures indicate points at which policy initiatives might be introduced to counter these problems. Potential policy initiatives are discussed in Section 7.4.

Cycling and walking (Figure 5.2) are, on the whole, subject to similar concerns. For younger children, there may be a need to accompany the child, or where this is not the case to deal with concerns about traffic danger or stranger danger. Other potential barriers include the need to carry books and sports equipment, and the lack of secure storage facilities at school for coats and other personal items. Additional potential barriers in the case of cycling include children's lack of proficiency in cycling and the lack of safe parking facilities at school.

In the case of **public transport** (Figure 5.3), many of the concerns associated with cycling and walking noted in Figure 5.2 also apply here. For parents of young children, worries about accompaniment may remain, at least as far as the bus stop. For those not accompanied, there may still be concerns about road accidents and personal safety between home and the bus stop – with the additional worry about the possibility of bullying on the bus. At the school end, there may still be problems relating to the provision of safe storage facilities.

Why do parents take their children by car?

There are several aspects of the public transport service that may also act as barriers to use, including: lack of information, inconvenient routeing or timing, no services enabling after school activities, the need to interchange, unreliability, and cost.

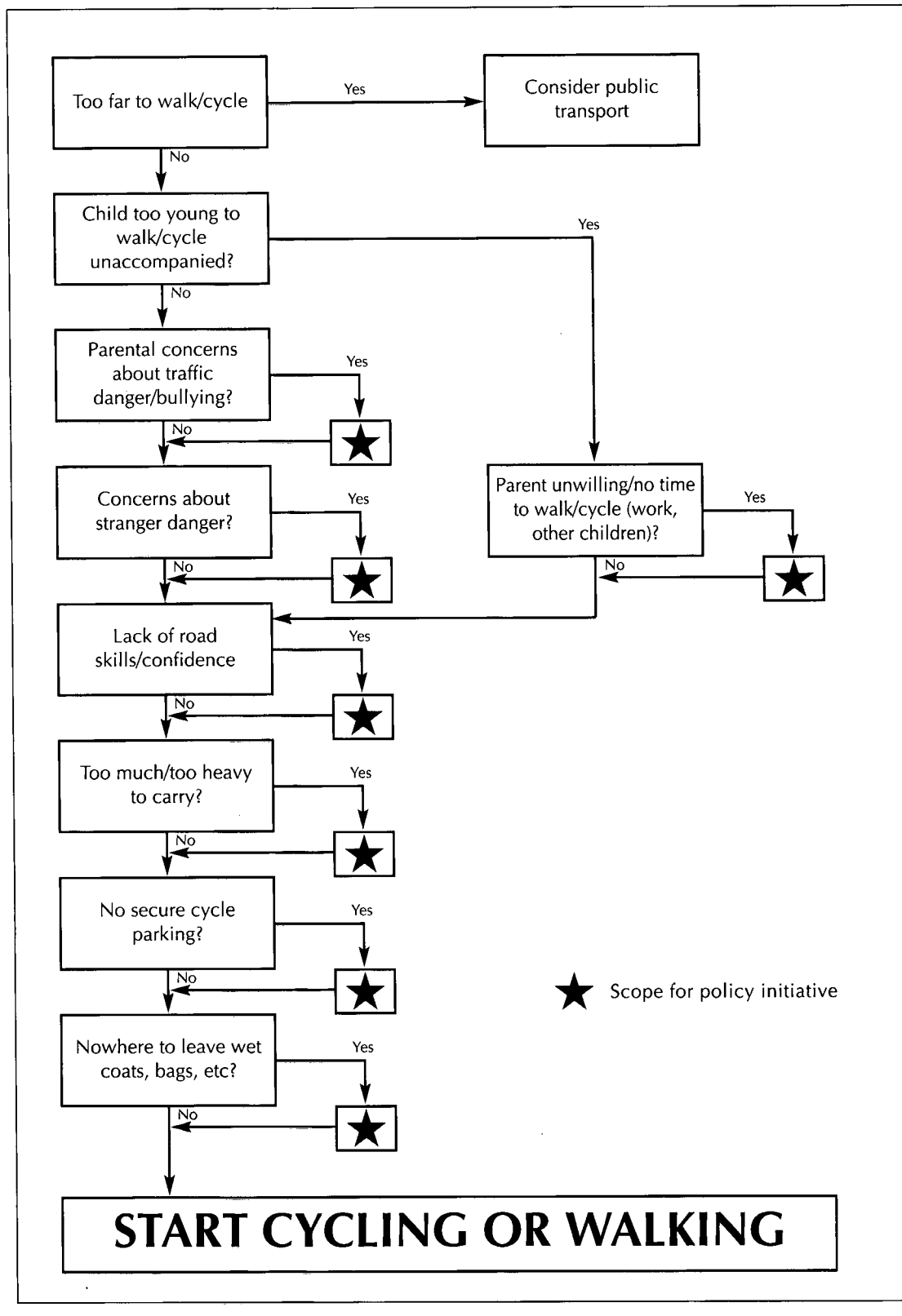
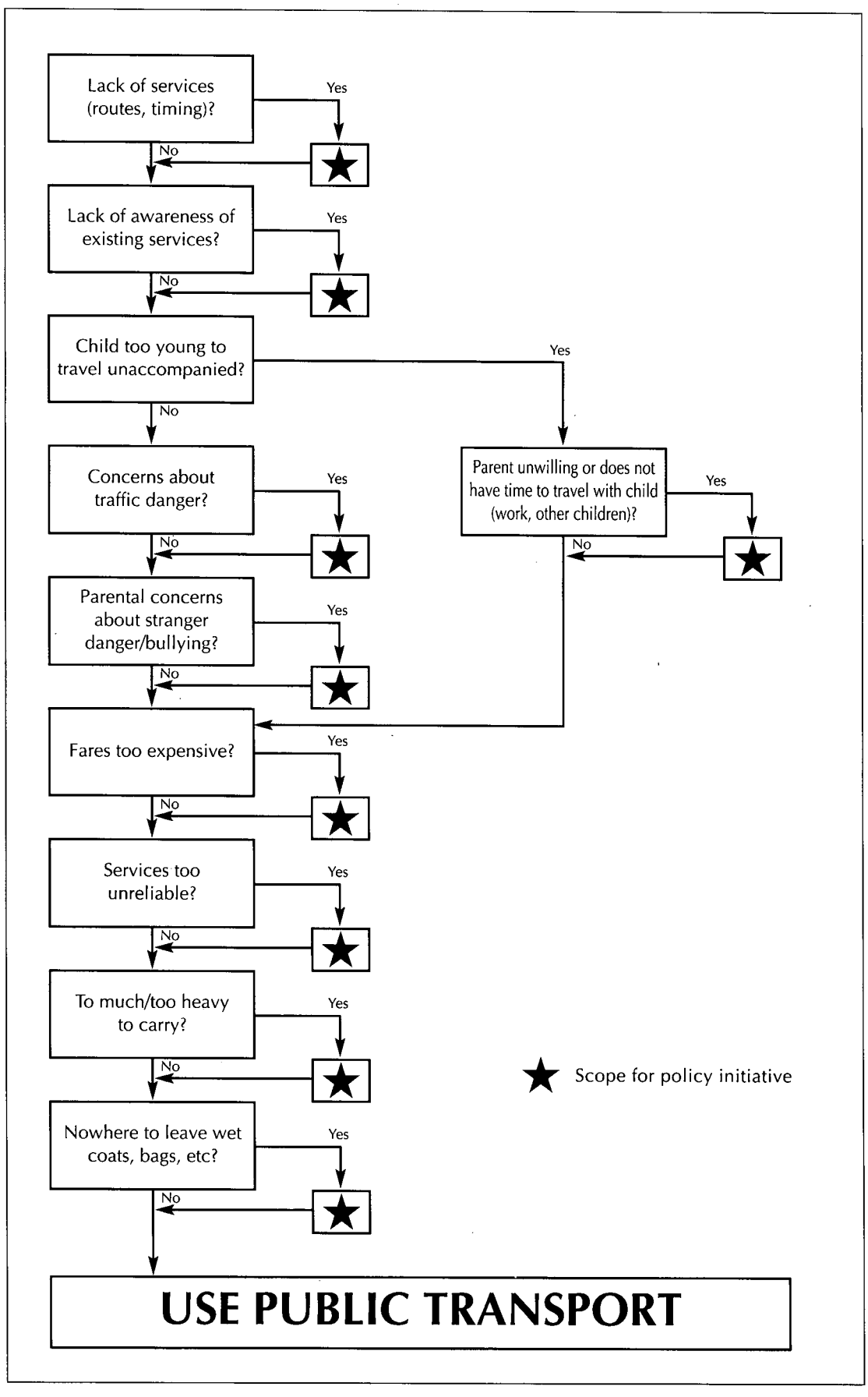


Figure 5.2
Barriers to walking and cycling

Figure 5.3
Barriers to using public transport



PART II: WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Chapter 6 What is already being done to address these problems?

Summary

Safe (or Safer, as they are sometimes known) Routes to School (SRtoS) projects usually encompass much more than the physical measures needed to provide safe cycling and walking routes. They typically also provide a great deal of educational and awareness raising activity and often an examination of the factors which might deter people from walking and cycling. More recently, the school travel focus has changed from safer routes for those walking and cycling to wider initiatives which cover all modes of transport. The role of educational, travel awareness and school policy measures is recognised as being as important as engineering measures in encouraging a change in behaviour and packages of measures or school travel plans (STPs) are now being encouraged. DETR recently published guidance on school travel plans. Some of the most successful examples identified include:

- *'Walking bus' – increased levels of walking to school, even in winter, by 30 per cent in 18 months.*
- *A programme of cyclist training, a new cycle shed and a cycle parking permit – now up to 80 pupils arriving by bike each day compared to none before implementation.*
- *Cyclist training with professional trainers – increase from 0 to 14 per cent of pupils now cycling to school.*
- *New bus service and subsidised fares – used by 30 pupils most of whom transferred from cars, pump primed for first two years but now breaking even.*
- *Special bus service with parent escorts – used by 65 children, 55 of whom previously came by car.*
- *School policy which actively promotes alternatives to the car – nearly one in four pupils regularly cycle and fewer are travelling by car.*

A national survey of local authorities found that 20 per cent have implemented or started an STP at one or more schools in their area and only 4 per cent said they had not considered STPs at all. Most of this work is very recent – a quarter said they had begun work on STPs in 1998 and almost two-fifths in 1999.

The survey identified that STPs were being implemented at a total of 507 schools (about 2 per cent of the approximately 26,000 schools in the whole of England and Wales). More detailed information was available for 149 schools, but only a fifth of these STPs were being monitored and there were only 3 where a substantial decrease (10–25 per cent) in car journeys had been identified.

There is, therefore, little evidence available on which to accurately assess the effectiveness of current initiatives. However, it appears that the most successful initiatives tend to be those where new services have been carefully designed to meet the needs of users, or where individualised assistance has been provided e.g. new bus services, professional cycle training.

6.1 Development of School Travel Initiatives (STIs)

Attempts to improve the safety for children walking and cycling to school by suggesting routes for them to use were first made as long ago as 1956 (Johnson, 1956). The basic criteria for these routes was that they should involve as few crossing places as possible, especially on busier roads, footpaths away from main roads should be used where available, and minor roads should be used in preference to major ones. In addition maximum possible use should be made of School Crossing Patrols.

More recently safe routes for children to walk or cycle to school were implemented in the 1970s in continental Europe as a means of reducing child cyclist and pedestrian casualties on the school journey. Where such routes have been successfully implemented they have had a dramatic impact on accident statistics. From 1955 to 1971 Denmark had the highest rate of child mortality due to road accidents in Western Europe (Tolley, 1990) and decided to act in order to improve the situation. A new Road Traffic Act was implemented in 1976, making it the responsibility of the police and local authorities to protect children on their way to and from school. Individual cities developed their own initiatives – one of these was the Odense 'Safe Routes to School' Project.

A study was carried out over several weeks in 1981 and 1982 in all of the 45 schools in Odense, with a total of more than 5800 children (aged between 9 and 15) participating. In contrast to the UK cycling is the most common mode of transport to and from school. Proposals to improve the traffic environment for children were worked out based on the study. A total of 185 proposals were worked out and many of the proposed changes have been implemented since 1981. The most common measures adopted were slow-speed areas, road narrowings, traffic islands and separate foot and cycle paths. The number of accidents has been reduced by 85 per cent in the slow-speed areas and the severity of accidents has also been reduced. In addition, schools and parents were generally very satisfied with the projects and considered the routes to school safer than before. Similar schemes have been adopted in Germany and the Netherlands.

Safe Routes to School projects were also tried in the UK in the 1980s, although the aim of these was slightly different from the schemes in continental Europe. The aim was to encourage children currently being driven to school to walk or cycle as well as improving safety for those already walking and cycling. Preliminary studies were undertaken by Sustrans in a number of areas, including Edinburgh and Greater London and measures such as slow-speed areas and separate foot and cycle paths were proposed. However, there was little in the way of implementation until more recently.

It is only in the past few years that such ideas have really started to take off. This was partly prompted by the national demonstration project to promote Safe Routes to School run by Sustrans and funded in part by the Government. The aim of this is to demonstrate that safe walking and cycling routes can reduce the number of parents who feel the need to drive their children to school by introducing engineering measures and also education and consultation with teachers, parents and children to change attitudes to the 'school run'.

The Sustrans project was started in 1995 as a three-year pilot scheme with 10 partner schools in four local authority areas. In 1998 the project was extended to run for a further three years to 2001. The demonstration schools are now in the process of implementing their local route networks and Sustrans uses the experience gained from these schools to provide information and support to over 80 other local authorities considering safe route schemes.

Safe (or Safer, as they are sometimes known) Routes to School (SRtoS) projects usually encompass much more than the physical measures needed to provide safe cycling and walking routes. They typically also provide a great deal of educational and awareness raising activity and often an examination of the factors which might deter people from

walking and cycling. More recently, the school travel focus has changed from safer routes for those walking and cycling to wider initiatives which cover all modes of transport. The role of educational, travel awareness and school policy measures is recognised as being as important as engineering measures in encouraging a change in behaviour and packages of measures or school travel plans (STPs) are now being encouraged. Section 6.2 gives examples of the kind of measures that might be included in STPs.

6.2 The range of current initiatives

DETR recently published guidance on school travel plans (DETR, 1999c) based on research undertaken by Oscar Faber, Sustrans and Adrian Davis Associates into current practice in England, Scotland and Wales drawing on 30 individual case studies. Initiatives were classified into a number of categories as shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Different types of School Travel Initiatives

Walking initiatives	• Walking bus • Personal safety training • Safe route trails • Walk to School campaigns
Cycling initiatives	• Cycle storage • Cycling permits and policies • Cycling awareness campaigns • Cycle maintenance
Road safety training and education	• Pedestrian training • Cyclist training • Parent escort training • Road safety curriculum work
Public transport initiatives	• Additional school buses • Concessionary bus fare schemes • Parent escorts on buses • Information and publicity
Highway and traffic engineering measures	• 20 miles/h zones outside schools • Priority measures for school buses • Safe crossings and routes • Junction narrowing • Parking enforcement outside schools • School crossing patrols
Classroom work	• Safe route planning in geography • Theatre in education • Other curriculum work
School management issues	• School policy • Staff supervision of entrances • Timetable planning • Provision of lockers
Involving Parents	• Family cycle training • Road safety fashion shows • Exploring routes to school • Car sharing • Walking/cycling on induction days

Source: Based on Table in DETR, 1999c

This section describes some of the schemes identified under each heading and gives an indication of how successful some of them have been based on the information in the guidance.

