

CLASS A TAXIS IN BUS LANES TRIAL 2017

Data Assessment – Technical Report



PURPOSE

This technical report collates and reviews the data gathered during the 12 week trial that allowed Class A taxis to use the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) bus lanes in East and West Belfast and the 12 hour city centre bus lanes which link the two BRT routes.

While this report sets out and provides some commentary on the data gathered it does not provide any recommendations or provide any direction in terms of changing access arrangements to bus lanes.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A 12 week trial allowing Class A taxis to use the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) bus lanes in East and West Belfast and the 12 hour city centre bus lanes which link the two BRT routes, commenced on 20 February 2017 and ended on 14 May 2017.
- 1.2 The aim of the trial was to gather data to help determine and quantify the impact on bus performance, and the implications on road safety of allowing Class A taxis into bus lanes.
- 1.3 Data has been gathered from the following sources:
 - i. Traffic surveys on the BRT routes, including journey time, vehicle speed and traffic volume surveys along the trial routes during the 12 week trial period;
 - ii. PSNI injury collision data;
 - iii. Translink bus speed data;
 - iv. An on-line survey conducted via the NIDirect Citizen Space portal seeking the public's views on the trial and bus lane usage in general;
 - v. Correspondence received in relation to the trial;
 - vi. Comber Greenway cycling count data.
- 1.4 Wherever possible any data gathered is compared with data from previous bus lane usage studies to see if there are any trends.

2. Traffic Surveys on BRT Routes

- 2.1 The surveys were carried out by the Department's consultant partner Amey.
- 2.2 During the trial a maximum daily average two-way flow of 18,602 vehicles was recorded on the Falls Road, which is down from 23,595 vehicles in 2007.
- 2.3 Similarly a maximum daily average two-way flow of 18,050 vehicles was recorded on the Upper Newtownards Road, which is down from 20760 vehicles in 2007.
- 2.4 The average daily 5 day flow measured on each route during the trial is presented in table 1:

Table 1: Traffic Volumes 2017 - Average Daily 5 Day Flow (number of vehicles)		
	In-bound	Out-bound
Upper Newtownards Road	7826	9672
Falls Road	9056	9389

- 2.5 During the trial the average maximum in-bound flow per lane during the AM bus lane operating times (07:30 – 09:30) was as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Traffic Volumes 2017 - average maximum in-bound flow per lane during the AM operating times (07:30 – 09:30) (number of vehicles)		
	Lane 1 (Bus lane)	Lane 2
Upper Newtownards Road	192	2003
Falls Road	428	1614

2.6 The average maximum in-bound flows by vehicle classification during the AM bus lane operating times (07:30 – 09:30) for each of the bus lanes is as follows:

Table 3: Traffic Volumes - average maximum in-bound flow in bus lane by vehicle classification during the AM operating times (07:30 – 09:30) (number of vehicles)						
	Upper Newtownards Road			Falls Road		
	2016	2017 Beersbridge Rd	2017 Winston Gardens	2016	2017 Convent of Mercy	2017 Leisure Centre
Bus	-	48	59	50	60	52
Private Car	-	42	61	80	147	41
Private Taxi	-	36	35	23	51	64
Public Taxi	-	0	1	194	128	214
Bicycle	-	33	16	16	22	17
Motorbike	-	24	21	5	3	2
Lorry	-	0	0	1	16	6
Total		183	192	369	428 (+15%)	396 (+7%)

2.7 Recent historical survey data is only available for the Falls Road which was surveyed during 2016. Consequently commentary on Table 3 will mainly relate to this route.

2.8 Table 3 indicates that during the AM bus lane operating times the total volume of traffic recorded using the in-bound bus lanes on the Falls Road has increased by 15% over the 2016 volumes at the count site on the Falls Road at the Convent of Mercy. Class A taxis account for 6% of this increase.

- 2.9 The numbers of buses travelling in-bound on the Falls Road during the AM operating times are of the same general order of magnitude between 2016 and 2017.
- 2.10 In 2016, 80 cars were recorded illegally using the in-bound Falls Road bus lanes during the AM period. The 2017 figures show this as increasing to 147 (+84%) at the Convent of Mercy count site and decreasing to 41 (-51%) at the Falls Leisure Centre. There is no apparent explanation for the different trends at the two sites, however even the lower figure still represents a significant level of abuse by private cars.
- 2.11 The number of private hire taxis using the bus lanes has increased from 23 in 2016, to 51 (+122%) at the Convent of Mercy and 64 (+178%) at the Falls Leisure Centre in 2017.
- 2.12 The numbers of taxis recorded as being outside of the bus lane during the AM operating period for both routes shows an interesting observation, Table 4 refers:

Table 4: Traffic Volumes 2017 - average maximum in-bound flow of taxis during the AM operating times (07:30 – 09:30) (number of vehicles)				
	Inside Bus Lane		Outside Bus Lane	
	Private taxis	Public taxis	Private taxis	Public taxis
Upper Newtownards Rd (Beersbridge Rd)	36	0	36	1
Upper Newtownards Rd (Winston Gardens)	35	1	14	1
Falls Road (Convent of Mercy)	51	128	50	12
Falls Road (Leisure Centre)	64	214	52	13
Falls Road (2016)	23	194	71	28

- 2.13 Table 4 indicates that on both the Upper Newtownards Road and Falls Roads during the AM operating period significant numbers of private hire taxis chose not to use the adjacent bus lane during the trial despite being able to do so. With the exception of the count site at Winston Gardens on the Upper Newtownards Road the figures are roughly equal in terms of private hire taxis either being in or out of the bus lane. There is no obvious explanation. It could be that some drivers felt there was little to be gained in terms of time savings from using the bus lanes and having to share the space with the overall slower moving buses, permitted taxis and bicycles.
- 2.14 In terms of overall numbers of Class A taxis using the Falls Road route there has been a 23% increase between 2016 and 2017 (94 up to 116). It cannot be determined whether this is reflective of a general growth in business over the period, or reflective of an increase in traffic generated by bus lanes being available for use by Class A taxis during the trial, without further analysis.
- 2.15 The number of cyclists is also showing an upward trend with a maximum of 22 recorded in 2017 as opposed to 16 recorded in 2016, while this indicates a 37% uplift it is admittedly from a relatively low base of between 6 and 8 an hour.
- 2.16 As with the 2016 surveys significant numbers of private cars were recorded using the bus lanes with a maximum of 231 recorded close to the Convent of Mercy.
- 2.17 Bus journey times were also recorded during the trial and similar to the traffic count data comparison can only be on the data recorded for the Falls Road and these are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Bus Journey Times - average in-bound journey times during the AM operating times (07:30 – 09:30) (minutes:seconds)							
Link	Period	2001	2005	2016	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17
Falls Road	AM	13:49	17:37	12:41	13:39	13:11	12:51
Falls Road	PM	-	-	-	12:47	13:57	11:45
Upper N'ards Road	AM	-	-	-	16:28	21:36	17:33
Upper N'ards Road	PM	-	-	-	14:54	20:37	17:19

2.18 Table 5 shows an improving trend between 2005 and 2016 of the bus journey times on the Falls Road during the AM period. However, this improvement is however lost between 2016 and 2017. The largest time difference between 2016 and 2017 was +58 seconds (Mar 2017) which represents an 8% increase in journey times.

2.19 While historical bus journey time data is not available for the Upper Newtownards Road, the figures collected for the average AM and PM bus journey times indicate a noticeable variation in times month on month.

2.20 Between March and April 2017 there is a 5 minutes 8 second difference (+30% on the lower figure) in the AM period and 5 minutes 43 seconds difference (+38%) in the PM period, on what should be relatively short journeys of around 15 minutes. These figures highlight the difficulty faced in interpreting this type of bus journey time data without further information on external factors such as parked cars, numbers of passengers, weather etc. which all can impact the duration of a bus journey.

2.21 Cycle journey time surveys (Table 6) were also conducted on both BRT routes. Although the times did vary considerably (by almost

80% between two trips on the Upper Newtownards Road in the PM) the cycle surveyor recorded that the only delays encountered along the route were at bus stops, signalised junctions and pedestrian crossing points.

Table 6: Cycle Journey Times 2017 (minutes:seconds)			
Route	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17
Falls Road in-bound AM	10:06	13:25	12:45
Falls Road out-bound PM	11:56	14:07	15:15
Upper N'ards Rd in-bound AM	16:44	19:10	15:11
Upper N'ards Rd out-bound PM	22:11	14:03	12:24

3. Injury Collision Data

3.1 Injury collision data for the last three available years, 2013 – 2016, was collated for the following BRT Routes:

- i. BRT East: (Upper Newtownards Road – Albertbridge Road – East Bridge Street);
- ii. BRT West (Divis Street – Falls Road – Andersonstown Road – Stewartstown Road); and,
- iii. 12 hour City centre bus lanes.

3.2 The 31st March 2016 is the latest date for available injury collision data, at the time of analysis. Data is not therefore available for the period of the trial.

