



BUS STATION IMPROVEMENTS SURVEY

September 2020

Prepared by the Policy & Information Team

Contents

Methodology & Background	2
Findings.....	3
Usage	4
Priorities for improvement	5
Difference by Usage.....	6
Demographic Differences.....	6
Comments.....	9
Public Art Comments.....	10
Impact of proposed changes.....	11
Use of colour & lighting will make the bus station more visually appealing	11
Better lighting will make me feel safer.....	12
New signage will make access clearer	12
New seating will make my experience more comfortable	13
I am more likely to use the bus station, in the future, if these improvements are carried out.....	14
Overall thoughts on proposals	14
Other comments	15
Survey Demographics.....	16
Acorn Analysis	18

Methodology & Background

The survey was open between 21st July and 17th September 2020. It was promoted online through the Council's website and social media channels. Residents who have signed up for consultation reminders were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation and during the last week of July a stand was set up in The Mall shopping centre to publicise the consultation. Additionally, paper copies of the survey were available from the stand and were provided on request to online users

There was a total of 404 responses to the survey.

As an online survey is a self-selection methodology, with people free to choose whether to participate or not. It was anticipated that returned responses would not necessarily be fully representative of the wider adult population, as the bus station is used by people who do not live within the borough, therefore no weighting has been applied to the data.

Where reference has been made in the report to a 'significant difference' in response between different groups, the proportional data has been z-tested and means have been t-tested. These tests determines if the difference between subgroups is large enough, taking into account the population size, to be statistically significant (meaning that if we were to run the same survey 100 times, 95 times out of 100 the same result would be seen) or whether the difference is likely to have occurred by chance.

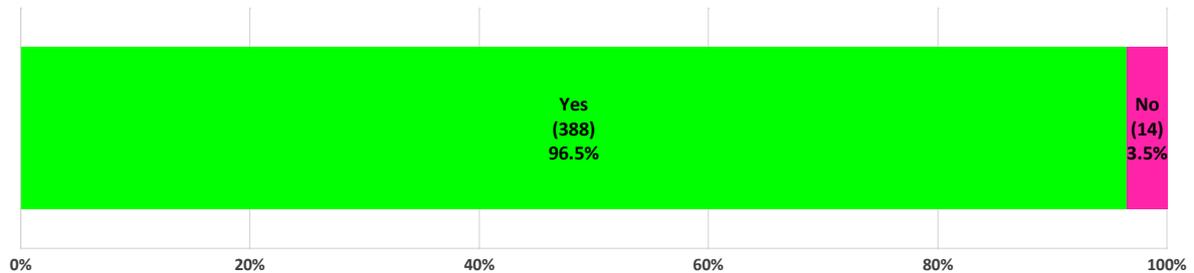
Please note that not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed, not to the survey overall.

Findings

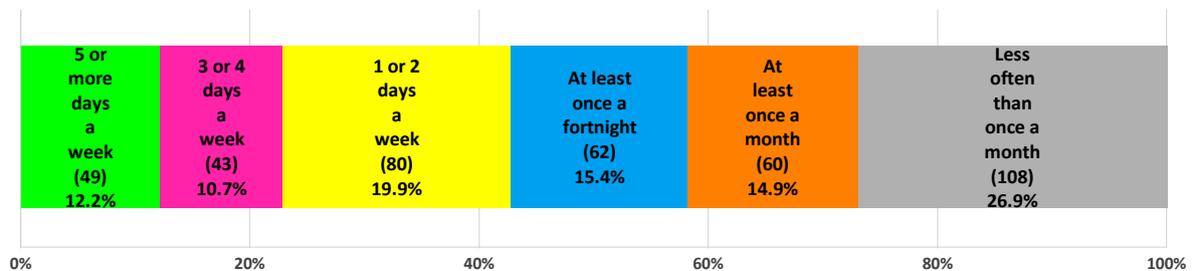
- 'Improved lighting' was the top priority overall and the top priority across all groups assessed.
- There were only five improvements featured in the top three improvements across all the groups assessed, in addition to 'Improved lighting'. These were:
 - Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas
 - New bay signage with timetabling information
 - New benches and seating
 - Replace canopy along East side
- Female responders tended to be more positive about the impact of the proposed improvements and their future usage of the bus station than male responders.
- The top themes arising out of the comments were:
 - That the bus station is in the wrong place/move the Bus Station
 - Air quality concerns – due to poor ventilation and fumes from buses
 - Cleanliness – there was a general feeling that the bus station was dirty
- Comments were made about displaying public art indicating that there is support for having art in the bus station, with people most interested in seeing art depicting the local area and art by local artists.
- Acorn analysis showed that respondents that use the bus station weekly have lower incomes and are less likely, than the average Maidstone household, to have access to a private vehicle.

Usage

The survey asked respondents if they had used or visited (even just to walk through) Maidstone Bus Station in the last 18 months. A total of 402 responses were received to this question. The chart below shows that most survey respondents have used or visited the bus station in the last 18 months.



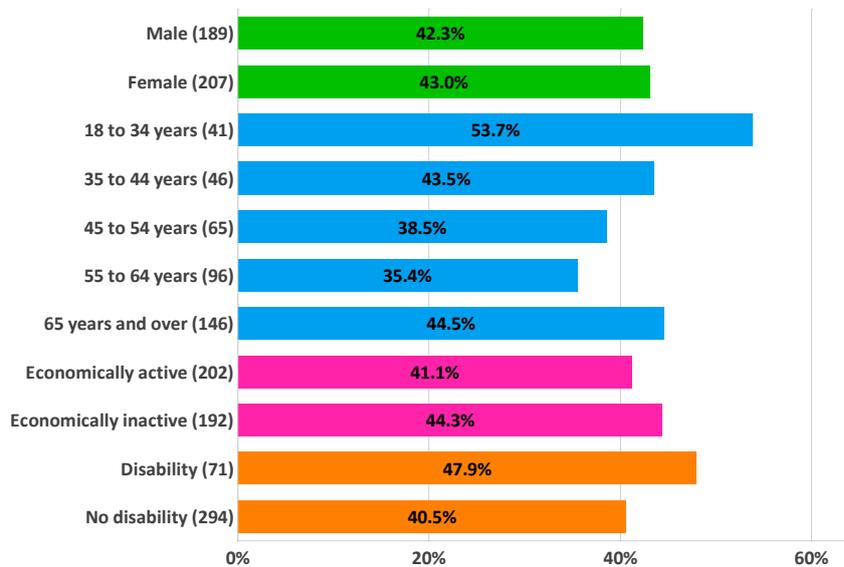
Survey respondents were also asked how often they travel via Maidstone Bus Station. A total of 402 responses were received the most common answer was 'Less often than once a month' with 108 people answering this way.



The usage frequency question was been used to create three groups – those who use/visit weekly, those that use/visit a couple of times a month and those who use/visit less than once a month. This allows us to identify if there are differences between the opinions of regular users/visitors to the bus station and less frequent users/visitors.



The chart below shows the proportions who responded 'Weekly' across the different demographic groups.



The proportion of respondents that they use or visit the bus station weekly declines as age increases (up to 65 years). This is not unexpected as those over 65 years benefit from a free bus pass. Respondents aged 55 to 64 years had the lowest proportion stating they use the bus station weekly with 35.4% answering this way. This is significantly lower the proportion using the station weekly aged 35 to 34 years where 53.7% answered this way.