6.2.1 Walking initiatives

The **Walking Bus** at Wheatfields Junior School, St Albans is an organised walking group led by adults to a set timetable along routes of between half a mile and one mile long. The routes have designated 'bus stops' where parents wait with the children for the bus which has a conductor who supervises the children and a driver who pulls a trolley carrying the children's bags. Both the driver and the conductor are trained volunteers working on a rota and generally take part once a week. Levels of walking to school, even in winter, have increased by 30 per cent in 18 months.

'Walk to School' is a **national campaign** run by the Pedestrians' Association and local authorities participating in the TravelWise initiative. Various messages are used to encourage all pupils and parents to walk to school whether for one day, one week or at regular occasions throughout the year. One-week events are usually held in May and June. The initiative usually involves primary age children and is backed up by classroom activities, school incentives such as badges and house points, and activities which promote walking as fun.

During the household interviews, several of the parents from the primary school in Leeds mentioned the Walk to School Week campaign which had taken place shortly before the interviews were undertaken. Some seemed to have gone to quite a lot of effort to ensure that their children were able to participate.

'...it makes me late, but we do it...Just to do this walk to school sometimes I've had to take my car the previous night and leave it at my mother-in-law's [near school] so that when I walk to school it's there for me to go straight to work in the morning.' (LCP5)

Although this does give the children the experience of walking to school they might not otherwise get, in this particular case it would not have any effect on overall levels of car use.

Other parents commented on how much they had enjoyed walking with their children as it gave them an opportunity to spend time talking to them which they did not usually have.

'...it was nice weather and it was actually really nice to walk down to school because I also had that time to talk to [her] which you don't get if you're in the car.' (LCP4)

Other types of walking initiatives include **personal safety training** (covering issues such as bullying on the way to school and having an alternative plan if something goes wrong, such as missing the bus home) and **safe route trails** (similar to the Sustrans initiative).

6.2.2 Cycling initiatives

Temple Moor School in Leeds has introduced a range of measures to encourage cycling. These include an extensive programme of **cyclist training**, a new **cycle shed** and provision of a new signalised road crossing outside the school. They have also introduced a **cycle parking permit** to alleviate some of the liability and insurance issues associated with cycling to school. This includes rules about cycling behaviour, anti-theft measures, cycle training and bicycle maintenance. There were no pupils cycling to this school in September 1998, but there are now up to 80 pupils arriving by bike each day.

Students at Burnholme Community College in York also need a cycle permit if they want to use the purpose built secure cycle shed at the school. One of the conditions of

this permit is that bikes must be in a roadworthy condition. Students from years 8 and 9 carry out a **'bike MOT'** under staff supervision at the beginning of each school year. The safety checks carried out include the condition of brakes and tyres, steering, chain wear and secure wheels and saddles.

The Gilberd School in Colchester held a **cycling awareness day** to introduce students to the safe routes to school project. During a preliminary assembly they showed a promotional video including pupils from the school and footage from local roads. Groups of pupils then attended a number of workshops led by teachers and invited guests and parents. The sessions included: survey forms and discussion of routes to school; discussion about the merits of cycle permits and rules; cycle maintenance; cycle skills and road safety; and an introduction to safety measures installed near the school.

6.2.3 Road safety training

Oxfordshire has a child **pedestrian training** scheme for all primary schools, pre-school groups and childminders. Volunteers take two children at a time out on local roads for ten minutes or so every few weeks over three or four years. Training takes place with children as young as three and health visitors now give a new video and teach yourself booklet to all parents of two year olds.

Pupils at McEntee School in the London Borough of Waltham Forest are offered **cyclist training** with professional trainers. They are taken out on at least three one-hour training periods along the roads they use to get to school. After running for three years, the programme has resulted in an increase from 0 to 14 per cent of pupils now cycling to school.

6.2.4 Public transport initiatives

At Sandringham School in St Albans, the local authority offered pupils living within three miles of the school a **new bus service** and **subsidised fares**. To assist route planning, the locations of pupils' homes were extracted from a school database and plotted on the local authority's geographical information system. The bus service was pump primed for the first two years and is currently breaking even with 30 pupils at the school using the new service. Importantly, most users of the new service have transferred from cars and the change has not had an adverse effect on existing bus services. The council has also provided a lot of **information and publicity** about travel to the school including timetables and marketing leaflets.

The Countryside Commission and Surrey County Council have provided two vehicles to operate dedicated school services for children from a wide rural catchment area attending Lingfield Primary School in Surrey. The routes maximise the potential number of passengers with the constraint that no child's journey should be longer than 40 minutes. **Parent escorts** supervise and travel on the buses. They are recruited from the school and paid by the County Council. Buses set down pupils very close to each child's home where the escort hands over each child to a parent or guardian. For the first half term travel was free, since then the fare has been set at 60 pence per day which still requires a subsidy from the local authority. This figure was worked out with parents as the maximum they were prepared to pay before reverting to the family car. 65 children now use the buses, 55 of whom previously came by car.

6.2.5 Highway engineering measures

At Huntington School in York, the council has installed a mandatory **20 miles/h zone** over a 200 metre length of single carriageway road outside the school with a traffic flow of approximately 950 vehicles per hour in the morning peak hour. The scheme includes: three raised crossings, one at an existing signal crossing; speed cushions;

signs, 20 miles/h roundels and red asphalt at each approach; new street lighting; cycle lanes on the carriageway; and a widened shared use footway for pedestrians and cyclists. The total cost of the scheme was £35,000 and it has helped achieve the following results: no accidents involving pupils since its opening; mean speeds reduced by 45 per cent to 18 miles/h; traffic flows reduced by 25 per cent (am peak hour); the majority of pupils surveyed feel safer as cyclists and pedestrians; more pupils are cycling to the school; and 80 per cent of residents are in favour of the scheme.

Priority measures for school buses have been provided at Wheatfields Junior School in St Albans by modifying the existing lay-by used by parents to drop off and collect their children from school. The lay-by was lengthened to include a bus stop at the front of the lay-by, which allows the school bus service to pull in front of parked cars which are then held behind the bus until it is ready to leave.

At Bruntsfield Primary School in Edinburgh, the **highway was narrowed** at key crossing points outside the school. A road width of less than 4 metres means that crossing distances for pupils are shorter, only one car could pass at a time, and parked cars were displaced to neighbouring streets.

As traffic levels have risen it has become increasingly difficult to recruit professional **school crossing patrols** in certain areas. Somerset County Council is trying to overcome this problem by offering volunteers insurance under the council's indemnity scheme. In certain cases, schools which recruit a voluntary patrol are given the money they have saved. They can spend it as they wish, and may use it to fund other measures such as new cycle parking.

Other examples of traffic engineering measures include **safe crossings** outside schools and along school routes; **cycle lanes and cycle tracks**; and **parking enforcement outside schools.**

6.2.6 Classroom work

Sandringham School in St Albans has devised a **'safer routes to school' geography module** as an optional course of study for year 9 pupils. It consists of nine one hour sessions covering how to influence public attitudes and health and road safety issues. Guest contributors include the police, a road safety officer and a traffic engineer. The course has been a very good way of 'spreading the word' and influencing travel habits among pupils.

Derby City Council has been using **theatre in education** to raise awareness of the implications of continued growth in private vehicle traffic. The performance, which is called 'The Road Race', is an interactive workshop aimed at changing the way we view and use the car as our main mode of transport. The actors create a world in which increasing dependence on the car is causing dramatic problems, using the ideas, experiences and suggestions of the audience. Having identified the problem, the session goes on to seek practical solutions.

Other ways in which school travel issues have been introduced into the curriculum include: bike shed design in CDT; survey analysis in maths/computing; publicity and promotional work in English and drama; and exploring risk management, health and citizenship in PSHE.

6.2.7 School management issues

Waingels Copse School in Wokingham actively promotes alternatives to car journeys with parents via a three stage **school policy**:

- Firstly, all pupils are encouraged to walk or cycle to school for their own health and safety;

What is already being done to address these problems?

- Secondly, parents who must use cars are asked to drop off and collect pupils at a public car park 1/4 mile from the school; and
- Thirdly, any parents who still have to come into the school grounds may do so but they are held back for up to fifteen minutes until all pupils not travelling in cars have cleared the school grounds.

The policy is explained carefully to all parents when their children start at school and is now generally accepted since its stated intention is to put the needs of pupils first. As a result fewer pupils are travelling by car and nearly one in four pupils regularly cycle.

Kesgrave School in Suffolk has very high levels of cycling as a result of an excellent network of safe cycle routes and a positive cycling culture at the school. Cycling racks are provided for over 600 bikes and every pupil has **access to a locker** to store books and safety equipment. In addition, the **timetable includes longer teaching sessions with fewer subjects each day** so pupils have less need to carry books and equipment. The school also plans to stay open at the end of the school day for **homework study** reducing still further the need to carry books and equipment home. Another important feature at Kesgrave is that 15 teachers and senior staff regularly walk or cycle to school reinforcing the school support for these modes.

6.2.8 Involving parents

Surrey County Council has organised **family cycle training** sessions, a specially designed programme for children under ten which culminates in children and parents cycling together on local roads. These courses are extremely popular and have enabled pupils to cycle to several of the county's primary schools.

Harold Road Primary School in Abergavenny holds an annual **road safety fashion show**. Children take home order forms for parents to purchase reflective clothing and other safety equipment.

When the Admiral Lord Nelson School in Portsmouth relocated to a new site, parents of existing and prospective pupils were interviewed about their travel intentions and safety problems with new school routes. Road safety officers persuaded parents to walk along routes to the new school site with their children, indicating where new pedestrian and cyclist crossings were to be installed and in so doing proved that journeys took less time than imagined. As a result of their **exploring their routes to school**, one in four pupils now cycles to school.

Other ways of involving parents include **car sharing; walking and cycling on induction days; volunteer trainers**; and **walking bus escorts**.

6.3 Survey of local authorities

6.3.1 School Travel Initiatives (STIs) in England and Wales

This section briefly summarises information about the take-up of school travel plans and initiatives collected in a survey of local authorities in England and Wales undertaken by the University of Westminster (Bradshaw, 1999) in July 1999 for DETR. A similar survey was first undertaken for DETR (Bradshaw *et al.*, 1998) by the University of Westminster in Spring 1998 prior to the publication of the Integrated Transport White Paper. The second survey provided an opportunity to compare how things had changed over a period of about 18 months during which the issue had received increasing attention at a national level.

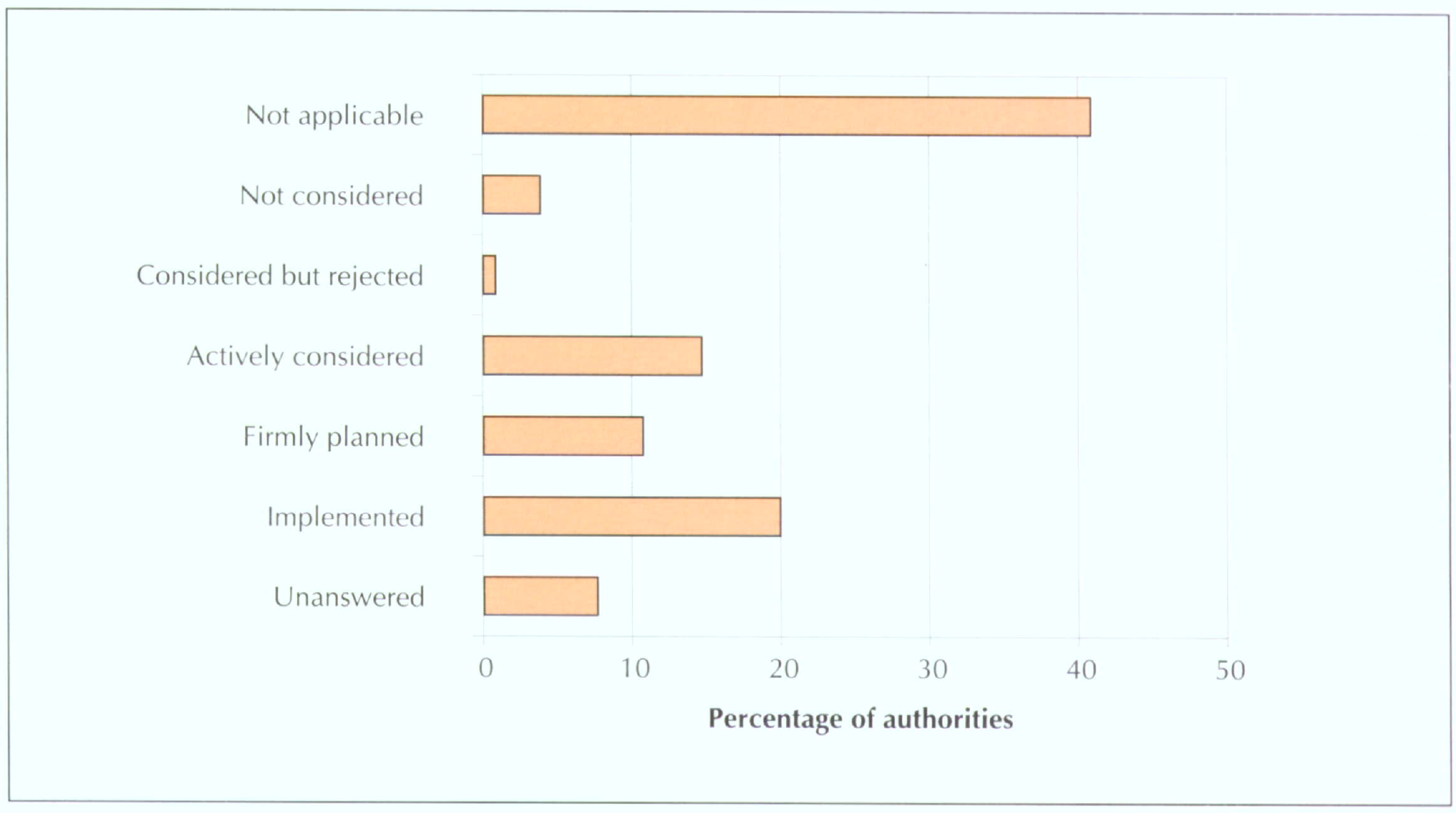
The overall response rate in 1999 was 80 per cent, representing 326 of the 410 authorities in England and Wales. The questionnaire was based on one originally designed for a survey in 1997 (see Bradshaw, 1998) but was revised to focus on School

Travel Plans and also to establish more clearly whether authorities had actually implemented measures or were just considering them.

The term School Travel Plan (STP) was used to refer to comprehensive plans that set out a package of measures. The questionnaire defined these as including 'walking, cycling and public transport initiatives; engineering, educational, travel awareness and school policy measures; and involvement of parents and pupils.' Authorities were asked to categorise themselves according to their development of STPs.