3.3 Table 7 presents the total numbers of injury collision data.

Table 7: Injury Collision Data – Total Numbers April 2013 – March 2016								
BRT Route	Outside Bus lane collisions					Inside Bus lane collisions		Overall
	Cyclists	Buses	Motorcycle	Taxi	Other vehicles	Cyclists	Other	Total no of collisions on Route
CITY CENTRE	5	21	1	9	47	2	7	92
BRT WEST	8	20	11	19	168	2	2	230
BRT EAST	21	22	2	4	136	3	4	192
Total	34	63	14	32	351	7	13	514
Percentage of total no of collisions on BRT routes	7%	12%	3%	6%	68%	1%	3%	

3.4 With reference to bus lane collisions only, over the three year period the data indicates the following:

- i. The bus lanes are currently relatively safe areas to travel along with less than 4% of the overall number of collisions.
- ii. The overall number of cyclist's collisions is low in all three routes, averaging just over 2 collisions per year and less than 2% of the overall total of accidents on all three routes.
- iii. Other bus lane collisions average just over 4 injury accidents per year with an overall percentage of just over 2% of the total collisions on the BRT network.

3.5 The collision figures for cyclists using stretches of the routes outside the bus lane are higher with a total of 34 recorded, which represents nearly 7% of the total number of collisions.

3.6 7 injury collisions are recorded for cyclists using the bus lanes on the three routes for the three year period. Only 1 of these involved a cyclist in collision with another vehicle using the bus lane (cyclist hit door of black taxi opened by passenger). The remaining 6 involved cars making 'legitimate' crossing movements, i.e. right or left turns and failing to give way. Table 7a refers.

Table 7a: Cyclist Injury Collision Data – Inside Bus lane collisions		
Total Numbers April 2013 – March 2016		
BRT Route	Location of Collision	Cause of Collision
City Centre	Wellington Place Donegal Square East	- Vehicle pulled across bus lane and cyclist fell trying to avoid - Vehicle pulled across bus lane and cyclist fell trying to avoid
BRT EAST	East Bridge Street East Bridge Street East Bridge St/Stewart St	- Cyclist hit car that was making left turn into layby off bus lane. - Cyclist hit by vehicle making right turn across bus lane. - Car making Left turn into Stewart Street hit cyclist.
BRT WEST	Falls Road at Lidl Falls Road / Beechmount	- Cyclist hit by vehicle turning right across bus lane. - Cyclist hit door of black taxi open by passenger

- 3.7 It should be noted that cyclists, responding to this and previous opinion gathering exercises, have consistently challenged the Department's use of injury collision data as in their opinion it does not give the full picture. Cyclists maintain that they feel safer in bus lanes and that this encourages them to cycle. This feeling of safety could be eroded or lost if the volume of traffic in the lanes is increased. They also indicated that the data used, which only includes collisions where an injury is recorded, does not present the full picture in terms of safety. They maintain that near misses are common across the road network.
- 3.8 One collision was reported during the trial. It involved a Class A taxi illegally using the Lisburn Road bus lanes and colliding with a car making a right turn across the bus lane. No further detail is available.

4. Translink Bus Speed Data

- 4.1 Translink provided bus speed information for the Metro 4 service – Upper Newtownards Road and the Metro 10 service Falls Road. This is presented in Table 8 and Table 9 respectively.
- 4.2 Data was provided for the periods 6 weeks before and after the trial, as well as during the trial itself, for both the in-bound and out-bound.
- 4.3 The data does not show any significant difference between the bus speeds measured before, during or after the twelve week trial.
- 4.4 This in some way defies logic. It could be expected that an increase in the volume of traffic using the bus lane should on balance decrease speeds, however the data mostly shows an increase in speeds – though the increases are relatively small.
- 4.5 The two largest increases of bus speed were recorded for the Falls Road in-bound in the 6 weeks after the trial for both the AM and PM periods. This may be because the number of vehicles in the bus lane has reduced but equally it could be down to a decrease in the number of bus passengers.

Table 8: Translink Bus Speed Data 2017: BRT EAST – Upper N’ards Road Metro 4					
OUTBOUND			INBOUND		
AM Peak			AM Peak		
	Average speed (kph)	% change in ave.speed using 6 weeks before as base		Average speed (kph)	% change using 6 weeks before as base
6 weeks Before	14.45		6 weeks Before	11.93	
During trial	14.75	2%	During trial	12.57	5%
6 weeks after trial	14.15	2%	6 weeks after trial	12.27	3%
PM Peak			PM Peak		
6 weeks Before	11.99		6 weeks Before	14.29	
During trial	12.43	4%	During trial	14.87	4%
6 weeks after trial	12.32	3%	6 weeks after trial	14.2	-1%

Table 9: Translink Bus Speed Data 2017: BRT WEST - Falls Road Metro 10					
OUTBOUND			INBOUND		
AM Peak			AM Peak		
	Average speed (kph)	% change in ave.speed using 6 weeks before as base		Average speed (kph)	% change using 6 weeks before as base
6 weeks Before	14.84		6 weeks Before	11.02	
During trial	15.13	1.95%	During trial	10.96	-0.54%
6 weeks after trial	14.85	0.07%	6 weeks after trial	12.16	10.34%
PM Peak			PM Peak		
6 weeks Before	12.64		6 weeks Before	13.34	
During trial	12.87	1.82%	During trial	13.4	0.45%
6 weeks after trial	13.01	2.93%	6 weeks after trial	14.32	7.35%

5. Attitudes - Citizen Space Survey Summary

- 5.1 1197 responses to the on-line survey conducted via Citizen Space were received.
- 5.2 The overall response to the survey, the questions asked and the resultant data tables for each question asked are all contained in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Over half of the responses were from Class A taxi drivers (52% or 626).
- 5.4 'Cyclists' represented the next largest group to respond, at 14% (172), closely followed by 'car drivers' at 10% (125).
- 5.5 Overall 90% of respondents (1074) indicated that they think bus lanes are a good idea.
- 5.6 69% (824) of respondents agreed with the trial to allow Class A taxis into bus lanes for a limited time period. By deduction, if 626 of these responses are from Class A taxi drivers (paragraph 5.3) there is still a significant proportion of others (198 or 16%) supportive of the trial.
- 5.7 In terms of the different types of transport that respondents felt should be using bus lanes, buses attracted the highest level of response with 96% of respondents indicating support for access. Bicycles were next with 85% of respondents being supportive of access.
- 5.8 Nearly 70% of respondents (832) indicated support for Class A taxis being allowed to use bus lanes. This could suggest a

significant percentage of other uses (i.e. not Class A taxi drivers) were supportive of allowing Class A taxis into bus lanes.

Assuming that all Class A taxi drivers (626) would be supportive then a minimum of 206 (17%) other users would share this view.

5.9 When asked to select what factors influence respondents views on the use of bus lanes the top three factors when multiple selections were allowed were:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| i. Better use of road space (taking some vehicles out of the main traffic flow). | 68% (811) |
| ii. More travel choice for travellers, especially people with disabilities. | 57% (686) |
| iii. 12 hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users | 55% (660) |

5.10 However, when respondents were asked to choose which one factor influences your views on the use of bus lanes, the three main factors were:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| i. Better use of road space (taking some vehicles out of the main traffic flow). | 55% (658) |
| ii. Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles). | 10% (122) |
| iii. Safety of cyclists. | 9% (109) |

6. Correspondence Received

6.1 The trial allowing Class A taxis to use bus lanes on the East and West Belfast Rapid Transit routes, plus the 12 hour City Centre bus lanes linking the two, prompted a level of correspondence to the Department.

6.2 The correspondence received comprised:

- 138 letters/e-mails;
- 1850 pre-printed letters of support from taxi drivers and passengers; and,
- 8000 pre-printed postcards of support from taxi drivers and passengers.

6.3 Of the 138 letters/e-mails:

- 7 were neutral;
- 13 indicated support for the trial and asked for access to be made permanent;
- 118 indicated opposition.

6.4 6 of the 138 letters came from local representatives (4 in their then capacity as a Member of Parliament) and all apart from one were supportive of the trial and requested that it be extended.

6.5 The following organisations provided a response:

- Belfast City Council (supportive of trial)
- Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (supportive of trial)
- Bikefest (against the trial)
- General Consumer Council (neutral)
- IMTAC (neutral)
- NIGreenways (against the trial)

- Sustrans (against the trial)
- Translink (against the trial)
- We are cycling UK (against the trial)

6.6 Responses from organisations ranged from being supportive of the trial (2), to being neutral (2) and asking for more analysis to be undertaken, to being against the trial (5).

6.7 Belfast City Council indicated that it was supportive of trial and also voted in favour of having the trial extended.

6.8 6 of the letters/e-mails reported incidents on the routes during the trial mainly involving cyclists and taxi drivers.

6.9 Of the 7 respondents who remained neutral in terms of the overall way forward, 2 welcomed the trial as an opportunity to gather current data.

6.10 The 13 letters/e-mails of support along with the 1850 pre-printed letters and 8000 post-cards had the following main themes/comments:

- Taxis perform a public service;
- Taxi industry subject to regulation and now more professional than ever;
- Complete support from the general public and drivers;
- Traffic moving smoother during trial;
- Passengers getting to destinations quicker; and,
- Trial benefitted both passengers and drivers with no adverse impact.