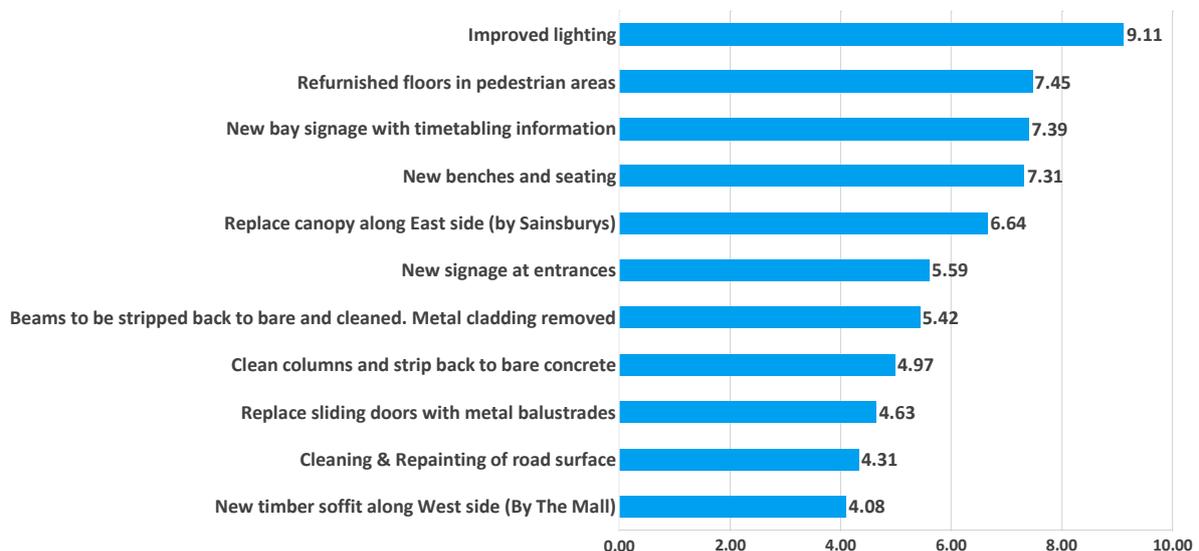
Economically active respondents were more likely to use the bus station 5 or more days a week with 15.3% selecting this response compared to 8.3% of economically inactive respondents, however, there are no significant differences between these groups when those using 'Weekly' are assessed.

Priorities for improvement

Survey respondents were shown a list of proposed improvements and were asked to place them in order of preference.

There was a total of 327 responses to this question. The highest-ranking improvement was 'Improved lighting' and the lowest ranking improvement was 'New timber soffit along West side'.

There was very little difference in score between the improvements rated second to fourth.



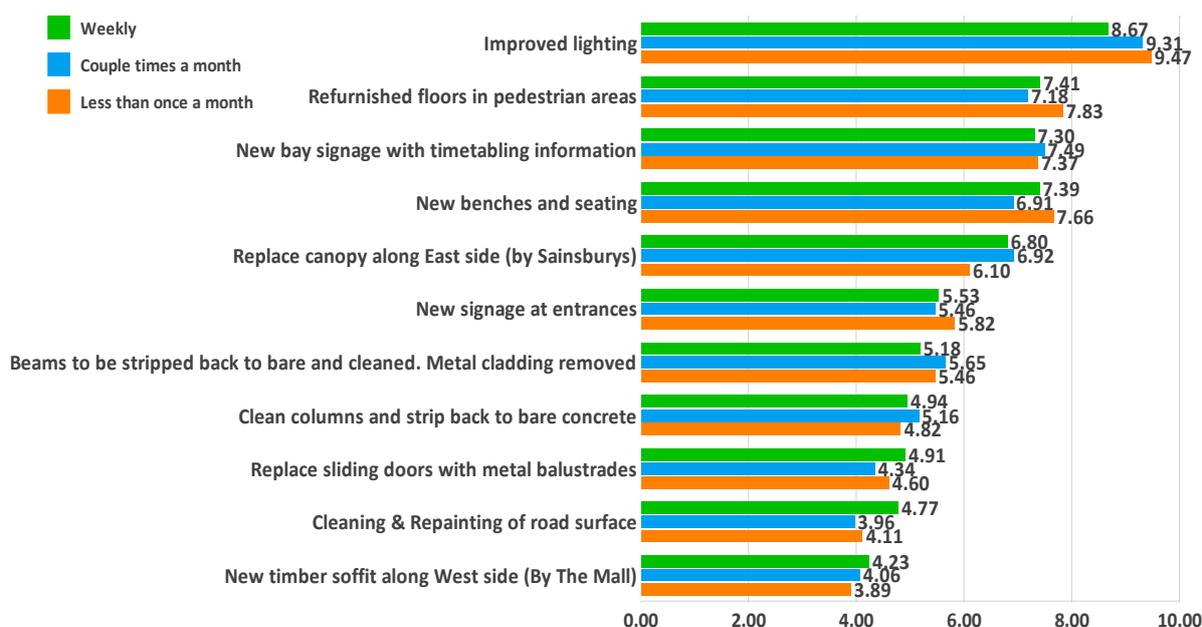
Difference by Usage

Top Three Improvements			
	Weekly	Couple times a month	Less than once a month
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	New bay signage with timetabling information	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas
3.	New benches and seating	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	New benches and seating

Those who said they use the Bus station most frequently (weekly) and those who use it less frequently (less than once a month) have the same top three priorities for improvement.

Although the top three improvements for these groups differ, there is little difference in the means scores between these groups.

The score given to 'Improved lighting' by those who use the station weekly is significantly lower than those who use the Bus Station less frequently.

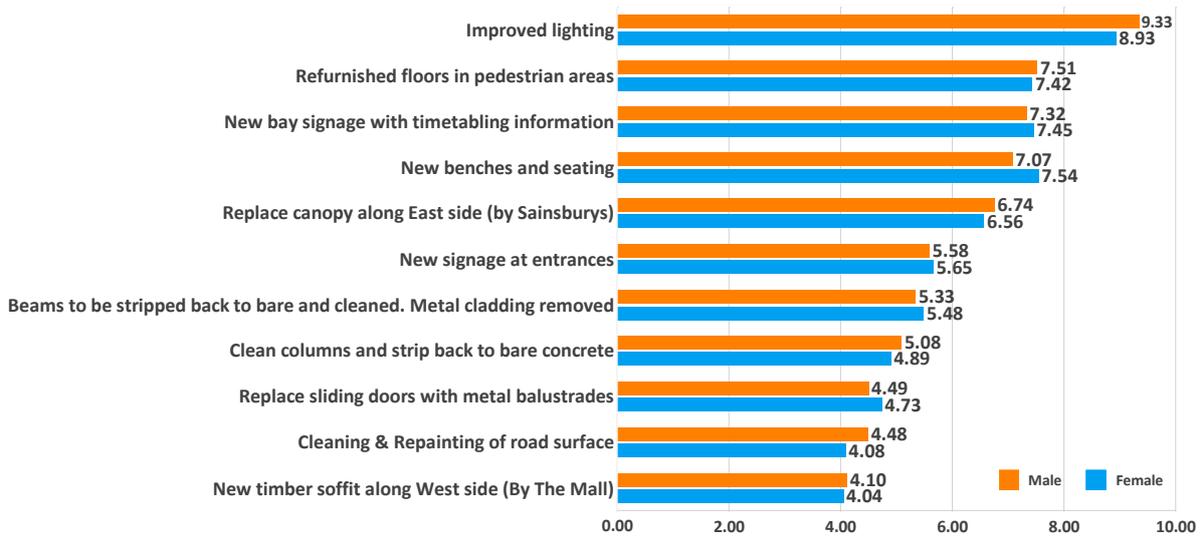


Demographic Differences

Gender

Although the top three improvements for male and female respondents differ from each other there are no significant differences in the means scores between these groups.