An authority was considered to have 'firmly planned' STPs if 'a committee report has been prepared or an inter-departmental/inter-authority meeting has been held specifically to discuss this issue' or to have 'actively considered' STPs if there had been 'for example, meetings held with schools or targets set'. Figure 6.1 illustrates authorities' involvement in STPs based on these definitions.

Figure 6.1 Authorities' level of involvement in School Travel Plans



Twenty per cent of the authorities responding had implemented or started an STP at one or more schools in their area and only 4 per cent said they had not considered STPs at all. Although changes in terminology meant it was difficult to make a direct comparison it was clear that there had been increasing activity in this area. In 1998, 22 per cent of authorities had not considered Safer Routes to School Type projects at all and only 10 per cent had implemented a scheme on a permanent basis.

A lot of the activity identified in 1999 had only begun since the previous survey. A quarter of the authorities said that they had begun work on STPs in 1998 and almost two-fifths in 1999.

What is already being done to address these problems?

The questionnaire also asked local authorities about the extent to which they were introducing individual measures that on their own do not amount to an STP. Based on this definition, 39 per cent of all authorities and 72 per cent of non-districts (that is Counties, London Boroughs, Metropolitan Boroughs, English Unitaries and Welsh Unitaries) had implemented or started STIs at one or more schools in their area . The types of initiatives they are implementing are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Type of STIs implemented or started (% of respondents)

	Total (Exc. Districts)	Shire District	Total
National campaigns	117 (84%)	36 (51%)	**153 (73%)**
Traffic management	109 (78%)	36 (50%)	**145 (69%)**
RSO work	123 (88%)	20 (28%)	**143 (68%)**
Classroom activities	84 (60%)	26 (37%)	**110 (52%)**
Pedestrian and cycle routes	81 (58%)	28 (39%)	**109 (52%)**
Leaflets to parents	91 (65%)	18 (25%)	**109 (52%)**
Additional ped. crossings/patrols	71 (51%)	19 (27%)	**90 (43%)**
Secure cycle parking	36 (26%)	11 (16%)	**47 (22%)**
Walking bus	28 (20%)	9 (13%)	**37 (18%)**
Improved bus routes	30 (21%)	5 (7%)	**35 (17%)**
Special bus fares	24 (17%)	2 (3%)	**26 (12%)**
Car-pooling/sharing	12 (9%)	2 (3%)	**14 (7%)**
Other	33 (24%)	14 (20%)	**47 (22%)**
Total	**140 (100%)**	**71 (100%)**	**211 (100%)**

Note: The percentages represent the percentage of respondents selecting that category. This was a multiple response question so the percentages do not sum to 100.

Education measures in Road Safety Officer's programme (e.g. cycle training) was the most common type of STI being implemented by non-districts – per cent were implementing this. Eighty-four per cent of non-districts and around half the districts were participating in national campaigns like 'walk to school' and traffic management near schools (e.g. calming, junctions) was being used by 78 per cent of non-districts and half the districts. The least common STI was car-pooling or sharing being used by only 9 per cent of non-districts. Only a fifth of non-districts were implementing the much publicised walking bus initiative. The types of measures being used were similar to those in 1998 when traffic management was the most common type.

The other STIs being implemented include:

- after school activities
- competitions in schools
- development of home-school agreements
- school gate package information campaign
- provision of child cycle helmets to support cycle training
- storage lockers for books etc.
- first day absence reporting (telephoning the parents of children who are not at registration – this is also useful as an anti-truancy measure)
- higher police profile for zig-zag markings
- park and walk scheme with a nearby supermarket
- community minibus planned for Pakistani pupils at girls school
- and school safety zones (no parking immediately outside schools)

As in 1998, the most common behavioural barriers cited were the ones related to parental attitudes or willingness to allow their children to use modes other than the car. Parental car dependence, parental fears for safety of children from traffic and parental fears for security of children from other people were each cited by over three-quarters of all authorities. The most common practical barrier was lack of time for local authority staff – chosen by 74 per cent of all authorities. Lack of financial resources and lack of time for schools were also important practical barriers – each was cited by around 70 per cent of authorities.

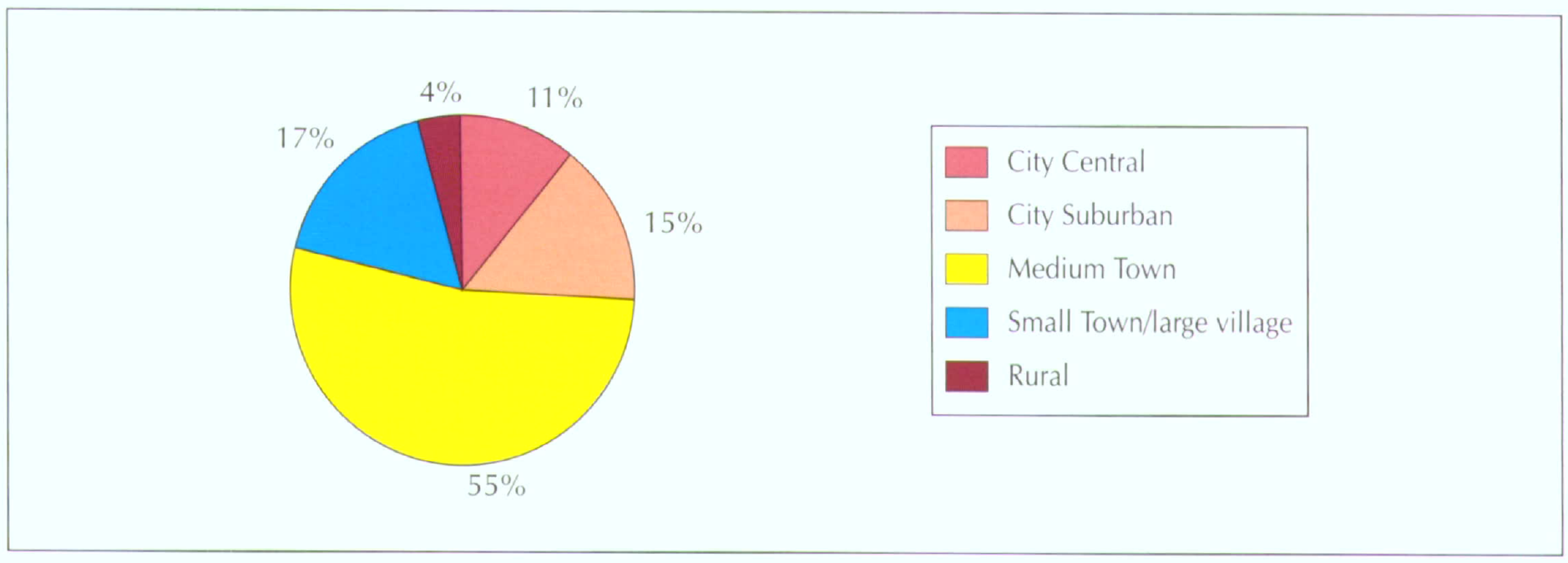
The limitations imposed by a lack of financial resources were clear from responses to the questions on funding. Two-fifths of those who answered the relevant question had no budget for STPs in the 1998/99 financial year and a further 38 per cent had budgets of less than £50,000. At the other end of the scale, 10 authorities (up from 5 in 1998) had budgets of £100,000 or over – the highest being £300,000.

The most common source of funding was Transport Policies and Programmes (TPP) funding which almost two-thirds of authorities had successfully applied for to fund school travel plans and initiatives. A number of new sources of funding were included in the questionnaire this time. Of these, only the road safety budget (58 per cent), developer contributions (21 per cent) and sponsorships/partnerships (17 per cent) had been used by more than a handful of authorities. A few authorities had used Health Action Zone or Health Improvement Plan funding (7 per cent and 3 per cent respectively). Very few authorities reported that they had applied for funding unsuccessfully.

Around two-fifths, or 42 of the 114 authorities with STPs said they were monitoring their impacts and 56 said they had not yet done any monitoring but will do in the future. As in 1998, the most common form of monitoring was questionnaires to pupils which 35 of those monitoring STPs were using. Thirty-eight authorities have set targets for the implementation of STPs. Overall targets ranged from 2 per cent to 100 per cent of schools. Ten authorities had targets of more than 50 per cent of schools by the year 2005.

The survey identified that STPs were being implemented at a total of 507 schools (about 2 per cent of the approximately 26,000 schools in the whole of England and Wales). More detailed information was available for 149 schools. As in 1998, the most common type of school for which full details were provided was a local authority primary school – just over half are in this category. Figure 6.2 shows that the most common location for schools with STPs was in medium sized towns with a population of 25,000 to 250,000 – just over half the schools for which details were provided were in towns of this size. The lowest levels of activity were in inner cities and rural areas.

Figure 6.2
Location of schools with STPs



The most common type of measure to be introduced were engineering measures which were included in 86 per cent of the STPs. Walking initiatives were included in 82 per cent and educational initiatives in 79 per cent. Although cycling initiatives were less common they were still included in around three-fifths of the STPs, but public transport initiatives were only included in a quarter.

What is already being done to address these problems?

Only about a fifth of the STPs at this sample of schools were being monitored and there were only 3 where a substantial decrease (10–25 per cent) in car journeys had been identified. All of these were long-standing schemes that have been running for three years or more. This suggests that time is needed for successful schemes to become established. It is important that local authorities and schools have realistic expectations about what can be achieved in the short term and are encouraged to make a long term commitment to work on STPs.

6.3.2 School Travel Initiatives in Scotland

In 1998, the then Scottish Office commissioned consultants to carry out a review of Safer Routes to School (SRtoS) in Scotland, similar to the 1998 survey of local authorities in England and Wales (Halden et al, 1999). The Scottish survey work found that just over half the local authorities in Scotland had started the SRtoS process. There were 89 school projects underway and a further 40 planned but most projects had started relatively recently. The proportion of Scottish authorities working on initiatives is similar to that in England and Wales in 1998. However, a third of the total expenditure on SRtoS in Scotland had resulted from national Scottish Office funding and some authorities noted that they did not have projects because their applications for national funding had been unsuccessful. This led the authors of the Scottish survey report to conclude that without national support for SRtoS, levels of activity would have been well below English levels.

The Scottish survey found that expenditure on SRtoS accounted for only 0.3 per cent of public expenditure on school travel and suggested that there may be scope for a more integrated approach to school travel planning yielding significant investment in SRtoS schemes.

6.4 Survey of car owning households

6.4.1 Range of measures

Respondents to the national survey were asked to indicate which transport related measures or facilities were available to their child at or on their way to school. This gives an indication of parents' awareness of what has been provided; this may differ from the actual situation, but is an important factor in the context of perceived barriers to using alternative modes.

As can be seen from Table 6.3, no single measure was mentioned by more than a third of parents, and most by less than a quarter – although around 90 per cent reported at least one transport measure at, or *en route* to, their child's school.

Table 6.3 Measures not available at/near child's school

Listed Measures/Conditions*	Percentage of parents NOT Reporting this Measure
School crossing patrol	68
A safe walking route	71
Safe crossing facilities	76
Secure cycle parking	76
Lockers for storing books, sports kit	76
Good public bus service	80
Before and after school facilities	83
Ban on cars stopping outside school gates	86
Dedicated school bus service	88
Cyclist training	90
Personal safety training	91
A safe cycling route	95

*Others not available at over 95 per cent of schools attended by respondents' children included: information on buses serving the school, walking bus, parental escorts on buses, showers for cyclists, and 'other' measures – for cycling, walking, public transport and at school.

Two-thirds reported that there was no school crossing patrol or a safe walking route. Three quarters said that there were not any safe crossing facilities, secure cycle parking, or lockers for storing books/gym kit/cycle helmets etc. Four fifths did not have a good public bus service and over 80 per cent did not have before – and after-school facilities for children. Three per cent of respondents said that there was a ban on cycling at the school their child attends.

Overall, just over a half of parents reported at least one measure to assist walking, and a third said that there were cycling or public transport measures in place.

Schools in the central areas of large towns or cities were least likely to have cycling measures (21 per cent compared to 44 per cent of schools in medium sized towns) and most likely to have walking measures (70 per cent compared to 55 per cent of schools in medium sized towns). Only 20 per cent of schools in rural areas had any walking measures but 38 per cent had cycling measures. The proportion of schools with any public transport measures did not vary much between the different types of area. However, schools in large towns and cities were more likely to have a good public bus service whilst those in small towns and rural areas where more likely to have a specially provided school bus service.

6.5 Effectiveness of current initiatives

There is little evidence available on which to accurately assess the effectiveness of current initiatives. Few of the initiatives described in Section 6.2 have been in place for any length of time and there is only limited evidence available on which to make judgements. Very little in the way of detailed monitoring and evaluation is being undertaken. The documents that have been published are usually aimed at promoting the take-up of school travel initiatives and at encouraging other schools and local authorities to get involved. They, therefore, tend to emphasise initiatives which have been successful and contain little information on the costs involved. In addition, local

authorities and schools are, understandably, unwilling to publicise initiatives that have not worked well and there has been little or no independent assessment carried out to date. As few initiatives have been running for any length of time, there is little evidence of their long-term effects. In most cases initiatives are implemented as part of a package so it is hard to judge the effectiveness of a particular initiative in isolation. It should also be noted that the local circumstances of the school involved may also effect the impact of a particular initiative.

All of these factors make it hard to compare the cost-effectiveness of different initiatives but it is possible to use what information there is available to give an indication of the relative costs and impacts of a number of measures. Table 6.4 provides a summary of this information. The table uses information from the survey of local authorities to indicate the extent to which each initiative is being implemented. This is important because, whilst a particular type of measure may be successful, if take-up is low, then its effectiveness will still be limited. An assessment of the degree of commitment required from schools and parents in implementing each initiative is also included. These factors may have a strong bearing on the ease of implementation of particular measures and therefore should perhaps be seen as an added element of the costs involved.

The most successful initiatives tend to be those where new services have been carefully designed to meet the needs of users, or where individualised assistance has been provided. For example, the two public transport initiatives described in 6.2.4 have both been very successful in attracting pupils who previously travelled by car. However, in both cases the local authority concerned had carefully designed the new services to maximise their attractiveness and, where appropriate, to meet parents' other concerns (e.g. providing parental escorts in Surrey). As Table 6.4 shows the cost of such initiatives can be high and take-up is very low.

The cyclist training described in 6.2.3 is another example of a scheme where significant changes have been achieved. Using professional cycle trainers and training each pupil on the road for a number of hours has resulted in a significant increase in cycling. Whilst cyclist training is fairly common, it is often done by volunteers so the impact may not be as great. However, using professional trainers is expensive.