6.11 The pre-printed letters and post-cards also called for an extension to the trial.

6.12 In terms of letters against the trial, and the concept of allowing all taxis to use bus lanes, the majority were based on the standard format asking that:

- Belfast Rapid Transit be given a chance to bed in; and,
- A proper risk assessment be carried out on the proposal with respect to how it affects vulnerable road users.

6.13 The letters also stated that the right transport decisions are better for public health, congestion and environmental reasons and that increasing opportunity for private taxis is not part of this solution.

6.14 The remaining letters provided various reasons objecting to the trial/concept including:

- Potential setback for cycling in Belfast;
- To increase the number of vehicles currently using bus lanes will have severely detrimental impacts on bus lanes;
- Numbers of private hire vehicles unmanageable and creates high risk to other users (Department challenged to quantify the numbers of taxi using bus lanes);
- Unpopular policy – in 2012 86% of respondents to a consultation to allow all taxis into bus lanes opposed the proposal;
- Need to reduce reliance on private transport;
- Will jeopardise Belfast Rapid Transit;
- Why take a backward step against an improving situation in terms of sustainable transport;
- Need to tackle the health threat of air pollution in Belfast;
- Risking the safety of people on bicycles and motorcycles;
- Cyclists and motorcyclists already vulnerable road users;
- In Dublin, taxis in bus lanes considered biggest problem for cyclist safety;
- Until there is a proper segregated cycle network protect bus lanes;

- Unfounded claims by taxi companies;
- Taxis are private hire vehicles which are not a substitute for an effective public transport system;
- There is no evidence that allowing private hire vehicles to use bus lanes reduces congestion;
- There is no precedent for private hire vehicles using bus lanes in any other UK city;
- No base line for trial – trial is therefore flawed;
- Equality Impact Assessment needed.
- Trial would normally be scrutinised by DfI Committee;
- Further research required;
- Freeze current bus lane arrangements for 5 years to allow for review of BRT and to make progress with cycling network;
- Cyclists highly dependent on bus lanes, a segregated system of bus lanes needed;
- Need to invest in and promote public transport and active travel to improve health, air quality, reduce congestion and boost urban environment and the economy;
- Further data and analysis needed, and then formal consultation;
- Aggressive driving behaviour of taxi drivers;
- Go back to original aim of bus lanes;
- No uniform approach in UK;
- Limited baseline data.

7. Comber Greenway Cycling Data

- 7.1 The review was tasked with assessing any impact on cycling figures on the Comber Greenway during the trial. As Travelwise was in the process of letting a contract to collect pedestrian and cyclist count data on the Greenway and which was due to coincide with the start of the trial a separate survey was not commissioned as part of the overall BRT route survey work.
- 7.2 Unfortunately, the count site was not up and running until 17 April 2017 some 8 weeks into the trial itself therefore limiting the data available for the trial period.
- 7.3 Data has been provided for the period Monday 17 April 2017 to Tuesday 19 September 2017 however it does not show any discernible trends in terms of usage apart from it dipping during the peak holiday periods over the summer months and the numbers of cyclists dropping off towards the end of the period as summer ends.
- 7.4 Notable points coming from the Comber Greenway figures are as follows:

Counter Location	Daily Average Count	Busiest Day	Busiest Month
Abbey Road	410	Sunday	May
Beersbridge Road	395	Tuesday	May

8. Summary

- 8.1 The 12 week trial provided an opportunity to get a picture of the numbers of Class A taxis that are likely to use bus lanes if permitted to do so.
- 8.2 Interestingly, and despite the sustained lobbying for access from the private hire taxi industry, nearly half of those Class A taxis recorded using the routes during the 12 week trial decided to stay in the main running lane and not to use the bus lane. The reason for this is unclear, though it may be that these drivers decided that there was little to be gained, in terms of time savings, by using the bus lane.
- 8.3 In 2016, 80 cars were recorded illegally using the in-bound Falls Road bus lanes during the AM period. The 2017 figures show this as increasing to 147 (+84%) at the Convent of Mercy count site and decreasing to 41 (-51%) at the Falls Leisure Centre. Even the lower figure still represents a significant level of abuse by private cars.
- 8.4 Where comparison was possible the data indicates that allowing Class A taxis to use bus lanes was not having any discernible impact on bus services in terms of journey times and speeds, despite the additional volumes of traffic using the bus lane, which should in theory adversely impact both.
- 8.5 The comparison is however based on data coming from a 12 week trial which would not generally be considered long enough to provide robust data for a study of this nature. Normally, when a trial is considered necessary due to a lack of or conflicting data,

the Department would undertake a pilot scheme to test the proposal. Once the 'before' data is gathered, the pilot would normally run for 2 – 3 years. 2 - 3 years is considered long enough to allow for any seasonal variations, such as school holidays, and to account for exceptional events such as a 'bad winter', though if conditions were favourable this could potentially be reduced to a minimum of 1 year.

- 8.6 The analysis of injury collisions on the trial routes for the period (2013 -2016) confirmed that bus lanes are generally a safe place to travel and in particular for cyclists. The cycling lobby has however consistently asked that these figures should not be viewed in isolation. The perception of bus lanes becoming less safe, due to the increased traffic volumes, should be considered as well. As does how this perception could deter new or would-be cyclists. The lobby also has concerns that the injury only data does not give any consideration to the number of non-reportable accidents or the number of near misses which occur on a daily basis.
- 8.7 The trial provided a platform for those with an interest in bus lanes and wider transportation matters to voice their opinion.
- 8.8 The on-line survey indicated that nearly 90% of respondents think bus lanes are a good idea, and 70% indicated that they supported the trial.
- 8.9 Better use of road space was the most common answer for allowing Class A taxis to use bus lanes.

- 8.10 The majority of responses to the on-line survey came from Class A taxis drivers who comprised 53% of the overall response. Cyclist comprised 14% and car drivers 11%.
- 8.11 A high level of correspondence was received with the majority expressing support for the trial and for the arrangement allowing access for Class A taxis to be made permanent across all bus lanes. Although the vast majority of this correspondence emanated from the Class A taxi industry and was in the form of either pre-prepared letters or post-cards that the respondent (mostly passengers) had to sign and hand back to the taxi driver.
- 8.12 The 138 letters/e-mails generally reflected the views of both sides of the argument either for or against allowing Class A taxis to use bus lanes. The trial did however elicit a supportive response from the four then sitting Belfast Members of Parliament as well Belfast City Council. One e-mail was received from a Member of the Legislative Assembly which critically questioned many different aspects of the trial.

9. References

- 9.1 Final Data Collection - Summary Report - Belfast Bus Lanes Surveys – Revision 0. Amey, October 2017.

Attitudes towards Taxis in Bus Lanes Trial 2017

Citizen Space - Survey

Currently only Class B and Class D taxis are allowed to travel in bus lanes. On 20th February 2017 the Department for Infrastructure initiated a trial whereby Class A taxis could also use bus lanes. This trial ended on the 14th May 2017.

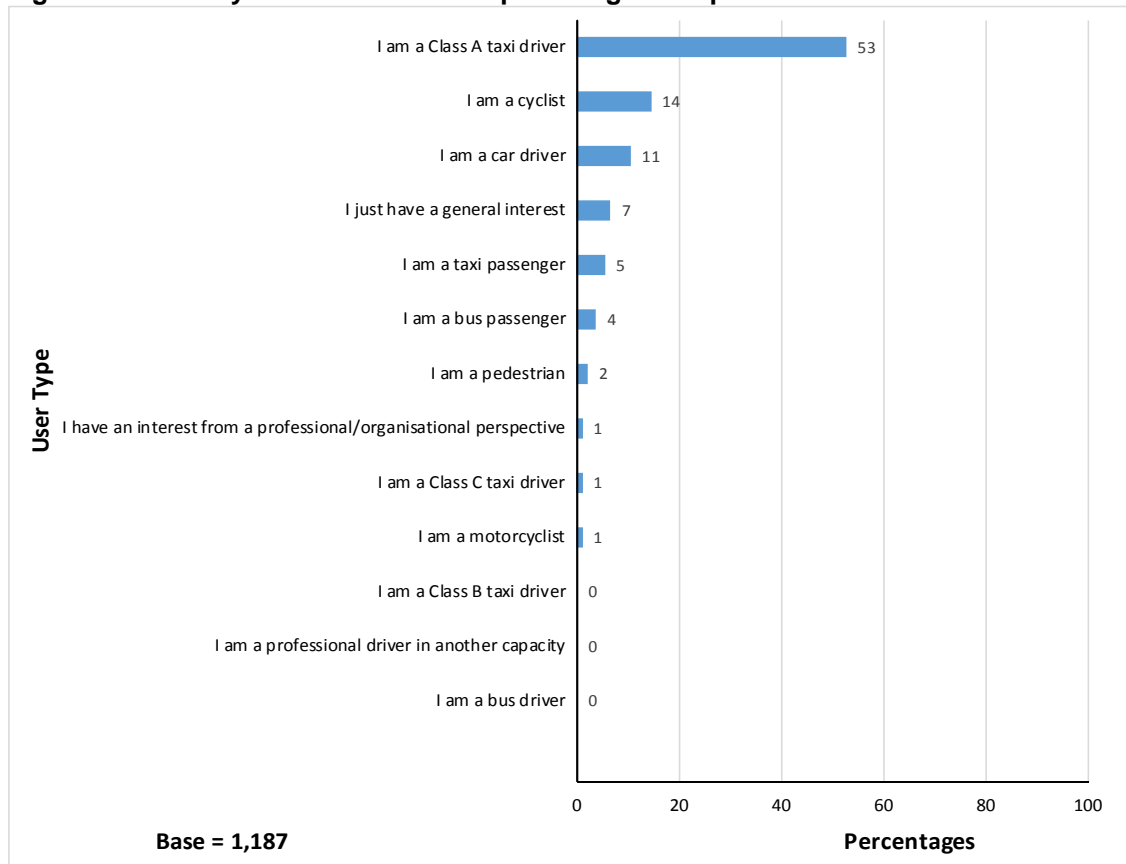
In order to evaluate this trial, DfI carried out an on-line consultation using Citizen Space to ascertain the views of the public. There were 1,197 respondents to this consultation which ran from 3rd May 2017 to 16th June 2017. A summary of the responses can be found below.