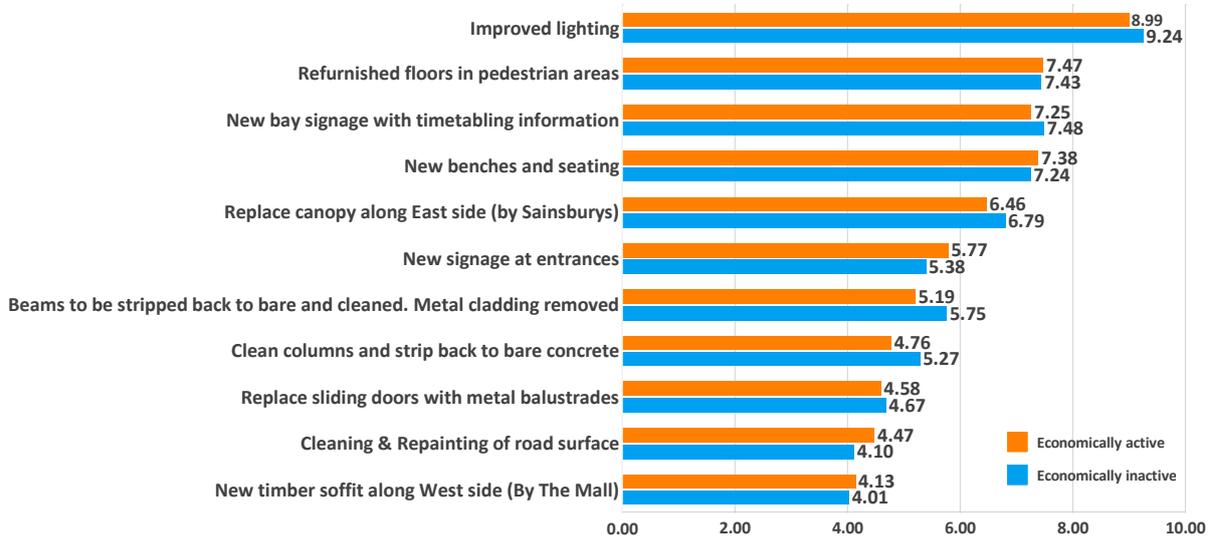
Top Three Improvements		
	Male	Females
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas	New benches and seating
3.	New bay signage with timetabling information	New bay signage with timetabling information



Economic Activity

Although the top three improvements for economically active and economically inactive respondents differ from each other there are no significant differences in the means scores between these groups.

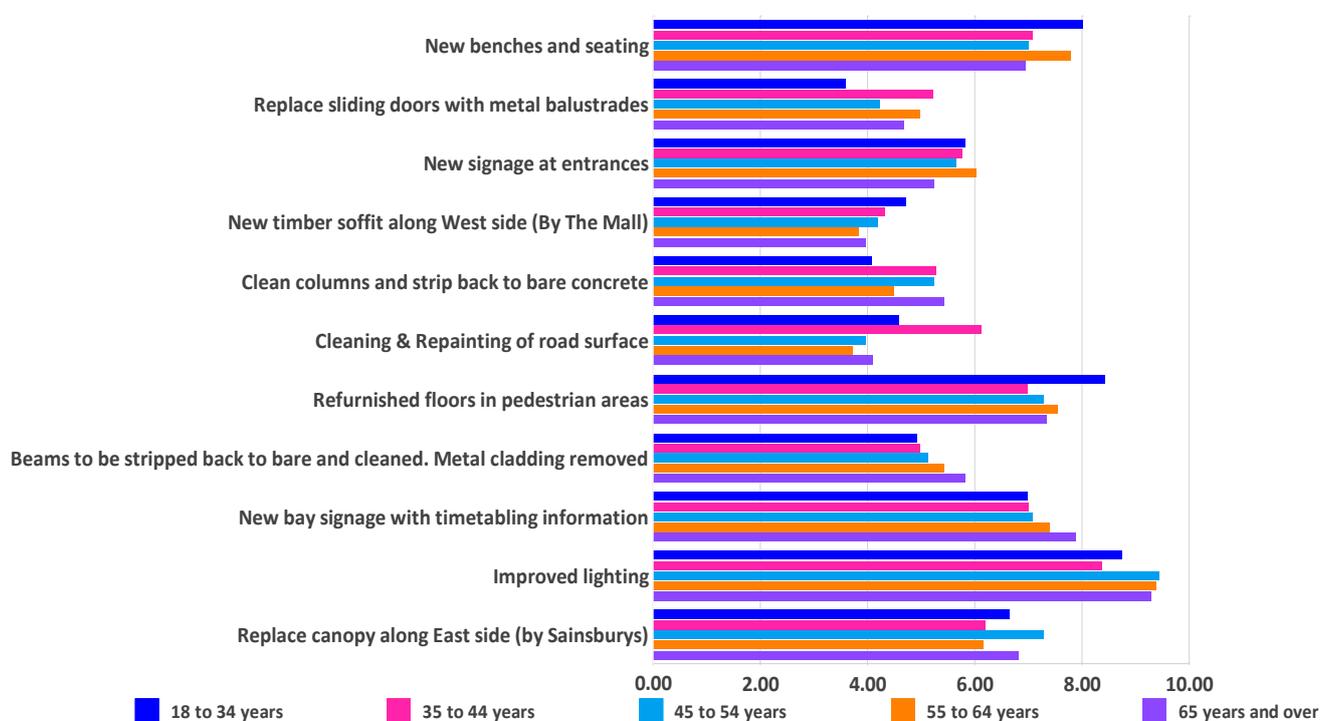
Top Three Improvements		
	Economically Active	Economically Inactive
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas	New bay signage with timetabling information
3.	New benches and seating	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas



Age

Top Three Improvements					
	18 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	New benches and seating	Replace canopy along East side	New Benches and seating	New bay signage with timetabling information
3.	New benches and seating	New bay signage with timetabling information	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas	Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas

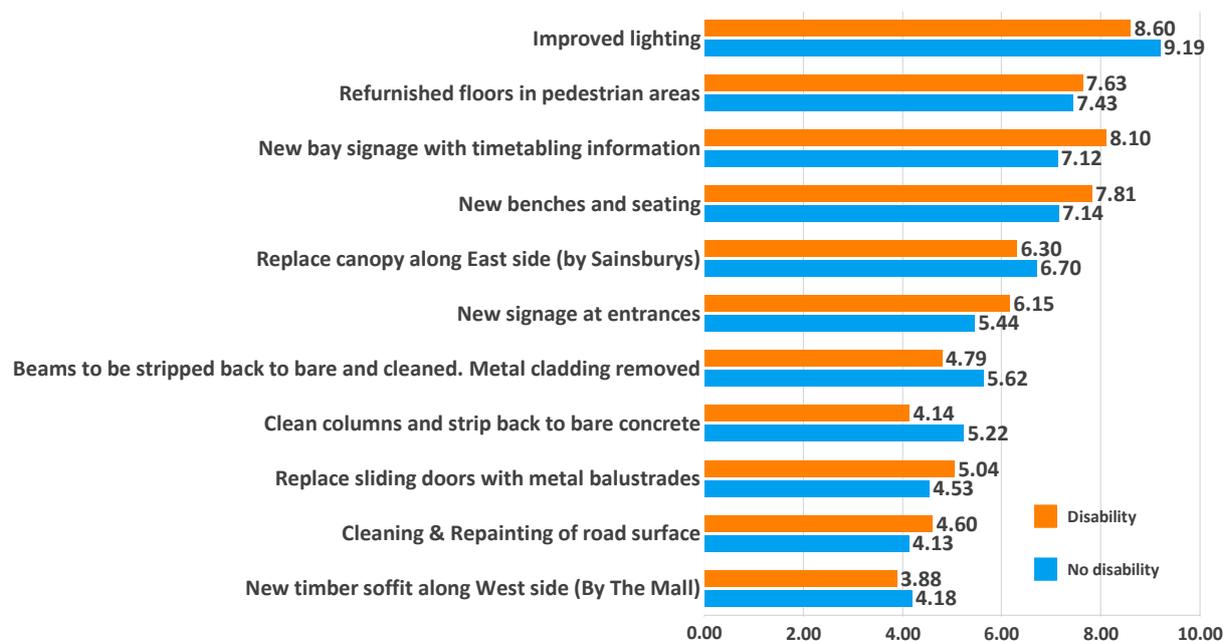
- ‘Clean columns and strip back to bare concrete’ was a lower priority for improvement for the 18 to 34 years age groups compared to the 65 years and over group and those aged 35 to 54 years.
- ‘Refurnish floors in pedestrian areas’ was a significantly greater priority for respondents aged 18 to 34 years compared to the other age groups.
- Respondents aged 65 years and over had the lowest score for ‘New benches and seating’, this difference is significant when compared to the results for the 18 to 34 years and 55 to 64 years age groups.
- Respondents aged 18 to 34 years had the lowest score for ‘Replace sliding doors with metal balustrades’, significantly lower compared to that for respondents aged 35 to 44 years and 55 years and over.