Table 6.3 Effectiveness of a sample of current initiatives

	Cost-effectiveness			Commitment from		Comments
Initiative	Impact	Cost	Take-up	School	Parents	
Walking bus[1]	●●●●●	●	●	●	●●●●●	A few well-publicised walking buses have been very successful but take-up is low despite the low cost. Requires a substantial commitment from parents which is not always available.
Walk to School campaign	●	●	●●●●●	●●●	●●●	Widely adopted and low-cost, requires fair degree of commitment from both school and parents but over short period. Long term impact uncertain and main benefit may be in raising awareness.
Cycle storage	●●●	●●●	●	●●●		Likely to have most impact as element of package of measures to encourage cycling. Low take-up is probably due to need for school commitment even if funding available from elsewhere.
Pedestrian and cycle routes	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●			High-cost measure that can be very effective, particularly if accompanied by supporting measures at the school. Take-up good but quality (and hence, effectiveness) likely to vary.
Cyclist training	●●●	(●●●)	●●●●	●●●●●	(●●●)	Cost varies depending on approach, can be high if professional trainers used. If not, may require substantial commitment from parents or other volunteers.
Improved bus routes	●●●●●	●●●●●	●			Improved bus routes and fares can have huge impact but take-up of such initiatives is low as they can be very costly. May also be difficult to get co-operation of bus operator. Successful schemes may break even in longer term but will still require financial support initially.
Special bus fares	●●●●●	●●●●●	●			
Traffic calming measures, traffic management	●●●	●●●●●	●●●●	●	●●	High take-up despite high cost possibly due to being easier to fund capital measures. Type of measures varies. Most successful when school and parents co-operate with parking restrictions etc.
Classroom activities	●	●	●●●	●●●●●		Relies on commitment of school but relatively good take-up due to low cost. Low impact but may make important contribution to raising awareness.
Car pooling/sharing	●●●	●	●	●●	●●●●●	A low-cost measure which could have significant impact in certain locations. However, requires high commitment from parents and some support from school and take-up is low.
School policy	●●●	●	●?	●●●●●	●●	Can have impact in its own right but most important in supporting other measures. Not costly but requires a lot of commitment from school. Take-up unknown but thought to be low.

Notes: 1. Judgements on 'impact' and 'cost' based on limited amount of published data (particularly, DETR, 1999c). 2. 'Take-up' based on number of local authorities who are known to be implementing this measure at one or more schools so number of schools involved will vary.

[1]A walking bus consists of a group of parents led on foot by two parents. The 'Bus' may have a timetable so that individual pupils know where and when they can join it and is usually operated on a rota basis. It is a good way of overcoming the problem of parents not having enough time to accompany their child on foot as it means they will not have to do so every day.

Chapter 7 What would make a real difference?

Summary

In a recent survey, 48 per cent of parents who ferry their children to school by car agree that parents should be persuaded NOT to do so, but instead encourage their children to go to school by public transport, walk or cycle (MORI, 1999).

The national survey carried out as part of this study provides some insights into the kind of improvements parents require. Public transport improvements were the most frequently cited – approximately 28 per cent of responses from chauffeuring parents, compared to 18 per cent citing improvements to cycling and 14 per cent for walking. Almost all of those (96 per cent) who wanted to see improvements to cycling wanted to see a safe cycling route introduced, around a quarter wanted secure cycle parking and 10 per cent wanted cyclist training. A safe walking route was the most common measure chosen by those who wanted improvements to walking – three-quarters chose this, two-fifths chose safe crossing facilities, a third a school crossing patrol and 10 per cent the organisation of a walking bus. In terms of public transport, a slightly larger proportion chose a specially provided school bus service (47 per cent) than a good public bus service (42 per cent). The most commonly requested measure overall was a safe cycling route (30 per cent).

Those who thought that there was nothing that could be done to improve travelling to school by alternatives to the car were asked about their reasons for feeling like this. A quarter said that the reason they would always drive is that the roads were dangerous or it was safer to drive, a fifth that their child was too young to go alone and 17 per cent that there was no bus service or no other means.

Section 7.3 examines the potential for reducing car use by examining which modes offer practical alternatives for the 'school run'. This examination concludes that improved bus services could reduce car trips by 25 per cent (primary) to 30 per cent (secondary) and in both cases car mileage by 40 per cent. Since relatively few schools initiatives have yet focused on public transport improvements, we conclude that there is considerable untapped potential here. However, based on current data, we do not know whether encouraging a shift from car to public transport would reduce or increase accident risk.

Various options are proposed for addressing particular parental concern.

- *How can danger of traffic accidents be reduced? – extensive 20 miles/h zones, home zones, more school crossing patrols, changes in legislation.*
- *How can fears of personal safety be removed? – monitors, supervision, dedicated school bus services, first day absence reporting.*
- *How can alternatives be improved? – direct and convenient walking and cycling routes, providing lockers and cloakroom facilities at schools, pre- and post- school arrangements, 'code of conduct', public transport pricing policies, good publicity.*
- *How can time pressures on parents be reduced? – sharing escorting to school (involve other members of the community), making better use of time on public transport or walking, 'family friendly' employment policies.*
- *How can less car dependent lifestyles be encouraged? – community car clubs, software to help schedule activities, assistance in thinking long-term when making locational decisions.*

7.1 What parents say needs to be done

In a recent survey, 48 per cent of parents who ferry their children to school by car agree that parents should be persuaded NOT to do so, but instead encourage their children to go to school by public transport, walk or cycle (MORI, 1999). What is not clear from this is whether parents think that they themselves should encourage their children to use alternatives or whether they feel it is other parents who ought to be persuaded not to drive.

In the national attitude survey undertaken for this scoping study, those respondents who were the parents of children regularly driven to school were asked if there was something that could be done to improve either cycling, walking or public transport that would make them feel confident about their child travelling to school by that means of transport. If they said there was, they were asked which of cycling, walking or public transport could be improved. Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1 show their responses to this question. The latter breaks down the parents' responses according to the age of the child.

Table 7.1
Means of transport which could be improved (parents of all children, aged 5-15)

	Total
Cycling	18%
Walking	14%
Public transport	28%
Other general	6%
None	42%
Sample size	134

Note: Multiple responses permitted.

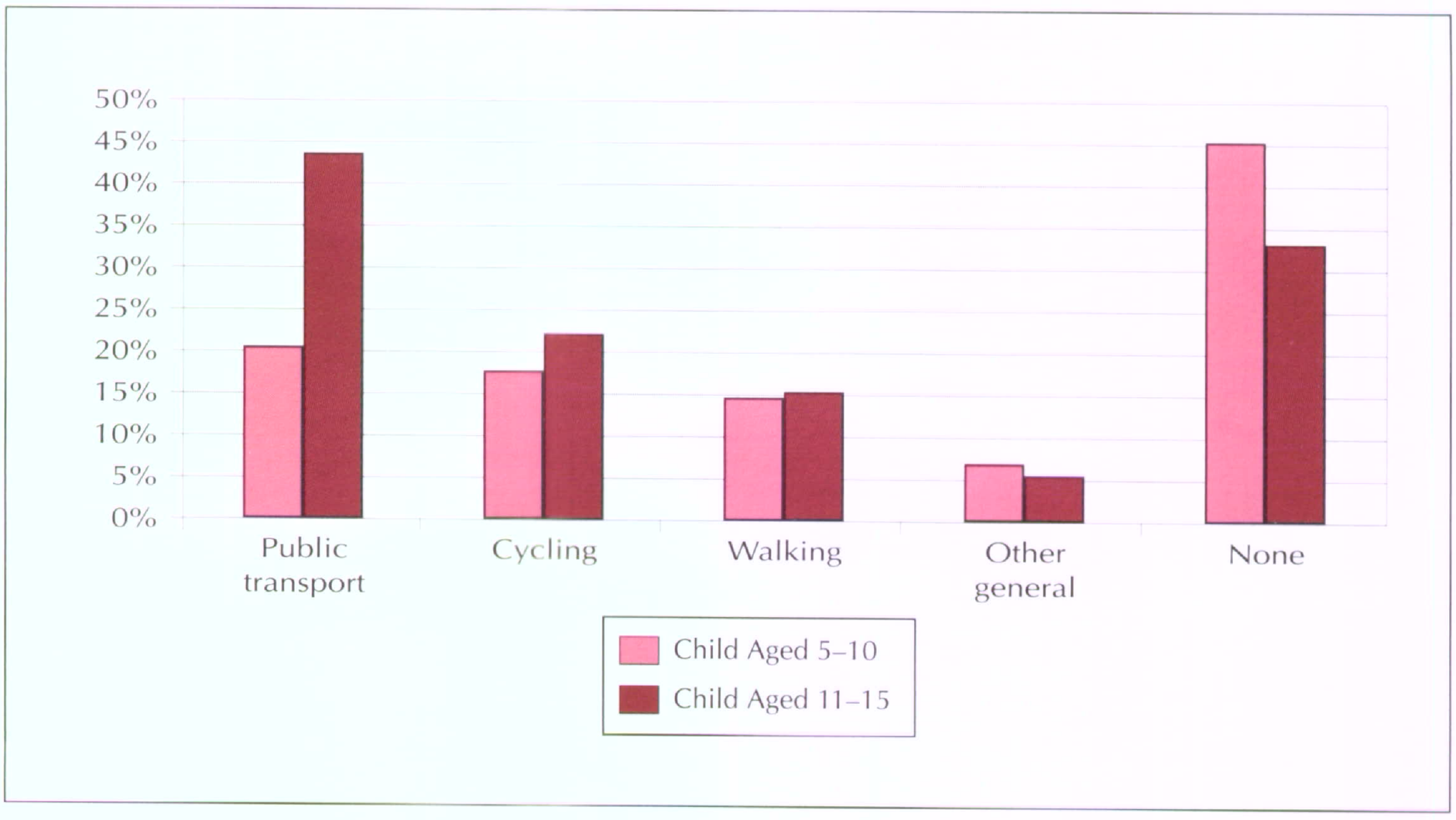
Nearly 60 per cent of parents who currently chauffeur their children to school felt that measures **could** be introduced that would enable them to stop using their car for the 'school run'; some indicated that there might be more than one feasible alternative. The remainder – just over 40 per cent of parents nationally (50 per cent in Scotland) – said that nothing could be done to encourage them to let their child use another mode to/from school.

Figure 7.1 shows the proportion of parents suggesting different kinds of improvement to the three main alternative modes, plus some non-modal improvements (e.g. locker facilities at school). Given the very different patterns of travel for primary and secondary school children, the figure shows the results for each age group separately.

For both groups across Great Britain as a whole, public transport improvements were the most frequently cited by the chauffeuring parents, followed by cycling and then walking. Priorities were very different in Scotland, however. Here respondents were most likely to suggest walking measures, less likely to select cycling and least likely to suggest public transport measures.

A higher proportion of parents of primary school children said that nothing could be done to influence their car use (46 per cent) than in the case of secondary school children (34 per cent) – but in both cases a majority did feel that other modes could substitute for the car, given appropriate measures. While support for cycling and walking were broadly similar in both cases, more than twice as many parents of secondary school children (44 per cent) mentioned public transport improvements than in the case of the primary school parents (21 per cent).

Figure 7.1
Means of transport which could be improved



Among those who selected **public transport** as a feasible alternative mode, overall slightly more asked for a specially provided school bus service (47 per cent) than a good public bus service (42 per cent); almost one fifth selected information on buses serving the school and 7 per cent parental escorts on buses.

Among those opting for **cycling**, almost everyone wanted safe cycling routes, around a quarter wanted secure cycle parking and 10 per cent cyclist training.

For those who selected **walking**, a safe walking route was chosen by three-quarters, two-fifths chose safe crossing facilities, a third a school crossing patrol and 10 per cent a 'walking bus'.

Other measures requested were: facilities for pupils to arrive early and stay late (29 per cent), personal safety training (29 per cent), organised car-sharing/pooling for the school run (19 per cent), and a ban on parents stopping at the school gates to drop off/pick up children (10 per cent).

Table 7.2 shows the combined responses from all those who thought something could be done to improve travelling to school by alternatives to the car. The most commonly requested measure overall was a safe cycling route (30 per cent). Other commonly requested measures were specially provided school bus service (23 per cent), a good public bus service (21 per cent), a safe walking route (18 per cent) and safe crossing facilities (10 per cent). Nobody requested showers for cyclists or lockers. Other measures were only chosen by a handful of respondents. These were a ban on parents stopping at school to drop off/pick up children (1 per cent), organised car-sharing/pooling for the school run (2 per cent), cyclist training (3 per cent), walking bus (3 per cent), parental escorts on buses (3 per cent), facilities for pupils to arrive early and stay late at school (3 per cent) and personal safety training (3 per cent). Respondents in Scotland were less likely to ask for a safe cycling route and more likely to ask for a safe walking route and safe crossing facilities. They were also less likely to ask for a specially provided school bus service and none of them asked for any of the other public transport related measures.

Table 7.2
Most commonly requested measures (all modes combined)

Measure	Percentage of those wanting improvements
A safe cycling route	30
Specially provided school bus service	23
Good public bus service	21
A safe walking route	18
Safe crossing facilities	10
Secure cycle parking	9
Information on buses serving the school	9
Total wanting improvements	76

Those who thought that there was nothing that could be done to improve travelling to school by alternatives to the car were asked about their reasons for feeling like this. This was an open response question. A quarter said that the reason they would always drive is that the roads were dangerous or it was safer to drive, a fifth that their child was too young to go alone and 17 per cent that there was no bus service or no other means. The time factor emerged again with 13 per cent saying that it was because it was quicker or more convenient or they go on to work. Seven per cent each said it was a long way from home and too far to walk or cycle or that they were concerned about strangers or bullies.

7.2 The potential for reducing car use

The evidence presented in this study suggests that a concerted effort to tackle the barriers that currently deter many parents from letting their children travel to/from school by other modes could significantly reduce car use for the school journey. This would relieve many parents of the burden of the 'school run' – and help to restrain the growth in this kind of activity in the future.

This section examines the potential for reducing car use: which modes offer the most practical alternatives for the 'school run', and what difference would it make to peak hour traffic levels if children did switch to these alternative means of travel?

Surveys suggest that around half the parents who take their children to/from school by car think that they **should** be discouraged from doing so, and overall nearly 60 per cent of parents engaged in the 'school run' believe that there are measures that **would** persuade them to let their child use an alternative mode. In exploring the potential for change, we have therefore **assumed** that up to **half the current trips** made to/from school **by car** might be encouraged to switch to another mode. We have further assumed that this fraction applies equally across all trip lengths and age groups.

On the basis of the analysis presented in section 3.3, at the height of the morning peak this level of modal shift could potentially remove over 11 per cent of the cars from the road, and reduce the numbers of car miles driven by up to 4 per cent.

Given the difference in journey characteristics and personal abilities for children attending primary and secondary schools, each situation is addressed separately.