1. Type of user.

When asked ‘What is your main interest in providing a viewpoint?’, looking at the top three responses, just over half of respondents (53%, 626) said ‘I am a Class A taxi driver’, almost a seventh of respondents (14%, 172) replied ‘I am a cyclist’, and just over a tenth of respondents (11%, 125) stated ‘I am a car driver’.

Class A taxi drivers, cyclists and car drivers accounted for almost 8 out of 10 consultation respondents (78%) and therefore responses to questions 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11 (see questionnaire attached) have been broken down by and reported on by these types of users.

Figure 1: What is your main interest in providing a viewpoint?

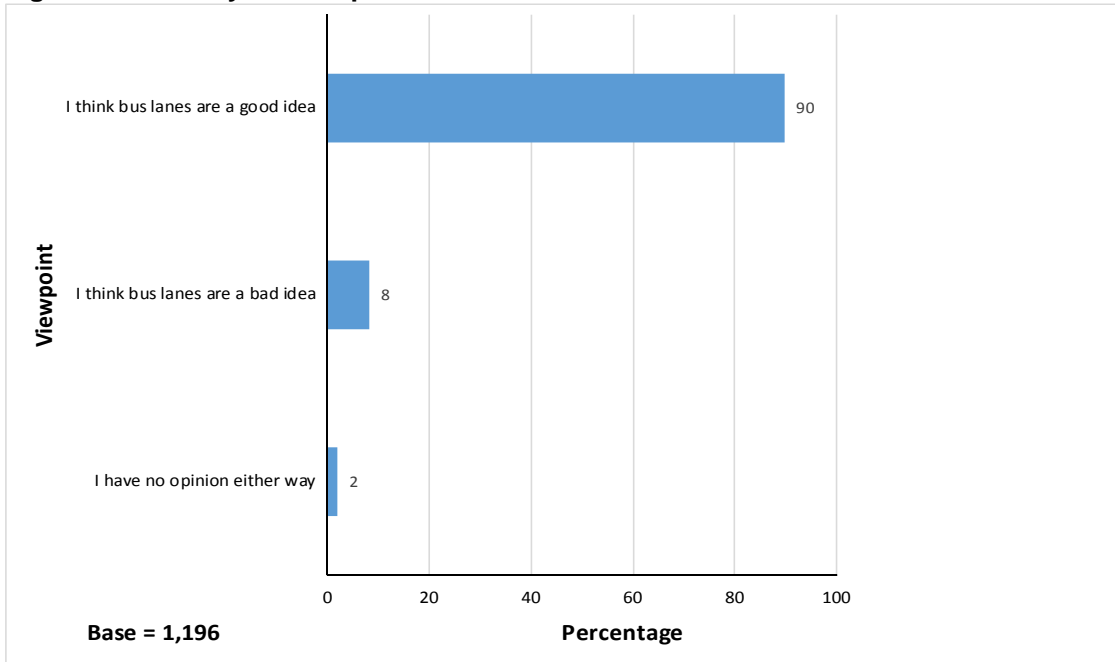


10 Respondents did not answer this question.

2. Viewpoint on bus lanes.

9 out of 10 respondents (90%, 1,074) indicated that they think bus lanes are a good idea with just under a tenth (8%, 98) saying they thought bus lanes are a bad idea.

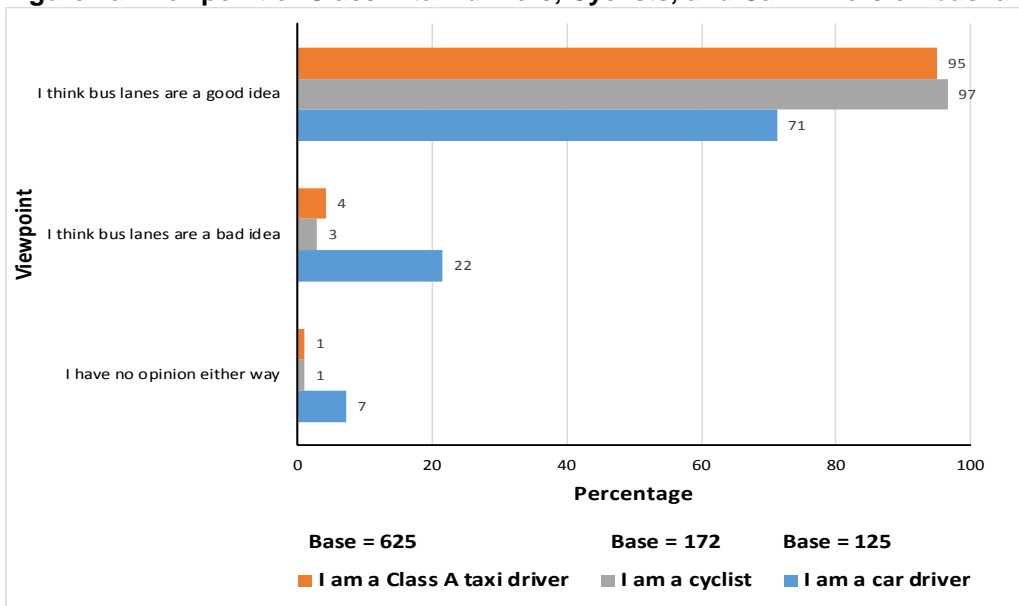
Figure 2: What is your viewpoint on bus lanes?



1 Respondent did not answer this question.

Almost all cyclists (97%, 166) and Class A taxi drivers (95%, 594) and just over 7 out of 10 car drivers (71%, 89) agreed that bus lanes are a good idea.

Figure 2a: Viewpoint of Class A taxi drivers, Cyclists, and Car Drivers on bus lanes.