Disability

Top Three Improvements		
	Disability	No disability
1.	Improved lighting	Improved lighting
2.	New bay signage with timetabling information	Refurnished floors in pedestrian areas
3.	New benches and seating	New benches and seating

Respondents with a disability rated 'New benches and seating' and 'New bay signage with timetabling information' significantly higher than respondents without a disability.



Comments

There were 222 comments from respondents to the question 'Are there any other improvements to the Bus Station that you would like us to consider?'

There were 41 comments where respondents said that the bus station was in the wrong place. They stated that it could not be improved in its current location with some highlighting health and safety concerns, others stated that the current building was too small and not fit for purpose. There were suggestions that it should be moved to nearer the train station or be placed on the Sainsburys site.

Relocate it to near a train station!!!! Get the landowner to pay for improvements, not the tax payer!

A good quality, reliable extraction system for the fumes. The bus station is always unhealthy and stinky

There were 40 comments relating to air quality with respondents requesting better ventilation. Suggestions about how this could be achieved included enforcing no smoking and idling vehicles in the bus station, installing fans and electric buses. A couple of comments highlighted concerns about removing the sliding doors, stating that this would mean that people were more exposed to fumes from buses. Several mentioned electronic buses as having a positive impact on air quality and cleanliness. In addition, there were 7 comments mentioning smoking – all stating this should be banned in the bus station.

There were 31 comments classified as being generally negative. With comments in this theme stating that the proposals were not good value for money, that they should go further as the proposals were just superficial improvements. Others stated the money could be better spent on other improvements in the borough.

This is a waste of money and half hearted attempt at cleaning up the area.

You will see that I have prioritised anything with the word "clean" in it. It is filthy at present including the ramp up to Sainsbury - truly a disgrace. I would rather you ensured that there is revenue available to thoroughly clean the existing area every six months. If you allow the proposed area to become as dirty as the existing it won't matter what pretty colours are used!

There were 31 comments mentioning cleanliness, describing the bus station as dirty, unpleasant, and smelly. It was suggested that it should be cleaned more frequently or have a dedicated cleaning team. Specific areas that were highlighted with regard to cleanliness included the canopy running on the Sainsburys side of the station and waterway (River Len) that runs beneath the Bus Station. A lack of litter bins was also highlighted. A further 6 comments mentioned the need for the station to be 'freshened

up' or made more open and airy and 3 highlighted the mess and issues caused by pigeons roosting in the bus station.

There were 25 respondents that mentioned the need for an information point. Suggested ways to provide information about timetables and services included electric boards showing the times of the next bus and lists of departing destinations as seen at train stations. In addition, some highlighted that there is nowhere to purchase tickets in the station.

Information hub where you can find out which bus goes to each destination and it's timetable. At the moment you need to know which bus stop you need.

There were 23 comments relating to pedestrian access. Respondents requested that the the staircase connecting the bus station and Sainsburys be made wider, for the lifts to be fixed / kept in order, sight lines for seeing approaching buses, crossings and improved space and access for disabled users.

Other themes that came out of the comments included 9 comments about the bus lanes with some suggesting the lanes need to be wider and others suggesting that a one system was employed. There were 9 comments about safety with 'dark corners' and CCTV and ASB mentioned. 6 comments were about facilities with requests for toilets and benches.

Public Art Comments

Survey respondents were informed that the Council was considering the use of the Bus Station to display public art and were asked what type of art they would be interested in seeing. A total of 151 people provided comments.

27 people said they would like to see images of the local area, both past and present. 23 said they would like to see art from local artists displayed and 12 said they would be interested in seeing art produced by schools and colleges. There were five comments that suggested having something relating to buses such as the history of buses in Maidstone or routes in the borough.

14 suggested modern art, 6 street art, 4 landscapes and 4 mentioned sculptures. 8 said that whatever was displayed should be bright/colourful. 3 suggested having plants in the bus station. 8 comments mentioned the need to rotate art regularly and 5 said any art would be nice.

27 people were negative about displaying art in the bus station, stated that it was a waste of money, impractical or that displaying public art was not the purpose of the bus station. In addition, there were 8 respondents that stated that they did not want to see public art displayed in the bus station.

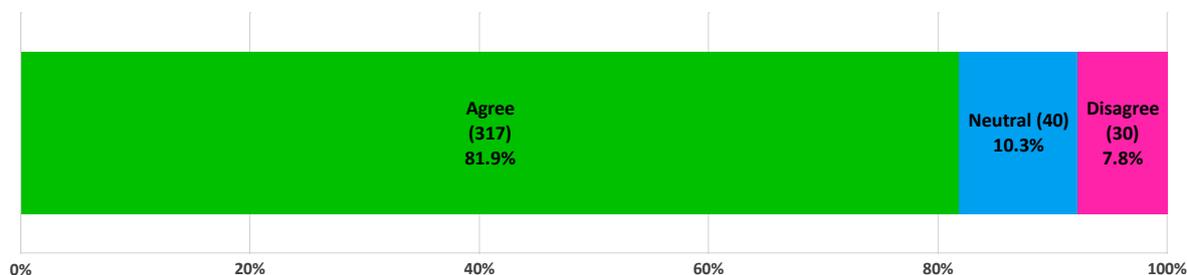
There were 10 comments classified as 'Other' that did not fit into any of the themes above. There was a request for art that 'challenged perceptions of people who use buses' and a request for art that celebrated diversity. Other comments stated the need for 'sensible pictures', 'not gory' and 'paintings' specifically.

Impact of proposed changes

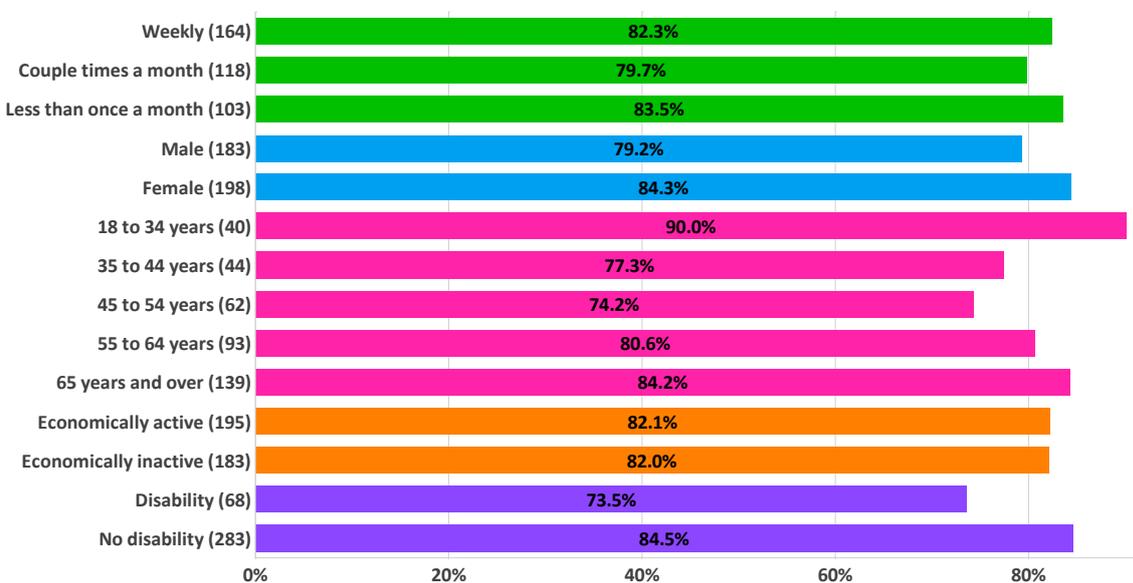
Survey respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the proposed changes. They were given five answer options ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree.

The overall result charts in this section show the answer responses with the positive responses (Strongly agree and Agree) grouped together and the negative responses (Disagree and Strongly disagree) grouped together. This is for the ease of assessing trends between positive and negative responses.