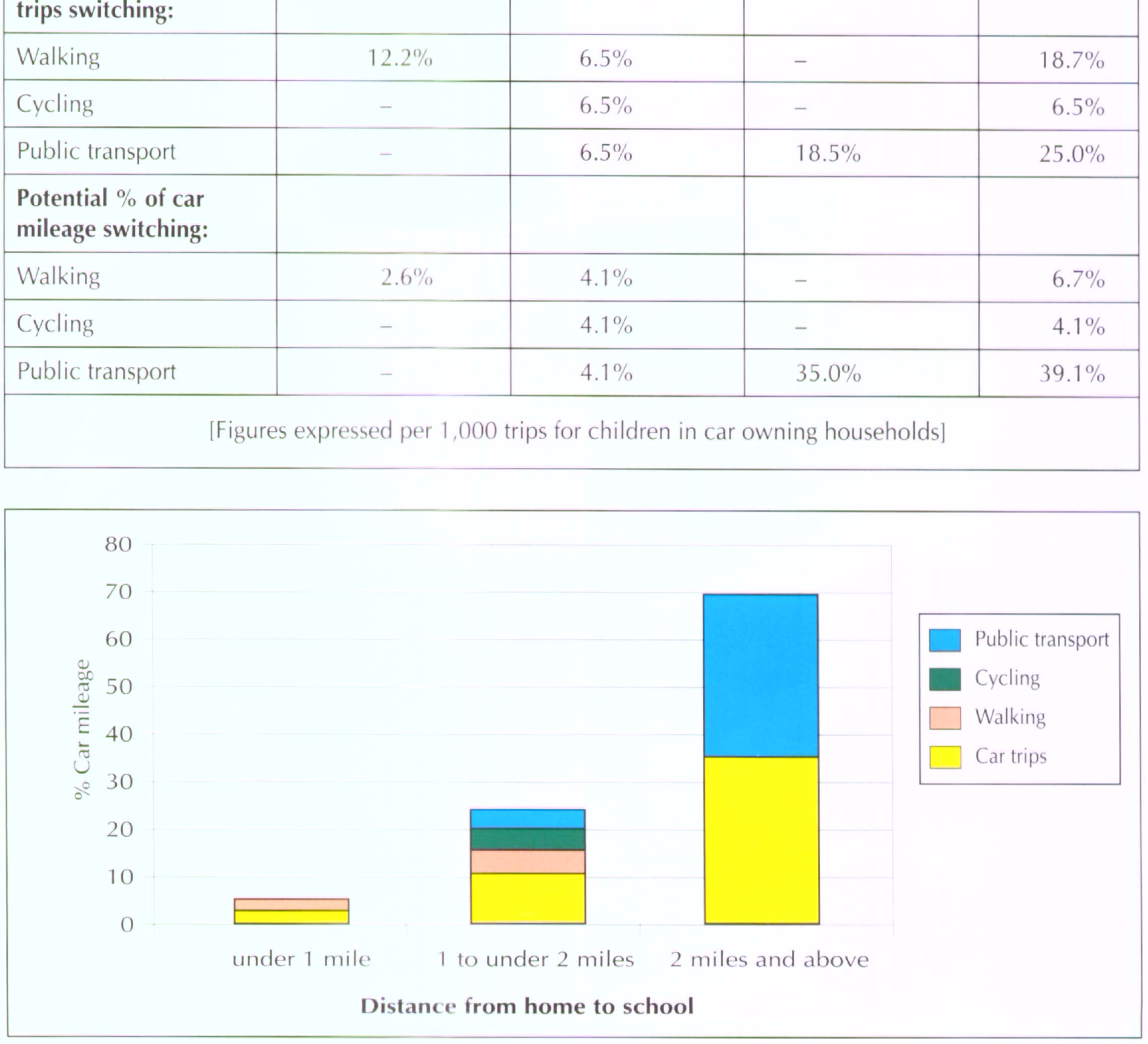
7.2.1 The 5–10 year age group

Table 7.3 shows the distribution of school journeys for primary school children from car owning households, classified by distance and mode, and expressed per thousand trips. It also sets out the potential numbers who might switch to other modes assuming up to a 50 per cent shift from car. Figure 7.2 illustrates the potential for school car mileage reduction among 5 to 10 year old children.

Table 7.3 Potential for reducing car use on school escort trips – 5-10 year olds

Distance from home to school	Under 1 mile	1 to under 2 miles	2 miles and above	Totals
Current travel mode:				
Car trips	111	176	168	455
Walk trips	419	47	3	469
Cycle trips	0	3	0	3
Public transport	3	11	42	56
Other	0	7	10	17
Total (all modes)	533	244	223	1,000
% car trips	**24.4%**	**38.7%**	**36.9%**	**100%**
Car mileage	56	264	743	1,063
% car mileage	**5.3%**	**24.8%**	**69.9%**	**100%**
Potential alternative modes	Walking	Walking Cycling Public transport	Public transport	
Potential % of car trips switching:				
Walking	12.2%	6.5%	–	18.7%
Cycling	–	6.5%	–	6.5%
Public transport	–	6.5%	18.5%	25.0%
Potential % of car mileage switching:				
Walking	2.6%	4.1%	–	6.7%
Cycling	–	4.1%	–	4.1%
Public transport	–	4.1%	35.0%	39.1%
[Figures expressed per 1,000 trips for children in car owning households]				

Figure 7.2 Potential for car mileage reduction among 5-10 year olds



Over half of primary school children in car owning households live within a mile of their school, and nearly 80 per cent of them already walk to/from school. This band contains about a quarter of school car trips, but only 5 per cent of car mileage – so the effects on congestion of half of these trips switching from car to walk would be minimal. Overall, if this target were achieved, the total numbers of primary school children walking to school (including those from non-car owning households) would increase by less than 10 per cent.

Above one mile, between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of children from car owning households are currently driven to/from school by car. So, this is the area where the greatest potential for change arises. However, it also implies very substantial increases in trips by cycle and public transport - which, in the latter case, might be difficult for the operators to meet, in the short term – and requires issues of accompaniment or supervision to be addressed.

Between 1 and 2 miles, improved walking, cycling and public transport facilities could provide feasible alternatives for many children who currently travel by car. This distance band contains 40 per cent of all primary school car trips and 25 per cent of car mileage. For simplicity, we assume that a third of the target car trips switch to each of the three alternative modes. This would result in a ten-fold increase in cycling in this distance band and a doubling of public transport use – so the implications for service provision are very significant.

Above 2 miles, the main feasible alternative to the car is the bus (either local public bus or special school bus). This distance band contains only 37 per cent of car trips, but 70 per cent of car mileage driven, so it represents the primary target in terms of traffic reduction. A 50 per cent switch of car trips to bus would represent a 150 per cent increase in bus patronage overall – again with implications for service provision.

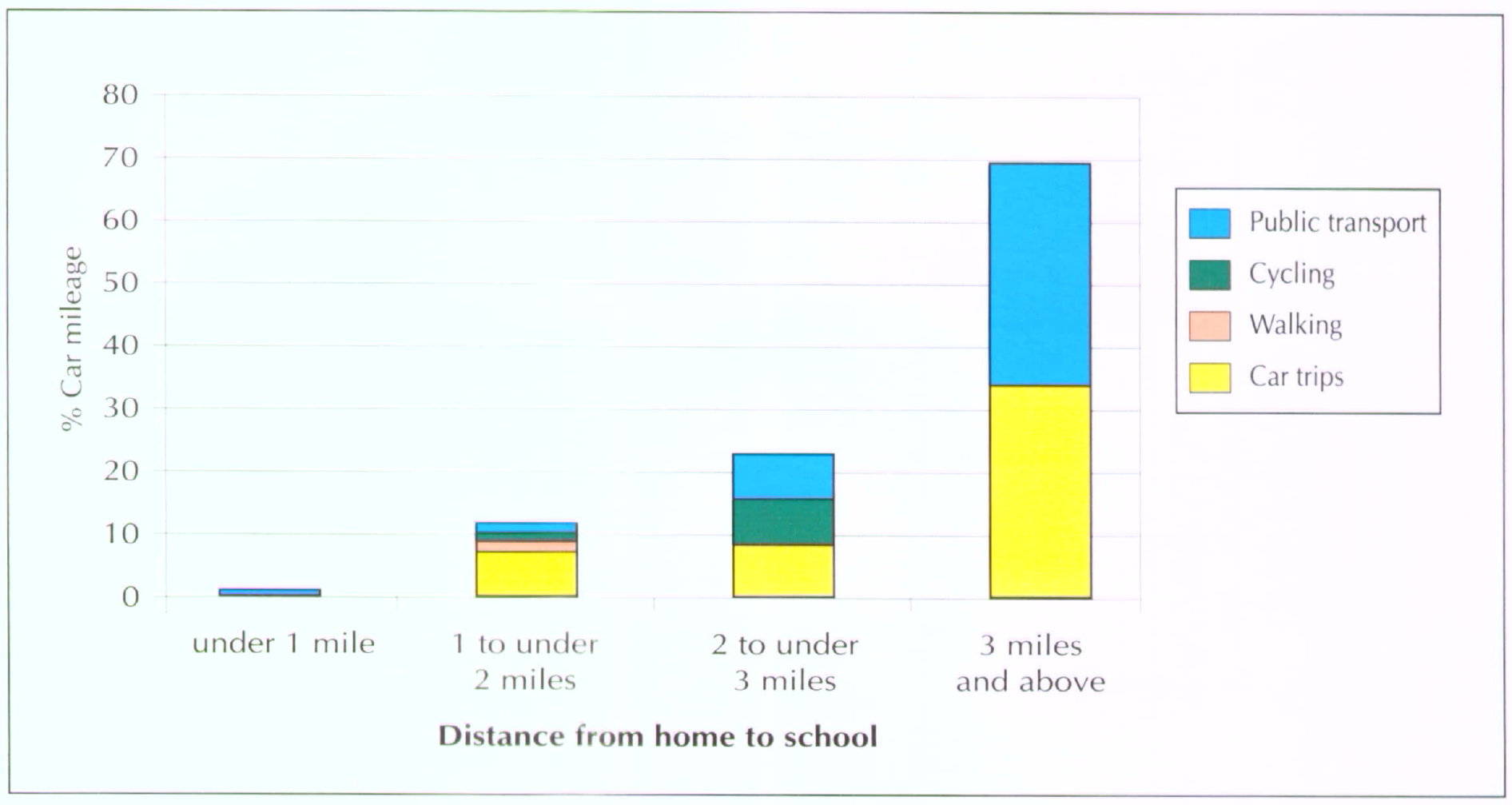
7.2.2 The 11-15 year age group

Here the situation is summarised in Table 7.4 and Figure 7.3, using the same conventions.

Table 7.4 Potential for reducing car use on school escort trips – 11–15 year olds

Distance from home to school	Under 1 mile	1 to under 2 miles	2 to under 3 miles	3 miles and above	Totals
Current travel mode:					
Car trips	22	74	52	88	236
Walk trips	270	123	14	3	410
Cycle trips	3	11	6	3	23
Public transport	3	25	53	222	303
Other	0	0	0	21	21
Total (all modes)	298	235	127	340	1,000
% car trips	**9.3%**	**31.4%**	**22.0%**	**37.3%**	**100%**
Car mileage	11	111	130	556	808
% car mileage	**1.4%**	**13.7%**	**16.1%**	**68.8%**	**100%**
Potential alternative modes	Walking	Walking Cycling Public transport	Cycling Public transport	Public transport	
Potential % of car trips switching					
Walking	4.7%	5.2%	–	–	9.9%
Cycling	–	5.2%	5.5%	–	10.7%
Public transport	–	5.2%	5.5%	18.7%	29.4%
Potential % of car mileage switching					
Walking	0.7%	2.3%	–	–	3.0%
Cycling	–	2.3%	4.0%	–	6.3%
Public transport	–	2.3%	4.0%	34.4%	40.7%
[Figures expressed per 1,000 trips for children in car owning households]					

Figure 7.3 Potential for car mileage reduction among 11–15 year olds



Up to 1 mile, around 90 per cent of secondary school children from car owning households already walk to school, so there is limited scope to increase this level: only 9 per cent of car trips and 1 per cent of car mileage are in this band. So, if 50 per cent of existing car trips switched to walk, it would increase walking trips overall by just 3 per cent.

From 1 to 2 miles, all three modes provide a credible alternative to the car: walking, cycling and public transport. This band contains 30 per cent of car trips, but only 14 per cent of total car mileage.

If, for simplicity, we assume an equal split of the 50 per cent shift from car among the three alternative modes, then the overall effect would be: an 8 per cent increase in walking, a doubling of cycle use and a 30 per cent increase in public transport use. All seem feasible.

Between 2 and 3 miles, walk becomes unattractive, but most pupils have a choice between cycling and public transport. Here the market potential represents 22 per cent of car trips and 16 per cent of car mileage. Again, we assume an equal shift to both alternatives. This would increase cycle use by over 200 per cent and public transport use by 20 per cent.

Above 3 miles, public transport (mainly bus) provides the best alternative to the car, and for most pupils is provided without charge. While this band contains only 37 per cent of car trips, it is responsible for 69 per cent of car mileage, so (as with primary school children) in terms of traffic reduction is the market to focus upon. A 50 per cent switch from car would only increase public transport use by 20 per cent among pupils from car owning households and 17 per cent overall – but it would reduce car mileage by 35 per cent.

7.2.3 Conclusion

Whether car mileage reduction or car trip reduction is the primary goal, this scoping study suggests that (on the assumptions noted above), of the three main alternatives to the car, improvements to public transport offer the greatest potential for reducing car use for both age groups. **Improved bus services could reduce car trips by up to 25 per cent (primary) and 30 per cent (secondary) and in both cases car mileage by up to 40 per cent.**

Despite the longer average car distances to secondary schools, a much higher proportion of younger school children travel by car, so that overall potential car mileage savings for the primary school run are about 25 per cent greater than for the secondary school run.

Most school initiatives to date have focused on improving conditions for those walking and cycling to school. The analysis suggests that these modes have the potential to collectively reduce car trips by about 20 per cent–25 per cent nationally, but in general their impacts on traffic congestion reduction will be relatively marginal – though there may be much greater localised impacts at certain schools.

Since relatively few schools initiatives have yet focused on public transport improvements, we conclude that there is considerable untapped potential here.

What would make a real difference?

7.3 Safety implications of encouraging public transport use

Given the recently announced national Road Safety Strategy, including new 10 year targets to reduce child deaths and serious injuries by 50 per cent, then it is particularly important to consider the safety implications of any initiatives which would cause a modal shift for the school run.

There are differences in accident rates among children using different methods of travel to/from school, which need to be taken into account when encouraging a shift in travel behaviour. Thornthwaite (undated) has compared child accident data against exposure rates from the National Travel Survey, based on miles travelled by mode of transport.

She concludes that children travelling as bus and coach passengers appear to have the lowest accident risk, while those cycling are exposed to the greatest risk. Children on foot are also relatively more likely to be killed or injured than children travelling as car passengers.

However, these figures can be misleading, since door-to-door travel by public transport or car usually involves access/egress on foot; any accidents as part of such multi-stage trips are currently attributed to journeys on foot.

Thus, based on current data, we do not know whether encouraging a shift from car to public transport would reduce or increase accident risk overall.

What is clear, however, is that as part of any such shift, it will be necessary to provide safe walking routes from home to public transport stops. This implies an extension of current 'safe routes to school' initiatives from the areas immediately surrounding schools to include local initiatives in the residential areas served by the school. Such initiatives would also help to reduce child accidents associated with non-school journeys.

Other measures to improve alternative modes

Other measures proposed for improving public transport included the introduction of a **'code of conduct'** which all parties involved in the school journey – pupils, parents, bus drivers, operators and schools would be expected to sign up to. The code would set out both what each party was expected to do with regard to school transport and also what they might expect in return. It would need to include some form of contingency plan as to what would happen if the vehicle did not turn up and other measures aimed at reassuring parents. It would also serve to encourage pupils and bus drivers to respect each other. Another proposed public transport measure is **'adopt-a-bus'**. This would be aimed at encouraging children to use the bus but would also hopefully help to reduce vandalism and bad behaviour and so encourage responsible bus use. The idea has already been tried in Germany and consists of a class or group of school children being allocated a vehicle which is 'their' vehicle. They can then put their own pictures or photographs up and perhaps examples of their work. They have this vehicle and the same bus driver each day, giving them an increased sense of ownership of, and hopefully, greater respect for their school bus.