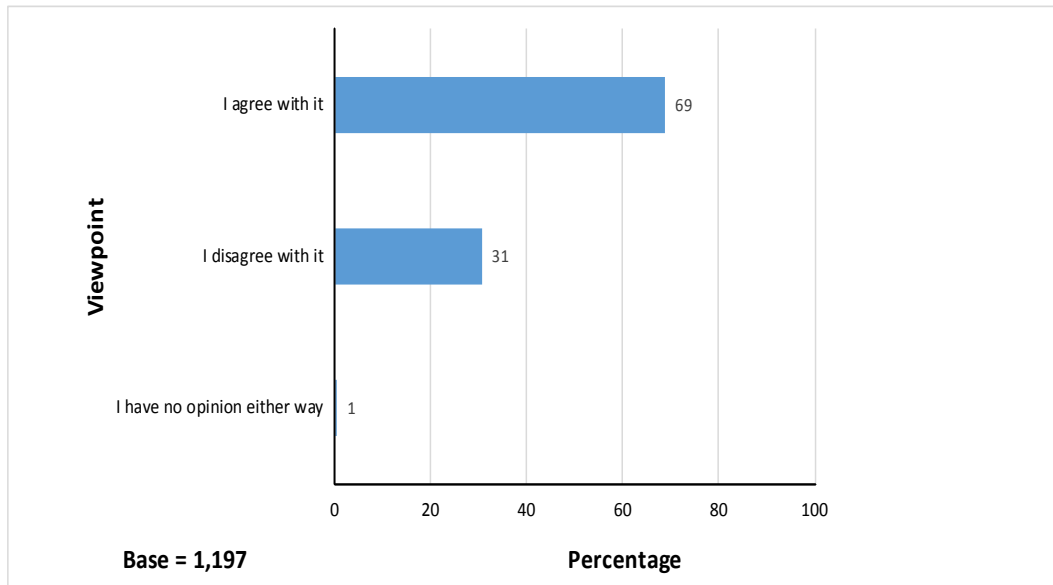


11 Respondents did not answer this question.

3. Viewpoint on the current trial that is allowing Class A taxi drivers to use certain bus lanes.

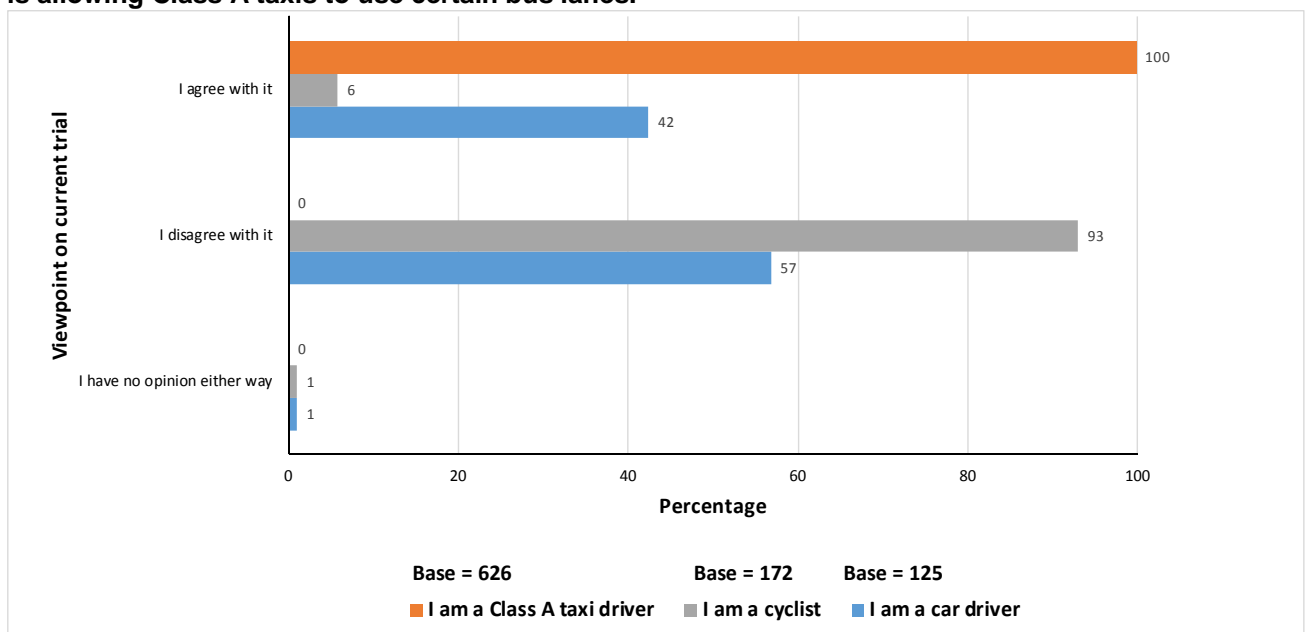
Almost 7 out of 10 (69%, 824) respondents said they agreed with the trial to allow Class A taxis into certain bus lanes for a limited time period. Just under a third of respondents (31%, 367) said they disagreed with the trial.

Figure 3: What is your viewpoint on the current trial that is allowing Class A taxis to use certain bus lanes?



Looking separately at respondents from Class A taxi drivers, cyclists and car drivers, it is clear that opinions on the trial are polarised. Almost all Class A taxi drivers (100%, 625) agreed with the trial whilst the majority of cyclists (93%, 160) disagreed. Car drivers had mixed opinions with over two fifths (42%, 53) agreeing and almost 3 out of 5 (57%, 71) disagreeing with the current trial.

Figure 3a: Viewpoint of Class A taxi drivers, Cyclists, and Car Drivers on the current trial that is allowing Class A taxis to use certain bus lanes.

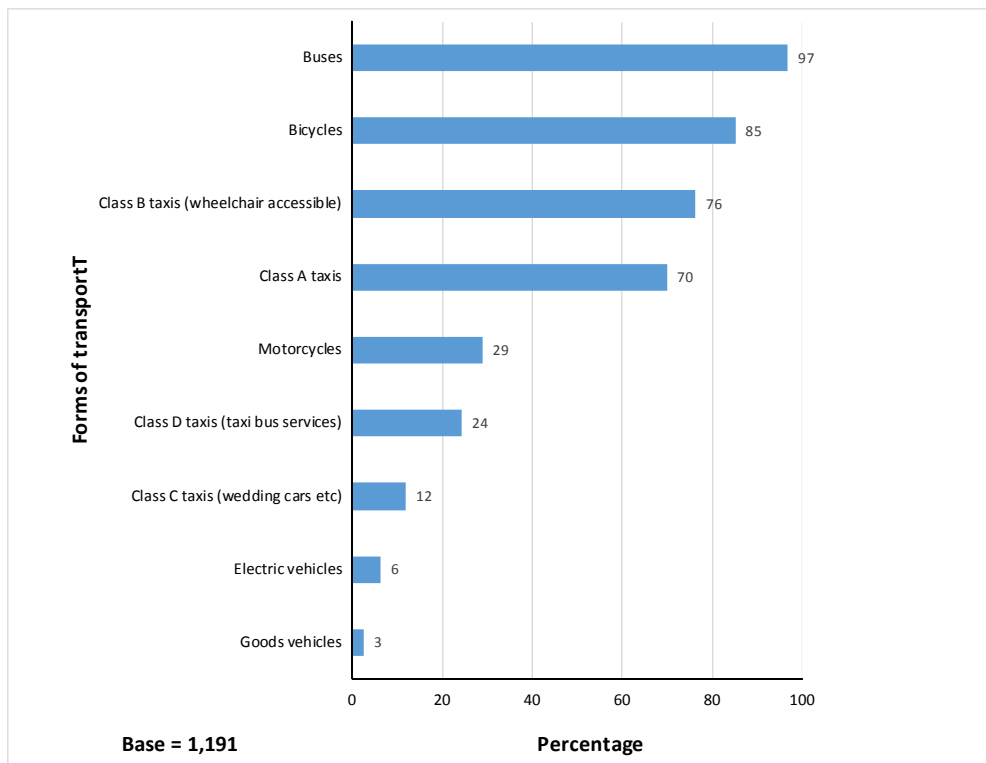


10 Respondents did not answer this question.

4. What forms of transport should be allowed to use bus lanes in the longer term?

Before the trial, only buses; bicycles; motorcycles; Class B (wheelchair accessible) taxis; and Class D (taxi buses) taxis were permitted to use bus lanes. Respondents were asked to think about the longer term and to indicate what forms of transport they felt should be allowed to use bus lanes. Almost all respondents (97%, 1,153) said buses, over four fifths of respondents (85%, 1,013) said bicycles, just over three quarters of respondents (76%, 909) said Class B taxis (wheelchair accessible) and 7 out of 10 respondents (70%, 832) said Class A taxis.

Figure 4: What forms of transport do you feel should be allowed to use bus lanes?



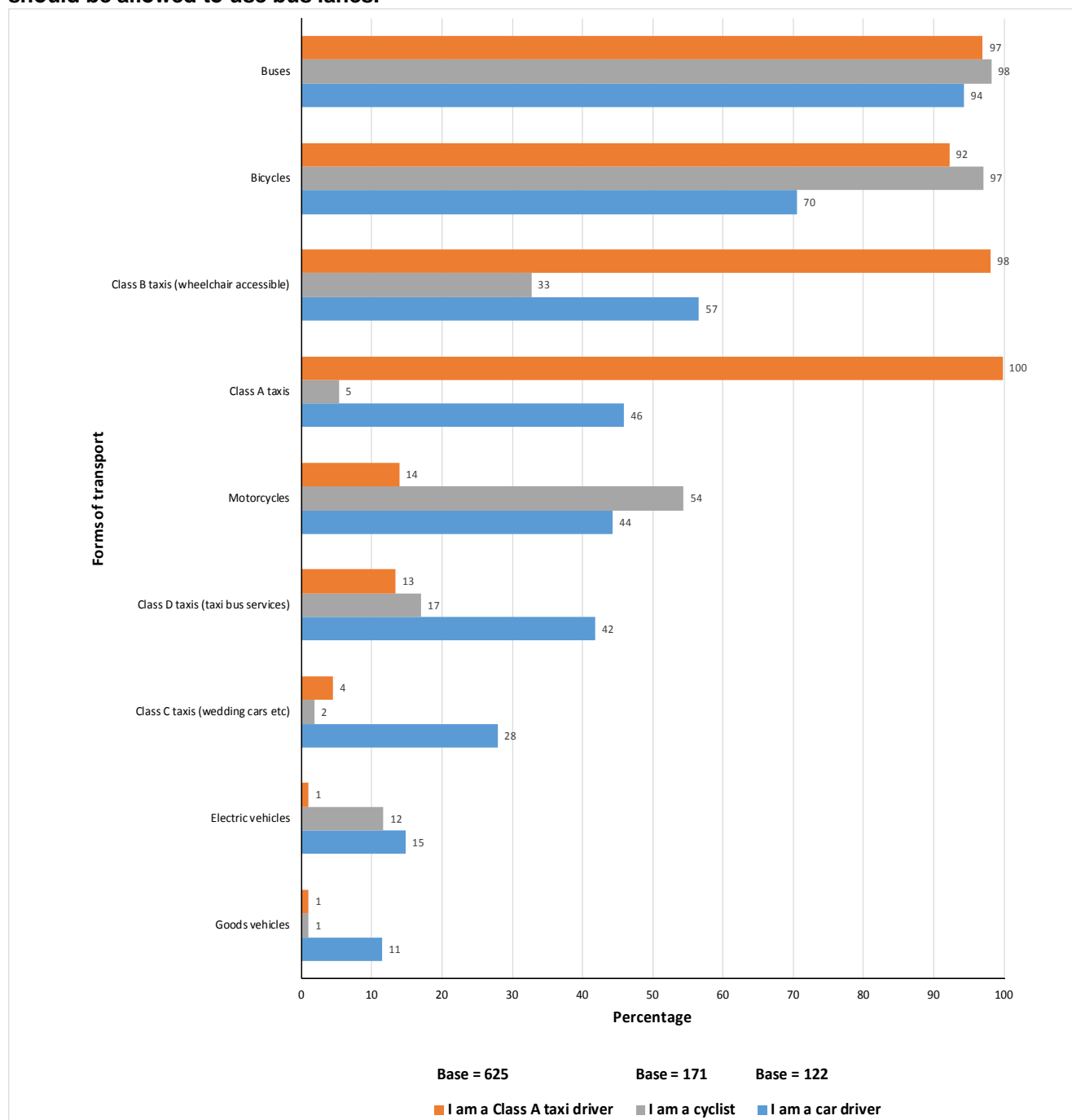
6 Respondents did not answer this question.