Use of colour & lighting will make the bus station more visually appealing

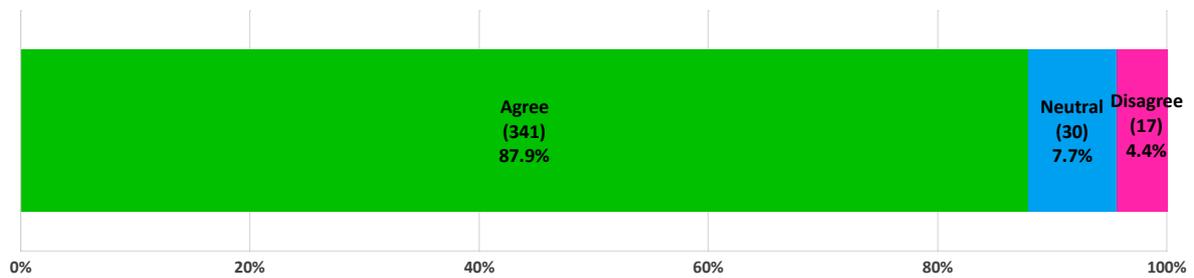


There were 387 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Strongly agree' with 166 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

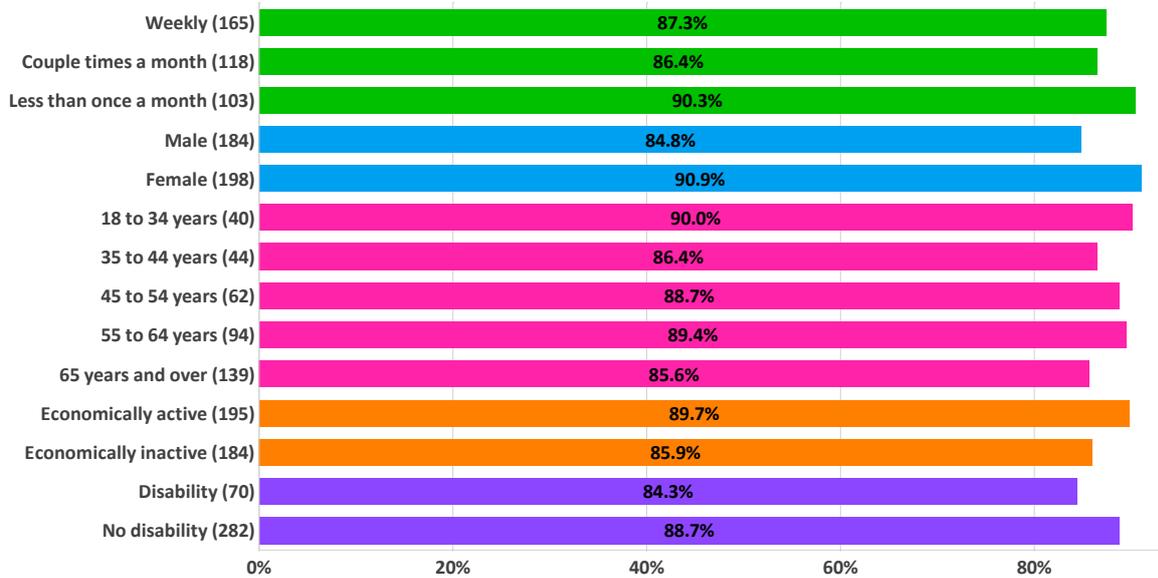


- The 45 to 54 years age group had the lowest proportion responding positively and the 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding positively. The difference between the way these two groups have responded is statistically significant.
- Respondents without a disability were more positive than respondents with a disability about the impact that colour and lighting would have on the bus station.

Better lighting will make me feel safer

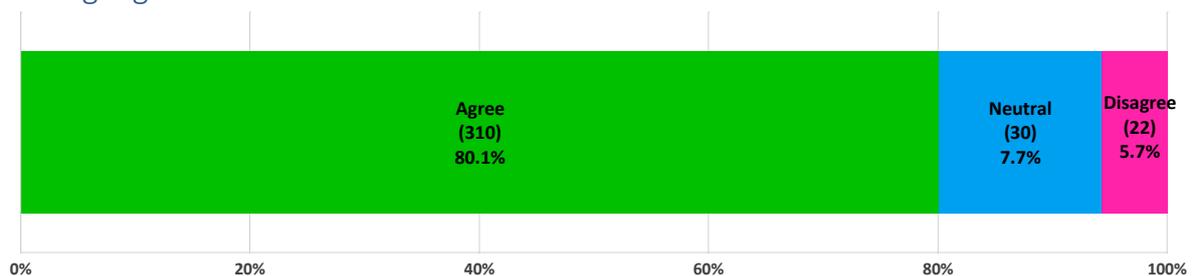


There were 388 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Strongly agree' with 205 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

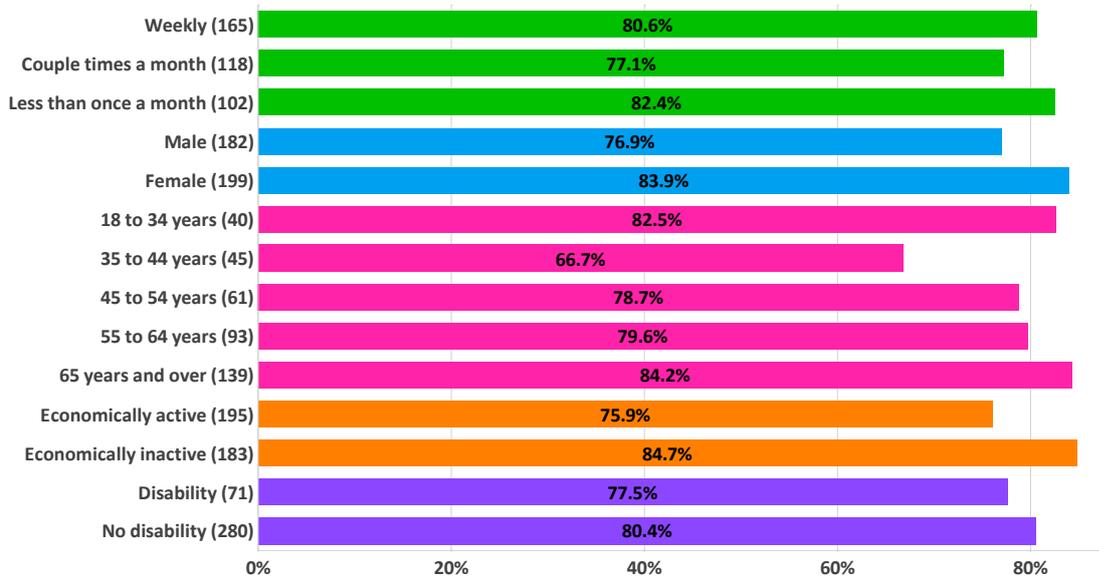


- There are no significant differences across the groups in the proportion of people responding positively.