There is a need to ensure that where **walking and cycling routes** are provided they **are direct and convenient**. This not only increases the attractiveness of such routes for the school journey but should also encourage others to use them, thereby helping to reduce some of the concerns about personal safety sometimes associated with traffic free routes.

Weight/volume of books etc. and lack of storage facilities at schools

Improving the alternatives should include **providing better facilities at schools**. It was clear from comments made in some of the interviews that many pupils have to carry literally everything around with them all day. They do not have anywhere to leave even their coats which clearly encourages car use particularly on wet days when a child would otherwise have to walk round all day with a wet coat. **Lockers and cloakroom facilities** need to be provided at school so that children do not need to carry so much around with them during the school day. Such facilities combined with **arrangements to stay at school** to do music practice or homework would also reduce the need for pupils to carry so much backwards and forwards to school so making it easier to walk, cycle or use public transport.

7.4.2 What if parents feel the child needs to be accompanied?

Sharing escort duties

In order to reduce some of the time pressures on parents who for whatever reason want to escort their child to school we need to consider how the amount of time spent escorting could be reduced. This could either be by sharing the task among parents or by giving the task to someone else – either paid or volunteer. Various ways **of sharing escorting to school** are already being implemented to some degree – for example, walking 'buses' and bicycle 'trains' where parents take it in turns to escort groups of children on foot or by bike. However, there has to date been little attempt to **involve other members of the community in the school journey** in the various ways discussed in sections 7.4.3 and 7.4.4 so perhaps this is an area which needs developing.

Reducing the time pressure

It was very clear from the surveys that the speed and convenience offered by the car were big factors in its choice as the mode used for the school journey. Alternatives to the car were viewed as taking too long. The fact that school journeys are often linked to other trips (workplace, another school, after school activities) adds to the time pressure as there is a need to get somewhere else afterwards quickly as well as getting a child to school on time.

What would make a real difference?

If alternative modes could be made faster or more reliable this would obviously increase their attractiveness compared to the car. Much can be done in terms of providing convenient routes for cycling and walking and reliable bus services as already discussed but it may not be possible to remove all the time advantage of the car. We therefore need to make sure that the increased time spent using other modes is not viewed as wasted time. This could be done by emphasising the advantages to both parent and child of travelling on foot or by bike – physical activity benefits, the chance to talk to each other and appreciate one's surroundings etc. The idea **of making better use of time on public transport or walking** was also discussed at the workshop and it was proposed that exercises could be developed for children to do alone or with parents. One workshop participant expressed concern that children are currently under quite a lot of pressure to succeed at school (and sometimes at home as well) and that some children have very little unstructured time for themselves so that we should try to avoid increasing that pressure. It would probably be better to emphasise the advantages of spending informal time together and learning about life rather than trying to develop formal exercises.

We also need to consider the role the school might be able to play in reducing time pressure on parents. **Providing pre- and post-school facilities** would give pupils greater flexibility in their arrival and departure times and also allow them to do their homework or music practice at school reducing the need to carry books and other equipment home. Such arrangements could make it easier to use public transport where the times do not match school start and finish times. They should also hopefully remove the pressure on parents to be at the school at exactly the right time and so hopefully encourage greater flexibility in the mode used by those who choose to escort their children. However, such schemes would have to be designed carefully to ensure that they did not simply make it easier for parents to drive by allowing them to avoid the most congested times.

The final area discussed under this heading was more flexible employment practices. Some employers already have **'family friendly employment' policies**. However, such policies are not commonplace and this meant that some of the parents in the in-depth interviews were travelling quite a long way to work just because a particular employer was able to offer them the hours they wanted to fit in with the family. The wider introduction of family friendly employment policies would give parents greater choice in the location of their employment. One participant at the workshop pointed out that at present discussion of such policies often tended to focus on mothers and that it was important that fathers should be included too so allowing them to play a greater role in escorting children.

7.4.3 How can danger of traffic accidents be reduced?

Parental concerns about road safety are clearly an important barrier to encouraging public transport use as well as cycling and walking. The latter is also relevant for public transport journeys as children will need to walk to and from bus stops. The solutions proposed under this heading consider what can be done using physical measures, regulation and other facilities to reduce or remove the danger of traffic accidents.

Road safety would be significantly improved if traffic speeds were significantly reduced in the areas used by young children. **Extensive 20 miles/h zones** could be introduced around schools so that children could travel to school much more safely without the need to provide special routes. As many primary schools, especially in urban areas do still have quite tightly defined catchment areas, it might be possible to have a large enough 20 miles/h zone that almost all pupils' homes were included. This should help to encourage large numbers to walk or cycle and, if sufficient numbers were doing so, it should also reduce personal safety concerns because there would be more people about.

7.4.5 What can institutions do to encourage successful outcomes?

One of the main institutional barriers to the implementing of measures is often the lack of resources, in terms of both funding and staff time for local authorities and schools. This barrier needs to be recognised and opportunities identified for implementing measures from both new and existing sources of funding across all aspects of an authority's work. This section considers how various different parts of an authority could contribute to encouraging successful outcomes for school journey measures.

Highway authorities could encourage greater introduction of 20 miles/h and home zones and could provide appropriate infrastructure for cycling and walking wherever possible. They also need to be able to respond positively to schools' requests for physical measures where such measures would support a school's own efforts to encourage a change in mode.

Planning authorities need to ensure that opportunities to provide for non-car modes are planned into new developments. Connected networks should be provided to make walking and cycling more direct and more convenient. These networks should serve not only schools but also places such as shops and libraries to encourage their use by all members of the community. It is also very important to try and ensure that local facilities, such as schools and leisure centres, are provided as early as possible in the building of new developments so that local travel patterns are established. Maximum car parking and minimum cycle parking standards should be set for new leisure centres and similar facilities.

Education authorities can contribute by reviewing policies on school catchment areas and statutory school transport provision to ensure that such policies do not conflict with other objectives in relation to the school journey.

Health authorities are now also starting to take an increasing interest in transport issues. They have an important role to play in encouraging walking and cycling as a means of physical activity and emphasising the health benefits offered by such modes of transport.

The fact that so many different groups have an interest in the school run means that there is a real need for careful co-ordination between them and for **formal procedures to co-ordinate policies across sectors**. Future changes in legislation will provide greater opportunities for local authorities and health authorities to pool budgets for particular initiatives so co-ordination procedures should cover funding and implementation as well as policies.

Chapter 8 Ideas for taking things forward

Summary

The study has found that the greatest gains for congestion reduction and reducing the numbers of car escort trips will come from improving public transport. However, to achieve this level of reduction will require a whole series of measures to address the different barriers identified by parents. The first part of this chapter develops some of the ideas discussed in the course of the study further and comments on what could be done to encourage greater use of public transport. As this was a scoping study, the aim was to produce suggestions which could be developed further rather than firm recommendations for future action. A number of these ideas emerged in the course of the workshop which formed part of the project.

The ideas are discussed under three theme headings. The first theme addresses the need to develop innovative bus services for the school journey and the second looks at ways in which schools could be supported in helping them to provide alternatives. Finally, it considers when the best time might be to encourage pupils to change mode by examining the transition from primary to secondary school.

The Chapter then goes on to discuss ideas for research projects in areas where present knowledge is inadequate to inform the policy debate. In particular:

- *Investigating traffic safety by mode, on a door-to-door basis, taking into account the different stages of the school journey (e.g. from the car to the school gate).*
- *Investigating children's other journeys: examining what scope exists for reducing reliance on the car and relieving parents of the chauffeuring burden.*

The study also identifies a number of other issues which would merit further research including:

- *Relationship between the school run and second car ownership*
- *Locational choices*
- *School reputation and property prices*
- *Changes in legislation*
- *Impacts of car use on children*
- *Costs and benefits of time-use*
- *Monitoring and evaluation*

8.1 Developing the ideas

The study has found that the greatest gains for congestion reduction and reducing the numbers of car escort trips will come from improving public transport. However, to achieve this level of reduction will require a whole series of measures to address the different barriers identified by parents and provide the kind of services that are required. This section develops some of the ideas discussed in the course of the study further and comments on what could be done to encourage greater use of public transport. As this was a scoping study the aim was to produce suggestions which could be developed further rather than firm recommendations for future action. A number of these ideas emerged in the course of the workshop which formed part of the project.

The ideas are discussed under three theme headings. The first theme addresses the need to develop innovative bus services for the school journey and the second looks at ways in which schools could be supported in helping them to provide alternatives. The final theme considers when the best time might be to encourage pupils to change mode by examining the transition from primary to secondary school. The ideas under

each theme are of particular relevance to public transport but many would also be of benefit to those walking and cycling.

8.1.1 Theme 1: Ideas for developing innovative bus services

The best place to develop innovative new bus services would probably be in areas where there was a group of schools (probably, but not necessarily, one secondary school and several primary schools) located reasonably close to each other. They would also work best where there is a high proportion of pupils living beyond a mile from the school but ineligible for public transport either because they live within the statutory minimum distance for which transport is provided or because they have chosen a school other than their nearest. It would be necessary to ensure that the new services complemented, rather than competed with, any statutory school transport provision in the area.

Innovative public transport services should be aimed primarily at the school journey but designed to meet other journey needs where possible. Although there have been quite a lot of walking and cycling initiatives aimed at reducing car use on the school journey there has been much less attention paid to public transport initiatives. Even where school transport is provided, existing bus services do not always cater for children participating in extra-curricular activities. It may be possible to overcome this by introducing services aimed at getting parents home after work (by the same route), which would also serve schools after hours.

The services would have to be carefully designed to ensure that they met parents' requirements and careful consideration should be given as to whether the services should be restricted to pupils, their parents and adults accompanying pupils or made available to all. The latter would provide more opportunities to raise revenue from the service whilst the former would hopefully address some of the parents' concerns about both 'stranger danger' and the behaviour of other pupils by excluding the general public but still having some adults on the bus to deter bullying.

The fare structure would need to be carefully designed to encourage both pupils and parents to use the services. Family ticketing initiatives should be introduced providing discounts where several members of the same family or household use the bus service. These could be in the form of reduced price season tickets for the second and subsequent members of the household who use the services. Alternatively, a family travel card could be introduced allowing up to four members of the same household to travel together but priced only slightly higher than a standard season ticket. The ticketing system should also be designed in such a way that families travelling together could purchase reduced rate tickets for individual journeys.

The bus drivers on these services should be specially trained to work with children and young people to ensure that they treat all their passengers with respect. The pupils should also be trained how to behave appropriately on public transport. This training should cover all aspects of public transport use, such as reading a timetable and how to board and alight from buses safely. Regular bus drivers would need to be assigned to these routes so that the pupils, parents and bus drivers could get to know each other. Special sessions could be organised at the schools to introduce the bus drivers to the pupils and parents. This would also provide an opportunity for on-vehicle training in the use of public transport, so that pupils who may rarely have travelled on a bus could experience the use of public transport.

If there are particular concerns about the behaviour of pupils and issues such as bullying it would be a good idea to introduce supervisors or escorts on the vehicles. The use of regular bus drivers would hopefully alleviate some of these concerns and if parents and other accompanying adults are encouraged to use the services they should

have an impact on pupils' behaviour. However, it may be appropriate to formally appoint one or more adults on the bus as escorts to ensure that other parents feel confident about allowing their children to use the service. This would particularly be the case for younger children whose parents would want to know exactly who would be keeping an eye on them. Where the services are mainly used by older children it may be more appropriate to encourage adults to use the services to deter bad behaviour but not to provide direct supervision as this would remove some of the attractiveness offered by independent bus travel. It may be possible to encourage parents (or grandparents) who need to travel anyway to act as escorts by offering travel at a discounted rate or even free of charge. Alternatively, other parents (or grandparents) could be asked to volunteer as escorts on a rota basis.

It would probably not be practical to have escorts on all non-school journeys so it would be particularly important that regular bus drivers were used for these journeys and that parents were encouraged to use the services at these times. CCTV cameras could be provided on the vehicles to give an added sense of security. The cameras would also hopefully deter bad behaviour and vandalism. It may be appropriate to consider innovative ways of operating the services at times when they are less heavily used, for example, the service could operate on some form of dial-a-ride system in the evenings and could be diverted off the designated route to drop people close to home. Low-floor vehicles should be used to make it easier for parents travelling with younger children in pushchairs to use the services.

It would be very important that the services were well publicised. Timetables should be distributed directly to pupils' home addresses to ensure that parents, as well as pupils, were aware of the service. If the timetables are only distributed at school, the information may not reach the parents. If the services are to be made available to the general public timetables should also be sent to all addresses served by the routes. Timetables should also be prominently displayed at each of the schools, all bus stops and locations such as leisure centres and libraries served by the vehicle. As well as providing information about the services offered, publicity should promote the advantages of using public transport - good safety record, no need to worry about parking etc. to encourage people to use it.

The co-operation of the bus company would be vital to the success of this demonstrator so it would have to be implemented in conjunction with an operator who was willing to be flexible and innovative. Such a bus company may be willing to part-fund the initiative, or, at least, to guarantee to continue the service once it has been demonstrated that it can be effective. It often takes several months for patronage on new bus services to grow as people need to be sure that the service will continue before they change existing travel patterns. Good publicity and fare incentives should encourage people to start using the services but it will be important to maintain publicity and not to be discouraged if there are low levels of take-up initially.

8.1.2 Theme 2: Ideas for providing support at the school level

The ideas under this theme aim to try and overcome some of the barriers to using alternative modes and the difficulty that schools face in devoting time to these issues by examining what could be done at the school level.

The main idea is a school travel facilitator whose role would be to address parents' concerns about travel to school and provide advice for families to help them use alternatives to the car. This advice would concentrate on the school journey but would also cover other journeys particularly where they had an impact on the school journey, for example if a parent dropped a child at school on the way to work. The facilitator would be available on a daily basis to deal with any problems that might arise for example, making alternative arrangements if one of the buses serving the school did

not run, providing information on travel to the school and promoting the advantages of using alternatives.

An important aspect of the role would be ensuring that new entrants to the school were aware of the school's policy of reducing car use and providing opportunities for those currently travelling by car to experience cycling, walking and public transport. The facilitator would also be able to check that pupils had arrived at school safely and inform the parents of those who had not arrived.

The role is potentially very big so the measures offered would need to be developed over time. Initially it would be important to devise ways of involving parents and older pupils in carrying out some of the work and it would also be important to work with teachers and others who work in the school, even if only on an occasional basis. For example, school nurses may be able to help with spreading the message about the health benefits of cycling. It would be very important for the facilitator to communicate well with all these different groups and also to listen to their concerns so as to identify ways of tackling any remaining barriers to reducing car use. For example, it may be that parents with pre-school age children find it difficult to cycle because they do not have the correct equipment to carry such children by bike. The facilitator could set up a cycle equipment loan or exchange scheme to overcome this problem.