Percentages may sum to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

When responses are analysed by type of user, it is clear that some views differ significantly. Almost all Class A taxi drivers (100%, 624) said 'Class A taxis' should be allowed to use bus lanes, compared with less than half of car drivers (46%, 56) and 1 in 20 cyclists (5%, 9). A higher proportion of cyclists (33%, 56), and car drivers (57%, 69) in addition to almost all Class A taxi drivers (98%, 613) felt that Class B taxis (wheelchair accessible) should be allowed to use bus lanes.

The majority of respondents from these three groups supported buses (Class A taxi drivers (97%, 606), cyclists (98%, 168) and car drivers (94%, 115)) and bicycles (Class A taxi drivers (92%, 576), cyclists (97%, 166) and car drivers (70%, 86)) using bus lanes.

Figure 4a: Viewpoint of Class A taxi drivers, Cyclists, and Car Drivers on what forms of transport should be allowed to use bus lanes.



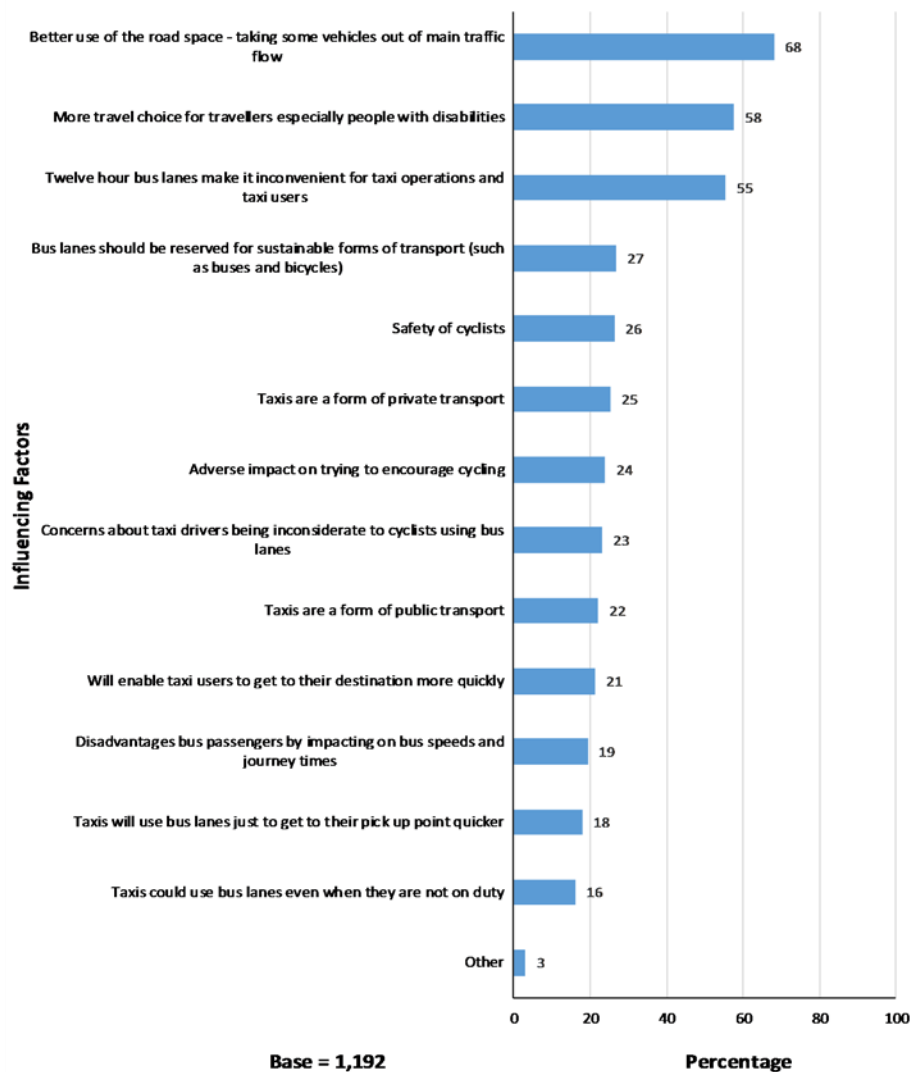
16 Respondents did not answer this question.
 Percentages may sum to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

Respondents were also asked whether there are any other forms of transport they felt should be allowed into bus lanes (*Please list any other forms of transport or type of users you feel should be allowed to use bus lanes*). 168 people responded to this question, with most 66 (39%) indicating ‘none’ or ‘none other than those already permitted’. 27 people (16%) indicated ‘Emergency vehicles’, despite these being already permitted in the event of an emergency, while 14 asked for more access for disabled drivers, and 10 indicated support for high occupancy vehicles.

5. What are the main factors that influence your viewpoint about the use of bus lanes?

When asked to select what factors influence respondents' views on the use of bus lanes, the top three factors given were, 'Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of main traffic flow' (68%, 811), 'More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities' (58%, 686) and 'Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users' (55%, 660).

Figure 5: Main factors that influence your viewpoint about the use of bus lanes.



5 Respondents did not answer this question.

Percentages may sum to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

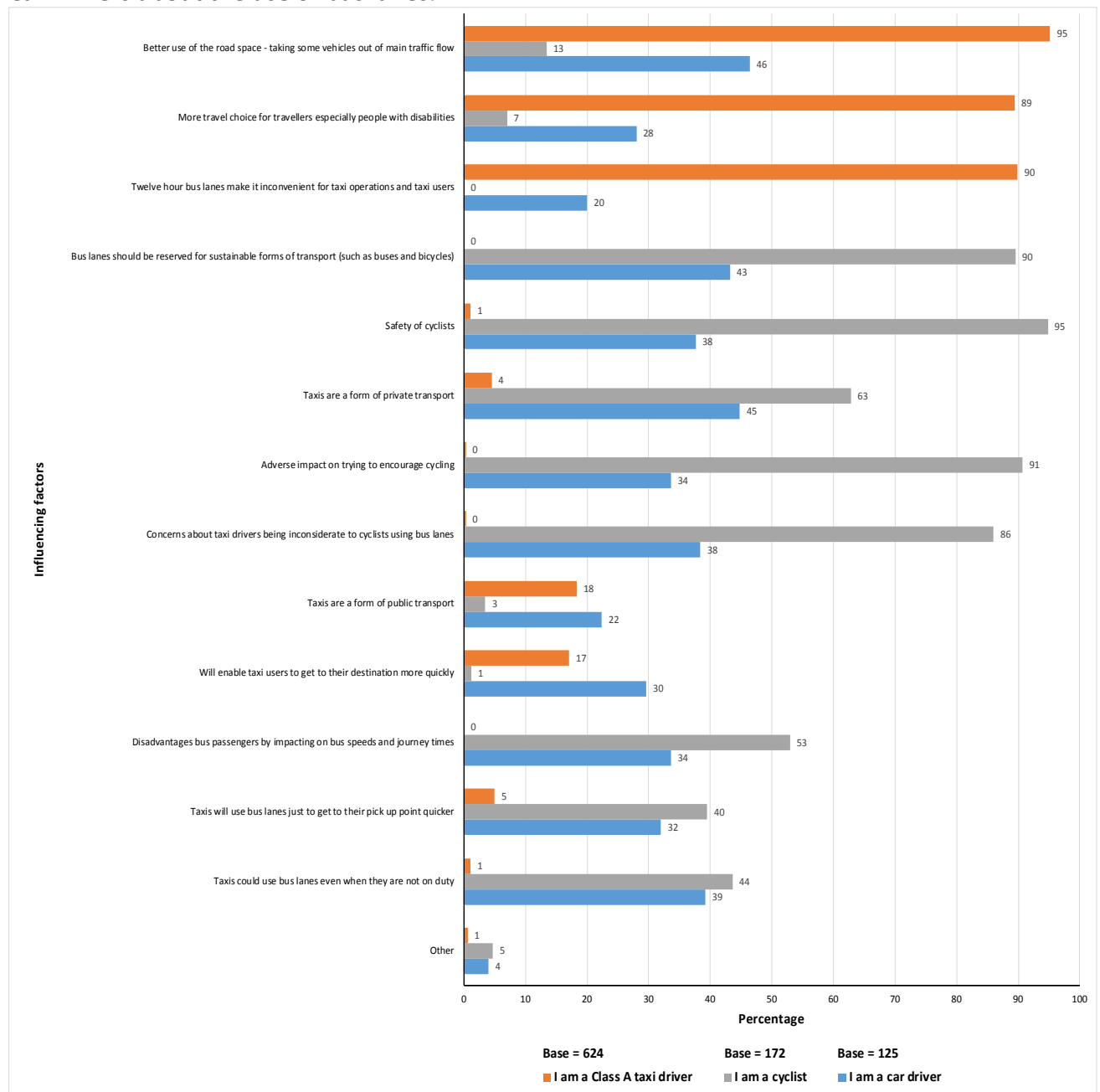
When considering the viewpoint of different road users, it is clear that views differ significantly between Class A taxi drivers and cyclists. The majority of Class A taxi drivers (95%, 594) said one of the main factors that influenced their viewpoint about the use of bus lanes was 'Better use of the road space – taking some vehicles out of main traffic flow' compared to 46% (58) of car drivers and 13% (23) of cyclists.