New signage will make access clearer

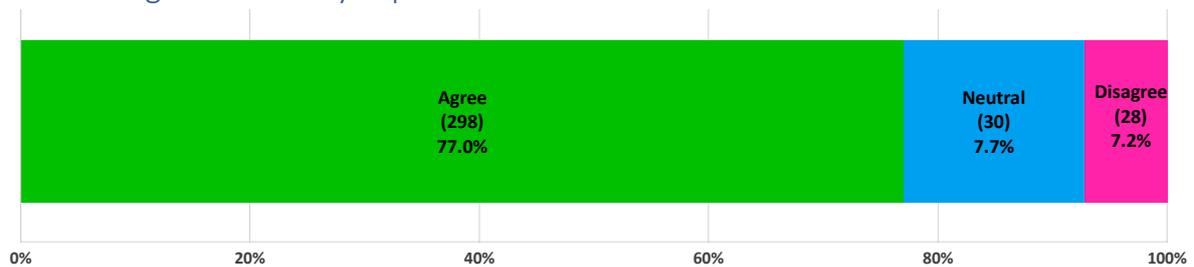


There were 387 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Agree' with 172 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

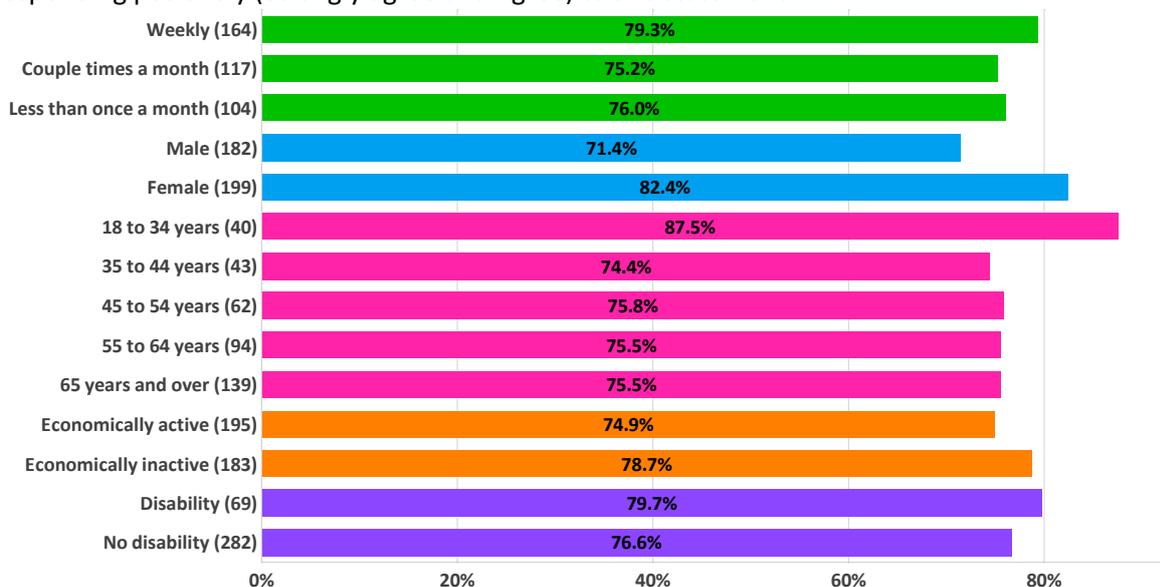


- The 18 to 34 years age group had the lowest proportion responding positively and the 65 years and over group had the greatest proportion responding positively. The difference between the way these two groups have responded is statistically significant.
- Respondents that are economically inactive were more positive than economically active regarding the impact of new signage in the bus station.

New seating will make my experience more comfortable

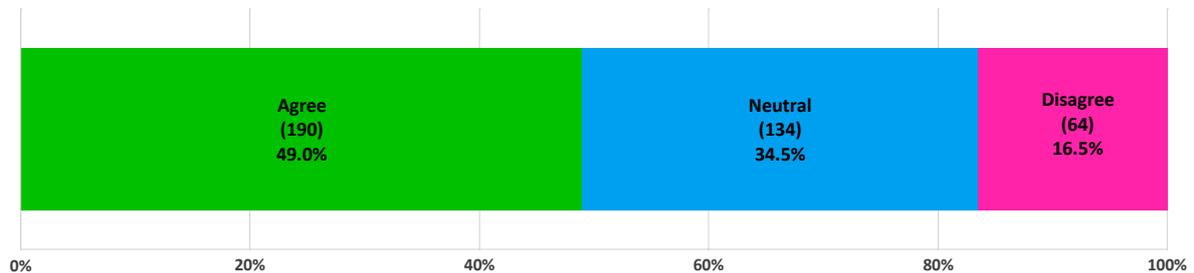


There were 387 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Agree' with 167 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.

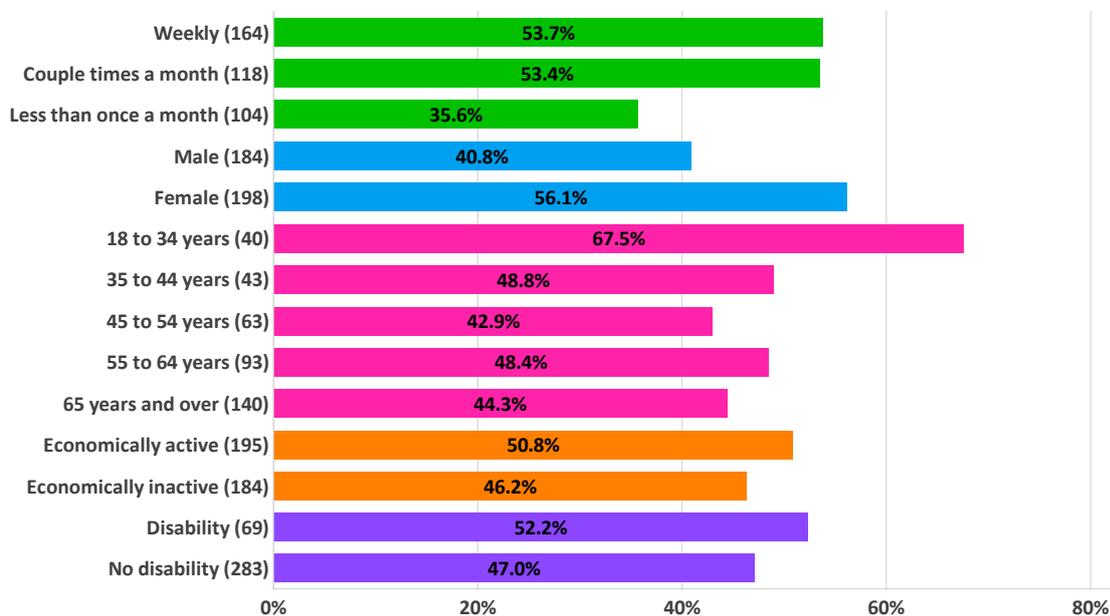


- Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondent to answer positively when asked about the impact of improved seating would have on their experience visiting Maidstone Bus Station.

I am more likely to use the bus station, in the future, if these improvements are carried out



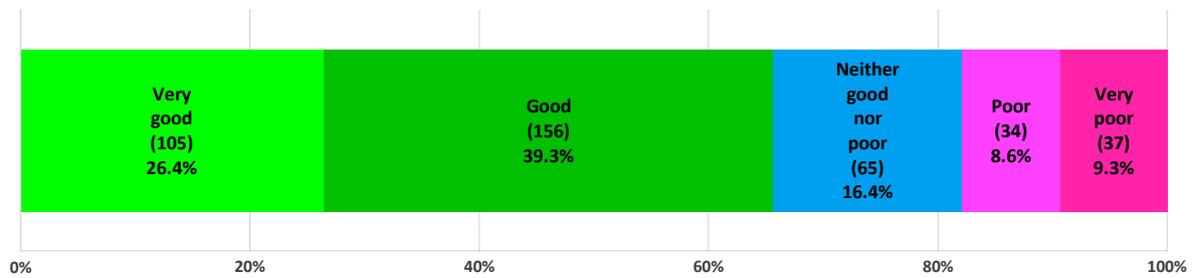
There were 388 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Neither agree nor disagree' with 134 people answering this way. The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.



- Responders that said they use the bus station less than once a month had a significantly lower proportion responding positively to this statement compared to the other visiting frequencies.
- Female responders were significantly more positive about their future use of the bus station following improvements than male responders.
- Responders aged 18 to 34 were significantly more likely be positive about their future use of the bus station following improvements that the age groups aged 45 years and over.