The facilitator should be able to remove some of the existing pressures on schools (for example, the Head would be able to refer all parents' queries about transport related issues directly to the facilitator). As part of the initiative the school would, therefore, be expected to offer certain supporting measures to ensure that it is made as easy as possible to travel by alternatives. These would include:

- facilities for doing homework at school to give greater flexibility in arrival and departure times and removing the need for children to carry so many books home with them;
- the provision of secure storage facilities for bikes, books, coats, umbrellas etc.;
- a review of timetable commitments and start and finish times to try and ensure that pupils do not need to travel in the dark particularly at the start of the school year;
- a review of teaching commitments and facilities for teachers to make it easier for teachers to travel by other modes, for example by reducing the need to do marking and preparation work at home;
- a review of selection criteria; and
- restrictions on vehicles arriving immediately before and leaving immediately after the end of the school day.

The school would also be expected to be reasonably flexible in responding to suggestions put forward by the School Travel Facilitator as a result of concerns raised by parents.

It is recognised that teachers and other school staff are already under pressure to meet a number of commitments and can not be expected to take on additional responsibilities. The role of facilitator would therefore ideally be a new appointment to the school. In future, it may be possible to combine budgets for a range of issues of relevance to school travel e.g. school crossing patrols, health promotion, road safety training etc. to give each school or group of schools the funding for a school travel facilitator. It may also be possible to draw on less obviously related sources of funding as some of the school travel facilitator's work may assist other school policies. For example, informing parents of pupils who do not arrive at school could form part of an anti-truancy initiative as well as alleviating safety concerns. Alternatively, local authorities might wish to review the role of existing staff such as road safety officers who already work closely with schools and see if they could work on a wider range of issues with a smaller group of schools.

8.1.3 Theme 3: Targeting the transition from Primary to Secondary school

Changes in people's lives, such as moving house or starting a new job, often mean a need to re-assess travel choices and are therefore a good time to encourage a change in the mode use. The ideas here use the transition from primary to secondary school and the greater levels of freedom often associated with this as an opportunity for encouraging the use of modes other than the car for children's journeys. There would also be a strong road safety element to the initiative. Themes 1 and 2 would both offer benefits to non-car owning families as well as encouraging those with cars to use them less. However, an important aspect of the 'transition' theme would involve teaching final year primary pupils how to travel safely to their secondary school on foot, by bicycle or by public transport, whichever was the most appropriate. Theme 3 would therefore benefit all pupils by providing important skills whilst also demonstrating that travel by this mode is possible for those who might otherwise not consider it. It could build on the initiative already being undertaken by BITER to develop materials for use by parents and children on transition from primary to secondary school.

Some Road Safety Officers already work with children on their transition to secondary school but this work usually concentrates on ensuring that pupils who will be travelling to school unaccompanied for the first time have the necessary road safety skills. The ideas suggested here would put a greater emphasis on promoting the use of alternative modes. Once pupils knew which secondary school they would be attending, special classes would be organised when pupils would be given maps and asked to mark on their home location and the location of their new school. The base maps should show information such as bus routes serving the school, the location of school crossing patrols and other pedestrian crossing facilities, any traffic-free walking and cycling routes in the area and any locations which are recognised as being unsafe and to be avoided. Using this information pupils would then be asked to decide which would be the best mode for them to use and what route they would take.

Ideally, a computerised mapping system should be used so that as well as each child being able to see the information for themselves, the information for all pupils moving to the same school could be marked on one map. This could even include linking to information supplied by pupils in the other primary schools involved in the demonstrator but the most important links would probably be with other pupils at the same primary school. Pupils who already live very close together may well already know who they could travel with but pupils travelling by car may be unaware that they are travelling past, or close to, the homes of other pupils. If the information for all the pupils is shown on one map it would be possible to see which pupils will be travelling along the same routes and which pupils could travel together, even if it is for only part of the journey. Where distances are greater, the information could also be used to show where there may be a need for new bus services or revisions to existing services.

Once they had decided which mode they would be using, the pupils would be divided into groups and taken out by road safety officers or appropriately trained volunteer parents to travel the route to their new school. It may even be possible to involve older pupils from the secondary school in teaching the primary school pupils about their route to school. This would have the added advantage of allowing younger pupils to get to know some of the older pupils before they change school. Depending on which mode was to be used, the training would cover issues such as identifying safe places to cross the road, where the bus stops are, what to do if the bus does not arrive, areas which might be best avoided etc. This training would be intended to complement rather than replace any other relevant training. So, for example, those cycling should also be offered on-road cycle training. Lessons in other useful topics could also be arranged, for example bicycle maintenance, possibly provided by older pupils.

The Family and the School Run: What would make a real difference?

Final year primary school pupils usually attend an induction day at their secondary school in the summer term before they change schools. Parents would be strongly encouraged not to use the car when they go to the induction day with their children but to travel by whichever alternative mode has been identified as most appropriate. If time allowed these induction days would include a brief session on the school's travel policies emphasising to parents the importance of independent travel for their children. It should be school policy to persuade parents to make every effort possible to accompany their child by the appropriate non-car mode for the first week of the new school term if they feel the need to escort their child. This could be combined with incentives such as a week's free travel on public transport or the loan of a bicycle for the week to make the use of an alternative as easy as possible. After the first week both child and parent would hopefully be confident enough for the child to travel alone.

The school's policies on encouraging independent travel should be advertised to prospective parents in advance of them making choices about their child's secondary school. This can be done in such a way as to emphasise the positive educational and health advantages of encouraging travel by non-car modes rather than focusing on the need to deter car use.

Although this initiative is primarily aimed at the school journey, providing children with the necessary skills and confidence to travel independently for the school journey should have a knock-on effect on the modes they choose to use for other journeys.

8.2 Areas for further research

A number of areas have been identified where further evidence is needed to enable future policy initiatives to be developed and implemented cost effectively. Areas of particular importance are:

- Investigating traffic safety by mode, on a door-to-door basis

Current accident statistics do not accurately portray the risks associated with different modes as they do not take into account the different stages of the school journey (e.g. from the car to the school gate or from home to the bus stop). There is a need to examine road accidents involving children in greater depth to try and identify the true risks associated with each mode

- Investigating children's other journeys

Further research is required to look more closely at children's other journeys, to see how many involve the parent making a car journey he/she would not otherwise need to make and how many are journeys where the child would be travelling with one or both parents anyway. It would also be useful to look more closely at some of the school travel initiatives which have been implemented to determine whether these have had an impact on children's other journeys.

In addition, the study has identified a number of other areas where there is a need for further information to inform the policy debate. These are:

- School choice/statutory school transport provision

Some pupils travel further to school because they are unable to get a place at their local school. In other cases parents choose to send their children to a more distant school. Schools should be encouraged to include distance in their selection criteria and families should be encouraged to consider transport issues when choosing schools for their children. Some schools already send out information to prospective parents aimed at persuading them not to drive their children to school and this practice should be more widely encouraged.

Ideals for taking things forward

Any review of school selection policies should perhaps be linked to policies on the provision of free school transport which currently seem to favour certain types of school. There are concerns about the equity of the current system of provision. It is proposed that the existing legislation should be reviewed to examine whether the way in which school transport is currently funded and provided is the most efficient and effective.

- School hours and terms

There are already various proposals to alter the school year and extend school hours. The transport implications of such proposals should be investigated prior to their implementation.

- Relationship between the school run and second car ownership

It is the availability of a car as much as the ownership of one that appears to determine its use for the 'school run'. It is likely that in households with only one car, the car may well be being used for another purpose at the time children need to travel to and from school. What would be interesting to investigate is the extent to which second car ownership is determined by the need (perceived or real) to use a car for the 'school run'. In other words, have families purchased a second car simply to have one available for the 'school run'?

- Locational choices

Further research is needed into the extent to which people are fully aware of the transport implications of their locational decisions and the relative importance that people place on the various factors which need to be considered when making those decisions.

- School reputation and property prices

Some reports have suggested that the reputation of a school can affect the price of property in its catchment area and that schools with a good reputation can add 10-15 per cent to property prices. Research is needed to determine the extent to which this is true and the extent to which parents are prepared to move and to pay more for property in areas with good schools. It would also be very important to examine the implications of this for policies such as social inclusion and regeneration, as well as for transport and education.

- Changes in legislation

Some other European countries have used changes in legislation to improve road safety by increasing the responsibility of drivers involved in accidents with child cyclists and pedestrians. There is a need to examine such approaches and to consider the extent to which they could be adopted in this country.

- Impacts of car use on children

Much concern is expressed about the extent to which increasing car use is effecting children's health, fitness and psychological development. However, there has been little research to date to provide concrete evidence of the impacts of car use on children. Whilst such research might be very difficult to undertake, it would provide valuable evidence to demonstrate the need to dedicate resources to school travel initiatives and other measures designed to encourage children to use other modes.

- Costs and benefits of time-use

One of the main factors encouraging parents to use the car for the 'school run' and other journeys to accompany their child is the significant time savings it offers. People are increasingly busy and have high expectations about the number of different

activities they can fit into a day. As more and more time-saving devices (including the car) are on offer a lot of people increasingly feel they do not have enough time to do the things they want to do. This has given rise to the description of some people as being 'money-rich and time-poor'. It would be interesting to examine the value that families attach to the different ways they spend their time and what they perceive as being the costs and benefits of this, in order to try and identify ways in which families might be encouraged to spend their time differently.

- Monitoring and evaluation

Last, but certainly not least, there is a real need to develop cost-effective indicators for monitoring and evaluating the various different school travel initiatives currently being undertaken. Many initiatives are not being monitored because this is seen as an unnecessary expense. However, it is very important for the future encouragement of further expenditure on these initiatives that they are monitored so that their success can by proven and evaluated so that the most effective aspects are developed and the less effective ones refined and improved. What is therefore required is an examination of how this could be done in the most cost-effective way.

Chapter 9 Conclusions

The study has found that **the 'school run' is not as great a contributor to morning peak traffic congestion as is often assumed**, although it does contribute more significantly to air pollution, in terms of the number of cold starts. Some commentators are also concerned that the growing levels of car use for the school journey may contribute to reductions in children's health and independence.

Many parents would welcome the opportunity to drop out of the 'school run', taking pressure off their busy lives, and giving greater independence to their children. Over half of parents think that measures could be introduced which would give them the confidence to let their children travel by another means of transport to/from school each day.

The barriers that currently inhibit parents from letting children use these other modes are many in number and complex in their interaction, and removing them will involve a large number of agencies. But a serious effort to improve modal alternatives, coupled with initiatives within the schools themselves, could potentially reduce car use by up to 50 per cent.

The greatest gains for congestion reduction and reducing the numbers of car escort trips will come from improving public transport. **We estimate that a greatly improved public transport service could reduce car mileage associated with the school run by 40% and school escort trips by up to 25 per cent–30 per cent.**

To achieve this full market potential will require **a whole series of measures to address the different barriers identified by parents**. Bus operators will have to provide services that meet children's needs - taking them where they need to go, when they need to be there - with a guarantee of reliability, and at attractive fare levels. Local authorities will need to provide safe routes to bus stops and deal with bullying *en route* to school. Schools will need to provide safe storage facilities, offer first day absence reporting and offer facilities for after school supervision.

However, from the available evidence **it is not clear whether encouraging a shift to public transport would reduce or increase accident risk**. This is a serious deficiency in our existing knowledge, inhibiting policy initiatives and the appropriate targeting of resources.

While the scoping study has focused on the 'school run', many of the concerns and barriers identified by parents that inhibit the use of alternative modes **apply equally to non-educational trips by children**. The latter form the bulk of children's travel over the year, and are the major source of child deaths and serious injuries.

In order to address these issues, **it will be necessary to carry out further research in several areas**, in particular:

- Investigating traffic safety by mode, on a door-to-door basis, taking into account the different stages of the school journey (e.g. from the car to the school gate).
- Investigating children's other journeys: examining what scope exists for reducing reliance on the car and relieving parents of the chauffeuring burden.

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Appendix A Topic guide used for in-depth interviews

SCHOOLS' STUDY: HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Introductions – thanks for participating
- Hand out voucher + get form signed

GET OUT DIARIES:

- Views on the diary:

was it easy to fill in? any difficulties?
was it interesting?
any value as educational exercise?
any suggestions for improvement?

TRIP MATRIX:

- Run through the child's week

day by day, activity, mode, location
how typical was the week?
how does it vary?

- Links with parents' trips/activities: complex scheduling problems?
- Any seasonal variations?

MAP OF GENERAL TRAVEL AREA:

- Mark on home and the location of activities child takes part in during the week

Review modes used:
are there other ways of getting there?
are they used?
why/why not?

- Are any problems experienced in getting there/back (congestion, etc?)

Why choose school – others considered?
Was travel a consideration?
Distance, impact on themselves etc?
Consideration of secondary school locations?
Location of other activities: options?
Was travel a consideration?
Home location: how long there?
Was location influenced by child's activities, easy access, etc?
If able to more now, would you consider somewhere different, to better fit in with child's activities?
Work location (if applicable?)
Relationship with car ownership?

The Family and the School Run: What would make a real difference?

THE JOURNEY TO/FROM SCHOOL

Mark route to/from school on map – ask driver to "talk you through" the route.

Any problems on the route?
difficult junctions, dangerous sections, etc?

Do they enjoy journey? Why/why not?

- Use of alternative routes?

Availability of alternative modes?
bus/rail, cycle, walk, car share?
pluses and minuses
why not used?

- Interest in using alternatives?

would you like your child to be able to get to/from school without you driving?
main barriers?
Expectations/social pressures?
Restrictions on own lifestyle?
Anyone else that can help?

If alternative mode available [and travel time INCREASES], mark out implications on Time Line
would this have any other implications for travel/activity patterns?

- What could be done to make alternative mode(s) attractive? (both for school and other car trips)
- Extent to which car used vs other modes in general?

why/why not use other modes?

How did they travel to school/other places themselves when younger?
If walked/cycled/pt etc. why are these modes not suitable for their own children?

Any recent experience of using rail, bus at other times (eg school holidays) – both themselves and kids?

Do they feel area is safe?
If not, is it 'stranger danger' or danger from traffic?

'Coping strategies' – would child know what to do if parent did not turn up to collect them?

SCHOOL TRAVEL INITIATIVES

- Awareness of any local initiatives

at the school: what done
in the wider area

- Views on what has been proposed/implemented?

- Reactions to (other) possible policy options:

school buses
safe routes to school: paths, traffic calming?
School crossing patrols
Walking buses
Car sharing

Appendix A

CHILD ESCORT (modify for older children)

Is child always escorted?
Why (lack of network knowledge, road safety, stranger danger, etc?)
Limits to travel on own?
Mark on map – PROBE why boundaries chosen?

- Are certain modes excluded (e.g. bike) Why?

WIDER TRANSPORT/CHILD WELLBEING ISSUES

- Any concerns about traffic problems in general? (congestion, speed, safety, pollution, etc)
- Views on what should be done about traffic?
- Any concerns about child health, exercise, etc?
- Any general desire to reduce child's dependence on the car?
- Willingness to change behaviour – how? – what needs to happen?

Appendix B Omnibus survey questionnaire

Answers will be inverted randomly

If [Q9751, 2] go to end of questionnaire

Question 1

1021L1

Q.1 Do you or someone else in your household own or have use of a **car**? If yes, how **many cars**?