9 out of 10 Class A taxi drivers also felt that 'Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users' (561) and 'More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities' (89%, 558) influenced their viewpoint.

Almost all cyclists (95%, 163) felt that the use of bus lanes impacted on 'safety of cyclists' compared with 1% (7) of Class A taxi drivers and 38% (47) of car drivers. A high proportion of cyclists also felt that the use of bus lanes had an 'Adverse impact on trying to encourage cycling' (91%, 156), 'Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and cycling) (90%, 154) and 'concerns about taxi drivers being inconsiderate to cyclists using bus lanes' (86%, 148).

For car drivers the top three factors that influenced their viewpoint about the use of bus lanes were 'Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of main traffic flow' (46%, 58), 'Taxis are a form of private transport' (45%, 56) and 'Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)' (43%, 54).

Figure 5a: Main factors that influence the viewpoint of Class A taxi drivers, Cyclists, and Car Drivers about the use of bus lanes.



15 Respondents did not answer this question.

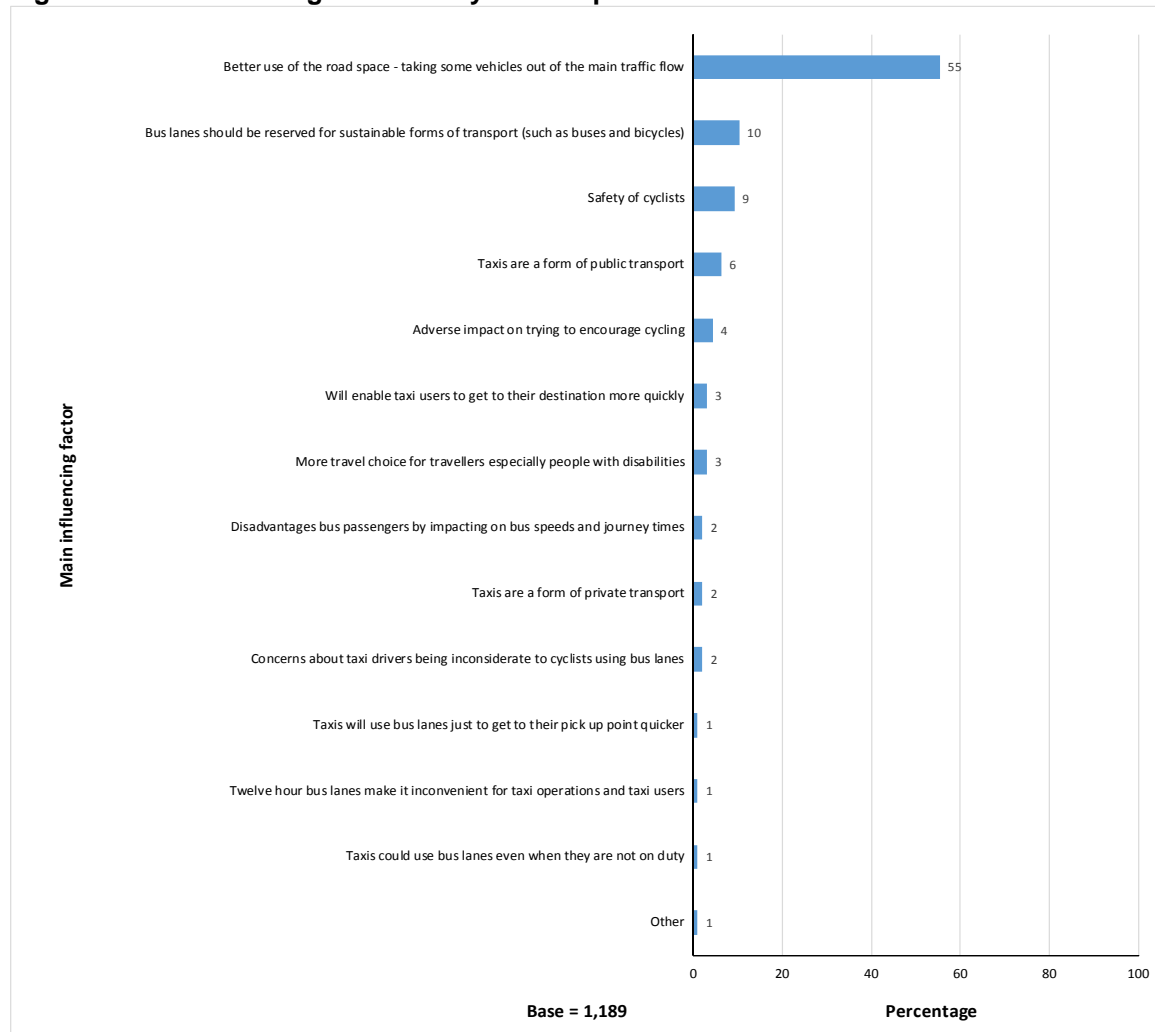
Percentages may sum to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to ‘...specify any other factors that you believe are relevant’ in relation to their views on the use of bus lanes. A ‘free text’ box was provided and 735 people responded to this question. 498 (68%) of respondents to this question indicated that the detrimental impact of introducing 12 hour bus lanes on the taxi industry was the most important factor and that allowing Class A taxis to use bus lanes was the only way to resolve this. 43 (6%) of respondents indicated that in their view the proposal to allow all taxis access went against any aim to achieve a sustainable transportation system. 30 people cited the needs of taxi users as being a relevant factor. Other factors included: poor attitudes of taxi drivers (23); cycle lanes needed (17); safety of cyclists (21).

6. What one thing influences your viewpoint on the use of bus lanes most?

Respondents were asked to choose the one factor that influenced their views on the use of bus lanes, the top response given by over half of respondents (55%, 658) was 'Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of the main traffic flow'. A tenth of respondents (10%, 122) stated 'Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)' and just under a tenth (9%, 109) replied that 'Safety of cyclists' was the main factor that influenced their views on the use of bus lanes.