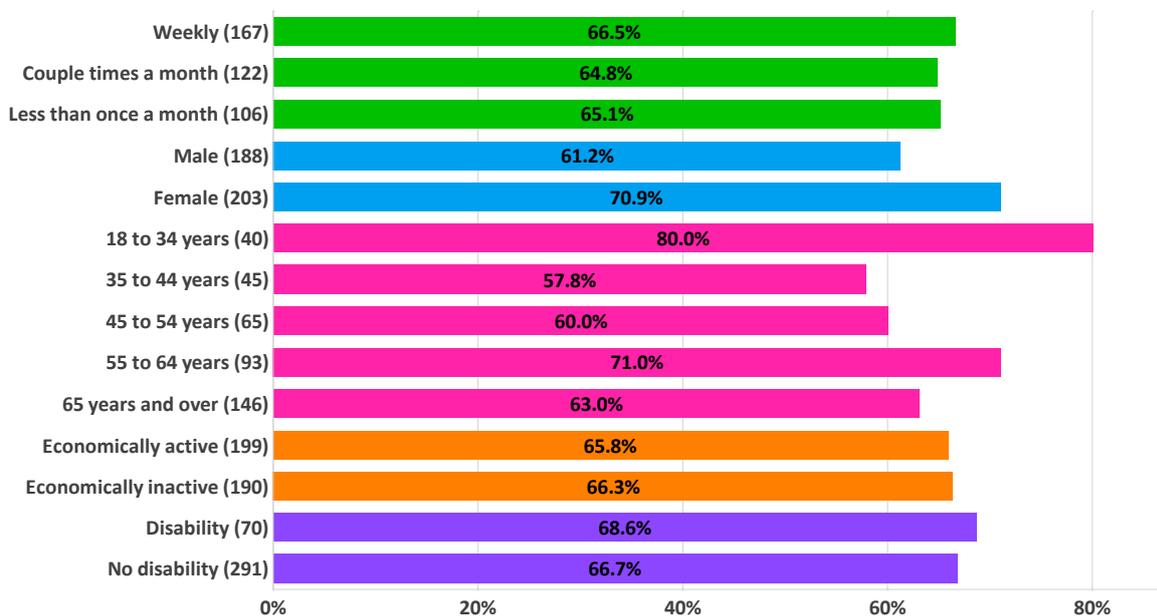
Overall thoughts on proposals

Survey respondents were asked 'Overall, what do you think of the proposals to improve Maidstone Bus station?' and were provided with five answer options ranging from 'Very good' to 'Very poor'.



There were 397 respondents to this question, the most common response was 'Good' with 156 people answering this way. 65.7% responded positively (Very good and Good responses combined) when asked what they thought of the proposals to improve Maidstone Bus Station.

The chart below shows the proportion of each demographic group responding positively (Strongly agree and Agree) to this statement.



- Respondents that said they visit or use the bus station weekly had a significantly greater proportion responding 'Very good' compared to those who said they visit/use the bus station a couple of times a month. However, there is no significant differences between the overall proportions responding positively across the visit/usage frequencies.
- Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to be positive about the proposed improvements.
- Respondents aged 18 to 34 years had the greatest proportion responding positively to this question across the age groups. This result is significantly higher than that for respondents aged 35 to 54 years and 65 years and over.

Other comments

A total of 197 comments were received when respondents were asked if they had any further comments about the proposals to improve the bus station. No new themes were identified when these comments were cross-referenced with the response to the question about other improvements people would like to see.

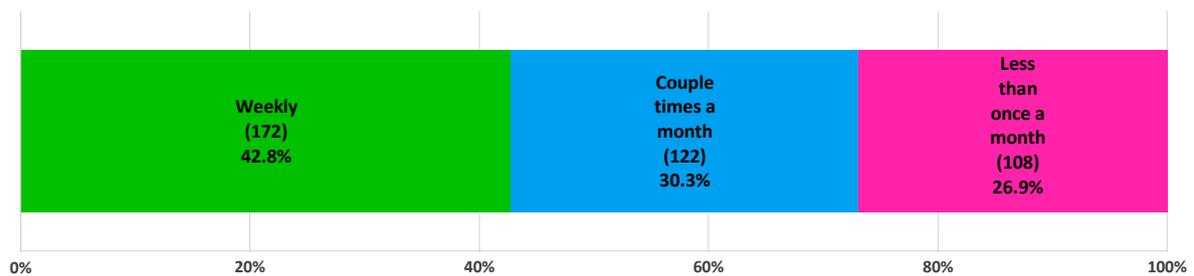
A total of 30 comments were positive about the proposed improvements and 70 were negative about the proposed improvements.

Common themes identified in the comments included:

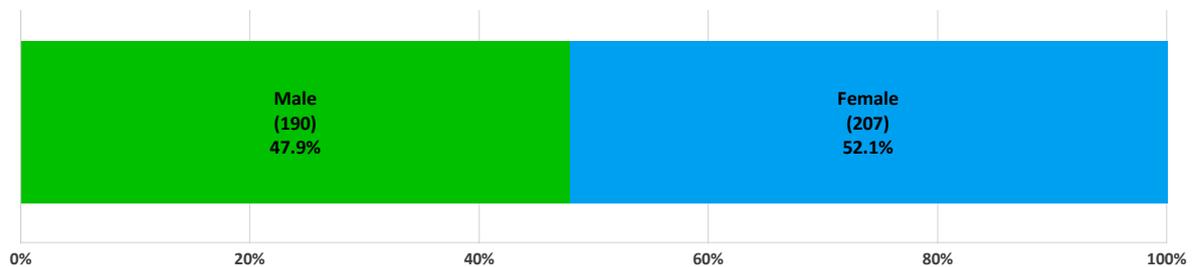
- Move it (31)
- Air quality (22)
- Cleanliness (18)
- Information boards and Bus Services (15)
- Safety issues (9)
- Lighting (6)
- Bus lanes (5)
- Pedestrian access (5)

Survey Demographics

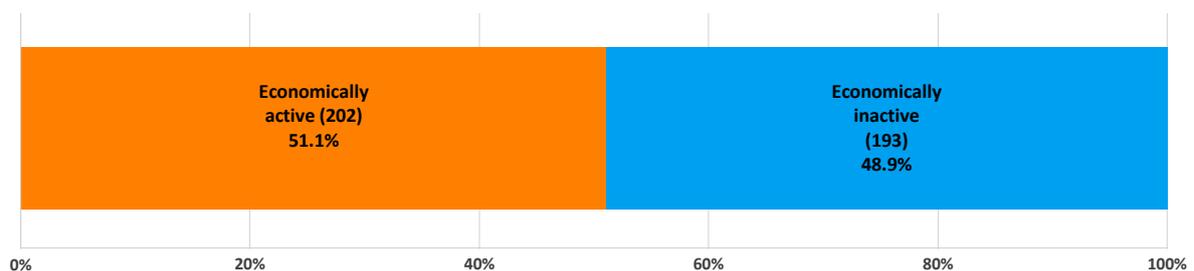
Usage frequency



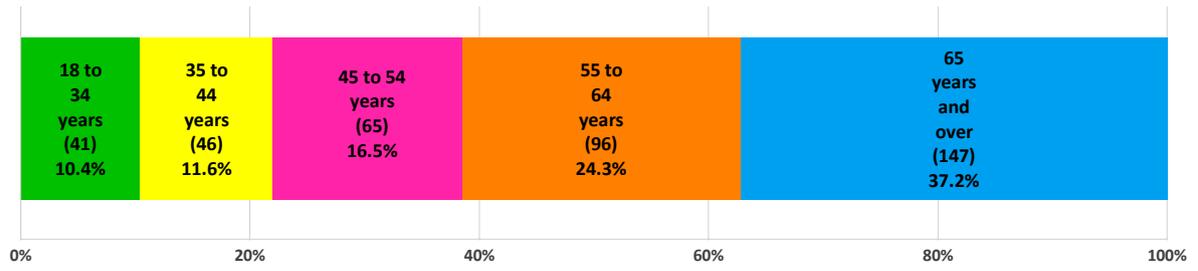
Gender



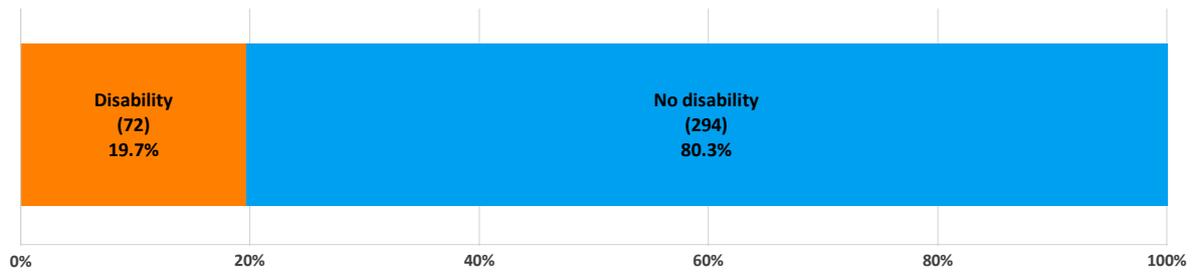
Economic Activity



Age



Disability



Acorn Analysis

The Acorn Profile provides a summary of the demographic, social and lifestyle attributes of the profile set and is derived using the recognised behaviours of Acorn Types across the whole of the UK. It is therefore an estimate of the likely characteristics that you might expect to find, based on the relative proportions of the individual Acorn Types found within the profile set.