1 ❑ 1 car
2 ❑ 2 cars
3 ❑ 3 or more cars
4 ❑ No car

If [Q1, 4] go to end of questionnaire

Question 2

1022L1

SHOW SCREEN

Q.2 Are there any children in your household aged between **5 and 15 years**? If yes, how many?

1 ❑ Yes – one child aged 5–15
2 ❑ Yes – two children aged 5–15
3 ❑ Yes – three children aged 5–15
4 ❑ Yes – four children aged 5–15
5 ❑ Yes – five or more children aged 5–15
6 ❑ No children aged 5–15

If [Q2, 1] continue at question 8003
If [Q2, 2–5] continue at question 8103
Otherwise go to end of questionnaire

Question 8003

I would now like to ask you some questions about schools and travelling to and from school.

Question 3

1023L1

Q.3a Does that child attend **boarding school**?

1 ❑ Yes – does attend boarding school
2 ❑ No – does not attend boarding school

If [Q3, 1] go to end of questionnaire
Otherwise continue at question 4

Question 8103

I would like now to ask you some questions about schools and travelling to and from school.

Question 8503

1024L1

Q.3b Do any of the children aged 5–15 attend **boarding school**?

1 ❑ Yes – they all attend boarding school
2 ❑ Yes – some attend boarding school and some don't
3 ❑ No children attend boarding school

If [Q8503, 1] go to end of questionnaire

Question 4

Question only asked, if [Q3, 2]
1025L2

SHOW SCREEN

Q.4a How old is that child?

5 ❑ 5
6 ❑ 6
7 ❑ 7
8 ❑ 8
9 ❑ 9
10 ❑ 10
11 ❑ 11
12 ❑ 12
13 ❑ 13
14 ❑ 14
15 ❑ 15

Question 8504

Question only asked, if [Q8503, 2]
1027L2

SHOW SCREEN

Q.4b I would now like to ask you some questions about **one** child only. Please think about one of your children aged 5 to 15 who **does not** attend boarding school and whose birthday is coming up next. What is the **age** of that child?

5 ❑ 5
6 ❑ 6
7 ❑ 7
8 ❑ 8
9 ❑ 9
10 ❑ 10
11 ❑ 11
12 ❑ 12
13 ❑ 13
14 ❑ 14
15 ❑ 15

Question 8604

Question only asked, if [Q8503, 3]
1029L2

SHOW SCREEN

Q.4c I would now like to ask you some questions about one child only. Please think about the child aged 5–15 who's birthday is coming up next. How old is that child?

5	❑	5
6	❑	6
7	❑	7
8	❑	8
9	❑	9
10	❑	10
11	❑	11
12	❑	12
13	❑	13
14	❑	14
15	❑	15

Question 5

1031L1

Q.5 Is this child a girl or a boy?

1	❑	Girl
2	❑	Boy

Question 6

Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
1032L2

SHOW SCREEN

Q.6 What is your **relationship** to this child?

1	❑	A. Parent (living with partner)
2	❑	B. Parent (single)
3	❑	C. Step-parent/partner of parent
4	❑	D. Older brother/sister
5	❑	E. Grandparent
99	❑	
6	❑	F. Other relationship

Question 7

User defined button: 7 "DK"
1034L2

SHOW SCREEN

Q.7 Approximately how **far is it** from home to this child's school?

1 ❑ Less than half a mile
2 ❑ 1/2 mile up to 1 mile
3 ❑ Over 1 mile up to 2 miles
4 ❑ Over 2 mile up to 3 miles
5 ❑ Over 3 mile up to 5 miles
6 ❑ More than 5 miles
99 ❑ 11
7 ❑ DK

Question 8

User defined button: 3 "DK"
1036L1

Q.8 Is this **the nearest school** for a child of that age?

1 ❑ Yes
2 ❑ No
3 ❑ DK

Question 9

1037L2

SHOW SCREEN

Q.9 Which one of the following best described **the location** of this child's school?

1 ❑ A. Large town/city **central** (pop. over 250,000)
2 ❑ B. Large town/city **suburban** (pop. over 250,000)
3 ❑ C. Medium sized towns (pop. 25,000 to 250,000
4 ❑ D. Small towns/large villages (pop. 3,000 to 25,000)
5 ❑ E. Rural area
99 ❑

Appendix B

Question 10

Answers will be inverted randomly
1039L1

SHOW SCREEN

Q.10 How important a factor, was **the availability of good schools**, when choosing your **home location**?

1 ❑ Extremely important
2 ❑ Fairly important
3 ❑ Not very important
4 ❑ Not at all important
5 ❑ Not relevant at the time
9 ❑

Question 8512

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
Question only asked, if [Q11, 2]
1140L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.12b Which, if any, of the following factors, influenced **the first choice of school** for this child?
PROBE: Any others?

1 ❑ School's reputation
2 ❑ Brothers/sisters at the school
3 ❑ Wanted private education
4 ❑ Religious preference
5 ❑ Availability of special facilities
6 ❑ Within walking distance
7 ❑ Direct bus service available
8 ❑ On parent's route to work
9 ❑ Other children in area travel to that school
10 ❑ Nearest school to home
11 ❑ Other factor

Question 8612

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
Question only asked, if [Q11, 2]
1239L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.12c Which, if any, of the following factors, apply to the school they now **attend**?
PROBE: Any others?

1 ❑ School's reputation
2 ❑ Brothers/sisters at the school
3 ❑ Wanted private education
4 ❑ Religious preference
5 ❑ Availability of special facilities
6 ❑ Within walking distance
7 ❑ Direct bus service available
8 ❑ On parent's route to work
9 ❑ Other children in area travel to that school
10 ❑ Nearest school to home
11 ❑ Other factor
12 ❑ None, the only reason they go there is because there were no spaces available at school of first choice

Question 13

1338L1

SHOW SCREEN

Q.13 How often does this child attend **organised sport, leisure or social activities** (eg sports clubs, dancing, or music lessons, Scouts, Guides etc.) apart from those at school or during school hours?

1 ❑ Once a week or less often
2 ❑ Twice a week
3 ❑ 3–5 times a week
4 ❑ 6 or more times a week
5 ❑ Does not attend any extra activities

Question 14

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
1339L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.14a How does the child normally travel **to** school?
Please mention all forms of transport that are used regularly, that is at least once a week. If your child uses more than one form of transport, e.g. walk then bus, then it's the bus journey we would like to know about.

AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

1 ❑ Walk alone
2 ❑ Walk – with friends/school age brothers or sisters
3 ❑ Walk – with parent/other adults
4 ❑ Bicycle
5 ❑ Household car driven by mother
6 ❑ Household car driven by father
7 ❑ Household car driven by another person
8 ❑ Other car (lift from friend/neighbour/relative)
9 ❑ Bus

99 ❑
10 ❑ Other

Question 8514

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
1438L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.14b And how does the child normally travel **from** school?
Please mention all forms of transport that are used regularly, that is at least once a week.

AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

1 ❑ Walk alone
2 ❑ Walk – with friends/school age brothers or sisters
3 ❑ Walk – with parent/other adults
4 ❑ Bicycle
5 ❑ Household car driven by mother
6 ❑ Household car driven by father
7 ❑ Household car driven by another person
8 ❑ Other car (lift from friend/neighbour/relative)
9 ❑ Bus

99 ❑
10 ❑ Other

Question 8614

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
Question only asked, if [Q13, 1–4]
1537L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.14c How does the child normally **travel to and from any other activities** (e.g. sports clubs, dancing, music lessons etc) apart from those at school or during school hours? Please mention all forms of transport that are used regularly, that is at least once a week.

AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

1	❑	Walk alone
2	❑	Walk – with friends/school age brothers or sisters
3	❑	Walk – with parent/other adults
4	❑	Bicycle
5	❑	Household car driven by mother
6	❑	Household car driven by father
7	❑	Household car driven by another person
8	❑	Other car (lift from friend/neighbour/relative
9	❑	Bus
99	❑	
10	❑	Other

If [Q14, 5–8 or Q8514, 5–8] otherwise continue at question 8515

Question 8015

DO NOT SHOW SCREEN UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO

Question 15

Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
1636L99

Q.15a Why is the car **used** for the school journey in **preference** to other means of travel?
PROBE: Any other reasons? Any other reasons until no more given?

Continue at question 16

Question 8515

Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
1735L99

Q.15B Why **isn't** the car used for the school journey?
PROBE: Any other reasons? Any other reasons until no more given?

Question 16

Answers will be inverted randomly
1834L2

SHOW SCREEN

Q.16 In some areas parents are concerned about their **child's safety on the school journey** Which **one** of the following statements do you think is the **most** appropriate for this child's journey to school?

1 ❑ A. Neither "traffic danger" nor "stranger danger" are of particular concern
2 ❑ B. "Traffic danger" is a bigger concern
3 ❑ C. "Stranger danger" is a bigger concern
4 ❑ D. Both are of equal concern
99 ❑

Question 8017

'no answer' allowed
1836L1

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.17 Which of the following **measures or facilities** are available to this child at or on their way to school?

1 ❑

Question 17

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
User defined button: 7 "DK"
User defined button: 8 "N"
1837L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

FACILITIES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE – CYCLING

1 ❑ A. Secure cycle parking
2 ❑ B. Showers for cyclists
3 ❑ C. A safe cycling route
4 ❑ D. Cyclist training
5 ❑ E Ban on cycling
99 ❑
6 ❑ F. Other measures relating to cycling
7 ❑ DK
8 ❑ N

Question 8517

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
User defined button: 14 "DK"
User defined button: 15 "N"
1937L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE
FACILITIES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE –
WALKING

9 ❑ G. Organisation of 'walking bus' – rota of parents to escort groups of children on foot
10 ❑ H. A safe walking route
11 ❑ I. School crossing patrol
12 ❑ J. Safe crossing facilities
99 ❑
13 ❑ K. Other measures relating to walking
14 ❑ DK
15 ❑ N

Question 8617

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
User defined button: 21 "DK"
User defined button: 22 "N"
2037L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE
FACILITIES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE –
PUBLIC TRANSPORT

16 ❑ L. Specially provided school bus service
17 ❑ M. Good public bus service
18 ❑ N. Parental escorts on buses
19 ❑ O. Information on buses serving the school
99 ❑
20 ❑ P. Other measures relating to public transport
21 ❑ DK
22 ❑ N

Question 8717

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
User defined button: 29 "DK"
User defined button: 30 "N"
2137L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

FACILITIES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE – GENERAL

23 ❑ Q. Lockers for storing books/gym kit/cycle helmets etc
24 ❑ R. Facilities for pupils to arrive early and stay late at school
25 ❑ S. Organised car-sharing/pooling for the school run
26 ❑ T. Personal safety training
27 ❑ U. Ban on parents stopping at school gates to drop off/pick up children
99 ❑
28 ❑ K. Other measures /facilities
29 ❑ DK
30 ❑ N

If [Q14, 5–8 and Q6, 1–3] otherwise to to end of questionnaire

Question 18

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
User defined button: 5 "None"
3425L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.18 Could something **be done** to **improve** either cycling, walking or public transport that would make you feel confident about your child travelling to school by that means of transport instead of by car? If yes, which of these could be improved?

1 ❑ Cycling
2 ❑ Walking
3 ❑ Public transport
99 ❑
4 ❑ Other general facilities
5 ❑ None

Question 19

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
Question only asked, if [Q18, 1]
User defined button: 7 "DK"
3524L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.19a Which measures or facilities would you like to see **introduced** in terms of **cycling**?

CYCLING

1	❑	A. Secure cycle parking
2	❑	B. Showers for cyclists
3	❑	C. A safe cycling route
4	❑	D. Cyclist training
99	❑	
6	❑	Other measures relating to cycling
7	❑	DK

Question 8519

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
Question only asked, if [Q18, 2]
User defined button: 14 "DK"
3623L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.19b Which measures or facilities would you like to see **introduced** in terms of **walking**?

WALKING

9	❑	G. Organisation of 'walking bus' – rota of parents to escort groups of children on foot
10	❑	H. A safe walking route
11	❑	I. School crossing patrol
12	❑	J. Safe crossing facilities
99	❑	
13	❑	K. Other measures relating to walking
14	❑	DK

Question 8619

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
Question only asked, if [Q18, 3]
User defined button: 21 "DK"
3722L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.19c Which measures or facilities would you like to see **introduced** in terms of **public transport**?

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

16 ❑ L. Specially provided school bus service
17 ❑ M. Good public bus service
18 ❑ N. Parental escorts on buses
19 ❑ O. Information on buses serving the school
99 ❑
20 ❑ K. Other measures relating to public transport
21 ❑ DK

Question 8719

Multiple answers allowed
Answers will be inverted randomly
Open ended answers is written as a bitmap
Question only asked, if [Q18, 1–4]
User defined button: 29 "DK"
User defined button: 30 "N"
3821L99

SHOW SCREEN – MULTI CHOICE

Q.19d Which **other measures or facilities**, if any, would you like to see **introduced** that would make you **more confident** about your child travelling to school by a means **other than** by car?

GENERAL

23 ❑ Q. Lockers for storing books/gym kit/cycle helmets etc
24 ❑ R. Facilities for pupils to arrive early and stay late at school
25 ❑ S. Organised car-sharing/pooling for the school run
26 ❑ T. Personal safety training
27 ❑ U. Ban on parents stopping at school gates to drop off/pick up children
99 ❑
28 ❑ V. Other measures/facilities
29 ❑ DK
30 ❑ N

If [Q18, 5] otherwise continue at question 8021

Question 8020

DO NOT SHOW SCREEN FOR NEXT QUESTION

Question 20

Open ended answer is written as a bitmap
3920L99

You say that there are no circumstances under which your child will travel to school other than by car. Why do you feel that this is the case? **PROBE:** Why else? Until no more reasons given.

Question 8021
SHOW SCREEN
Q.21 Please tell me how much you **agree or disagree** with the following statements...?

Question 21

Answers will be inverted randomly
4019L2

SHOW SCREEN

I worry that my child doesn't know how to cross the roads because he/she usually travels by car rather than walking or cycling
I don't think that my child gets enough physical activity because he/she usually travels by car rather than walking or cycling
I spend too much time chauffeuring my child to school and other activities and I'd like him/her to be more independent so that I could have more time for myself

1 ❑ Agree strongly
2 ❑ Agree slightly
3 ❑ Neither agree nor disagree
4 ❑ Disagree slightly
5 ❑ Disagree strongly

End of questionnaire

End of interview, data will be written

Appendix C List of those represented at the workshop

AA - Andrew Howard

Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers - Graham Feest

Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers - Tim Davies

British Institute of Traffic Education Research - Dr. Andrew Clayton

Children's Play Council - Yvonne Ravestein

CTC - Sinead Flavin

Department for Education and Employment - Patrick Shipp

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions - Charlotte Bradford and Margaret Longes

Department of Health – Mike De Silva

Families for Freedom – Kate Moorcock

Health Education Authority – Hugo Crombie

Leeds City Council – Peter Zanzottera

London Borough of Ealing, Salsa Project – Madeleine Gorman

National Governors' Council – Fran Hollis

National TravelWise Association – John Sykes

Pedestrians Association – Peter Caunter

Professional Association of Teachers – Geoffrey Carver

Robert Gordon University – David Gray

Scottish Executive – Wendy McKendrick

Scottish Road Safety Campaign – Fiona McGregor

Steer Davies Gleave – Caroline Stratton