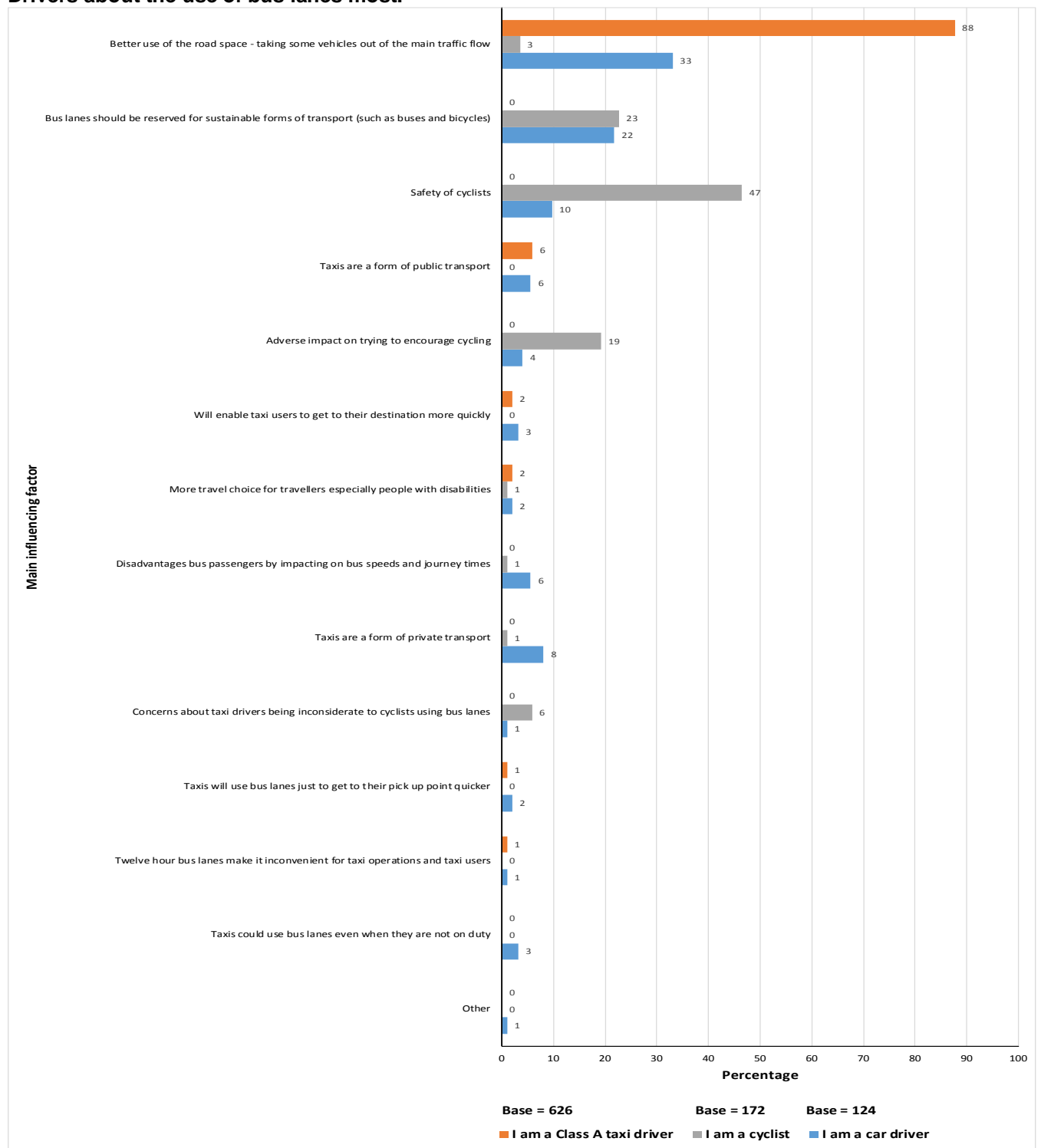
Figure 6: What one thing influences your viewpoint on the use of bus lanes most?



8 Respondents did not answer this question.

When asked to choose the one factor that influenced their views on the use of bus lanes almost 9 out of 10 Class A taxi drivers (88%, 549) and a third of car drivers (33%, 41) stated 'Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of the main traffic flow'. In contrast, only 3% of cyclists chose this option. The main factor influencing cyclists was the 'safety of cyclists' (47%, 80).

Figure 6a: One thing influencing the viewpoint of Class A taxi drivers, Cyclists, and Car Drivers about the use of bus lanes most.



15 Respondents did not answer this question.

Respondents were again given the opportunity to ‘...specify any other factors that you believe are relevant’ in relation to choosing the one factor that influenced their views on bus lanes. 664 people provided a response to this question. 498 (75%) of respondents to this question indicated that the introduction of 12 hour bus lanes would adversely impact the taxi industry. 31 people (5%) indicated that the proposal was not in line with any aims to provide a sustainable transportation system and would have environmental concerns. 26 people indicated that the trial sends out the

wrong message in terms of sustainable transport, while 24 indicated that allowing taxis into bus lanes would benefit taxi passengers and 22 people aired the view that access for Class A taxis would impact adversely on the safety of cyclists.

Questionnaire

Question 1: What is your name?

Question 2: What is your email address?

Question 3: What organisation do you represent?

Question 4: What is your main interest in providing a viewpoint?

I am a pedestrian

I am a cyclist

I am a bus passenger

I am a motorcyclist

I am a taxi passenger

I am a bus driver

I am a car driver

I am a Class A taxi driver

I am a Class B taxi driver

I am a Class C taxi driver

I am a Class D taxi driver

I am a professional driver in another capacity

I have an interest from a professional/organisational perspective

I just have a general interest

Question 5: What is your viewpoint on bus lanes?

I think bus lanes are a good idea

I think bus lanes are a bad idea

I have no opinion either way

Question 6: What is your viewpoint on the current trial that is allowing Class A taxis to use certain bus lanes?

I agree with it

I disagree with it

I have no opinion either way

Question 7: Thinking about the longer term, what forms of transport do you feel should be allowed to use bus lanes? (Pick all that apply)

Buses

Bicycles

Motorcycles

Class A taxis

Class B taxis (wheelchair accessible)

Class C taxis (wedding cars etc)

Class D taxis (taxi bus services)

Goods vehicles

Electric vehicles

Question 8: Please list any other forms of transport or type of users you feel should be allowed to use bus lanes.

Question 9: What are the main factors that influence your viewpoint about the use of bus lanes? (Pick all that apply)

Adverse impact on trying to encourage cycling

Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of main traffic flow

Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)

Concerns about taxi drivers being inconsiderate to cyclists using bus lanes

Disadvantages bus passengers by impacting on bus speeds and journey times

More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities

Safety of cyclists

Taxis will use bus lanes just to get to their pick up point quicker
Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty
Taxis are a form of private transport
Taxis are a form of public transport
Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users
Will enable taxi users to get to their destination more quickly
Other

Question 10: Please specify any other factors that you believe are relevant

Question 11: What one thing influences your viewpoint on the use of bus lanes most?

Adverse impact on trying to encourage cycling
Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of the main traffic flow
Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)
Concerns about taxi drivers being inconsiderate to cyclists using bus lanes
Disadvantages bus passengers by impacting on bus speeds and journey times
More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities
Safety of cyclists
Taxis will use bus lanes just to get to their pick up point quicker
Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty
Taxis are a form of private transport
Taxis are a form of public transport
Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users
Will enable taxi users to get to their destination more quickly
Other

Question 12: Please specify any other factors that you believe are relevant

Data Tables

Table 1: What is your main interest in providing a viewpoint? User Type

Response	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
I am a Class A taxi driver	626	53
I am a cyclist	172	14
I am a car driver	125	11
I just have a general interest	78	7
I am a taxi passenger	64	5
I am a bus passenger	44	4
I am a pedestrian	25	2
I have an interest from a professional/organisational perspective	15	1
I am a Class C taxi driver	14	1
I am a motorcyclist	11	1
I am a Class B taxi driver	5	0
I am a bus driver	3	0
I am a professional driver in another capacity	3	0
I am a Class D taxi driver	2	0
Base Number	1,187	

10 Respondents did not answer this question.

Table 2: What is your viewpoint on bus lanes?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I think bus lanes are a good idea	1,074	90
I think bus lanes are a bad idea	98	8
I have no opinion either way	24	2
Base Number	1,196	

1 Respondent did not answer this question.

Table 3: What is your viewpoint on the current trial that is allowing Class A taxis to use certain bus lanes?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I agree with it	824	69
I disagree with it	367	31
I have no opinion either way	6	1
Base Number	1,197	

Table 4: Thinking about the longer term, what forms of transport do you feel should be allowed to use bus lanes?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Buses	1,153	97
Bicycles	1,013	85
Class B taxis (wheelchair accessible)	909	76
Class A taxis	832	70
Motorcycles	345	29
Class D taxis (taxi bus services)	290	24
Class C taxis (wedding cars etc)	142	12
Electric vehicles	75	6
Goods vehicles	30	3
Base Number	1,191	

6 Respondents did not answer this question.

Table 5: What are the main factors that influence your viewpoint about the use of bus lanes?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of main traffic flow	811	68
More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities	686	58
Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users	660	55
Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)	319	27
Safety of cyclists	314	26
Taxis are a form of private transport	301	25
Adverse impact on trying to encourage cycling	285	24
Concerns about taxi drivers being inconsiderate to cyclists using bus lanes	275	23
Taxis are a form of public transport	263	22
Will enable taxi users to get to their destination more quickly	253	21
Disadvantages bus passengers by impacting on bus speeds and journey times	230	19
Taxis will use bus lanes just to get to their pick up point quicker	213	18
Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty	192	16
Other	36	3
Base Number	1,192	

5 Respondents did not answer this question.

Table 6: What one thing influences your viewpoint on the use of bus lanes most?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Better use of the road space - taking some vehicles out of the main traffic flow	658	55
Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)	122	10
Safety of cyclists	109	9
Taxis are a form of public transport	74	6
Adverse impact on trying to encourage cycling	51	4
Will enable taxi users to get to their destination more quickly	35	3
More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities	30	3
Disadvantages bus passengers by impacting on bus speeds and journey times	26	2
Taxis are a form of private transport	21	2
Concerns about taxi drivers being inconsiderate to cyclists using bus lanes	20	2
Taxis will use bus lanes just to get to their pick up point quicker	16	1
Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users	12	1
Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty	7	1
Other	8	1
Base Number	1,189	

8 Respondents did not answer this question.