The Acorn profile report helps you understand the underlying demographics and lifestyle attributes of your customers by comparing their Acorn profile to a base (e.g. UK population, specific area or other customer groups).

INDEX



Profiles have been run based on how frequently responders stated they travel from Maidstone Bus Station.

- The profiles show that households where someone of working age is unemployed are over-represented in 'weekly users'. Weekly users have a younger age profile than those that use the bus station less frequently. They are also less likely to have children and are more likely to be renting their accommodation from a social housing provider. Additionally, they are 18% more likely to not have access to a private vehicle. Where private vehicles are owned they tend to be smaller vehicles rather than large or luxury cars.
- 'Monthly' and 'Less than monthly' users tend to be more affluent than weekly users with higher household incomes. They tend to live in larger properties that they are owed with a mortgage or outright. Households with two or more private vehicles are over-represented in these users.

KEY FEATURES - Weekly user households compared to Maidstone households

(Based on most over-represented in the profile)



Age

25-34



Social Grade

C1



Children At Home

0



House Tenure

Social Rented



Household Income

£38k

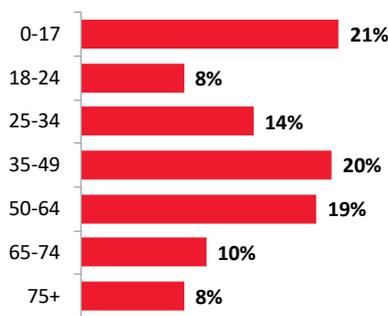


Social Media Usage

Medium

DEMOGRAPHICS

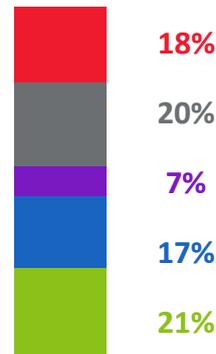
AGE



INDEX



FAMILY



Couple - No Children



Couple - With Children



Lone Parent



Single - No Children



All Student/Pensioner

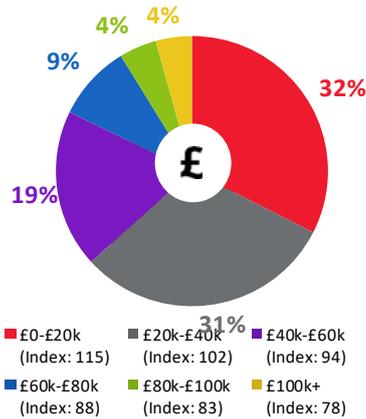
INDEX



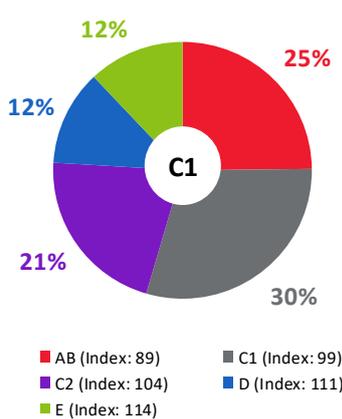
KEY INSIGHTS

- The average age of the population in the profiled households is slightly younger when compared to the base.
- Households containing singles with no children occur more in this profile than in the base.
- 32.5% of the profile live in households with an income less than £20k.
- The dominant Social Grade is C1 and the most over-represented is E.
- There is a higher proportion of people in this profile who are unemployed than in the base.

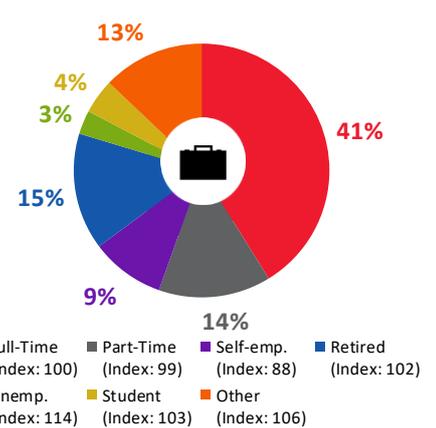
INCOME



SOCIAL GRADE

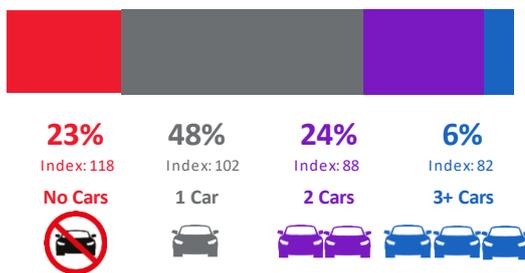


EMPLOYMENT

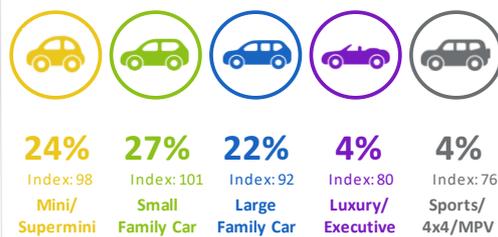


MOTOR & HOME

CARS



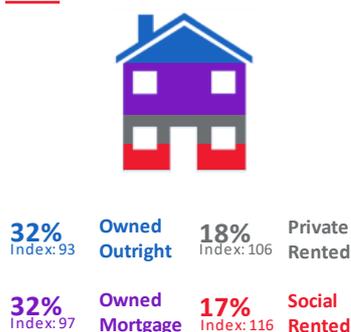
CAR TYPE



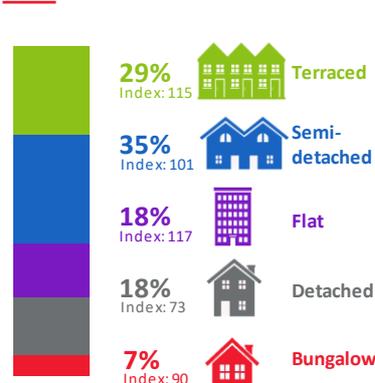
KEY INSIGHTS

- Most households will have access to a small family car.
- A higher proportion, in comparison to the base, are likely to have a small family car.
- Flats are 16.7% more likely than in the base.
- 16.8% of the households in the profile are likely to be social rented.
- About 9% of households will have 1 bedroom.
- The prevailing size is 2 people but households with 1 person appear more than in the base.

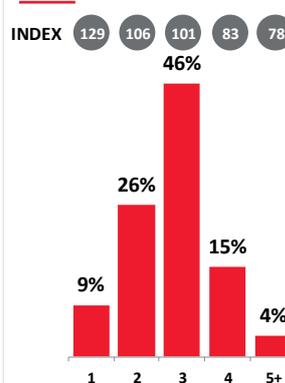
TENURE



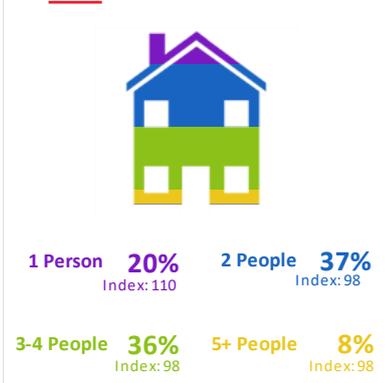
TYPE



BEDROOMS

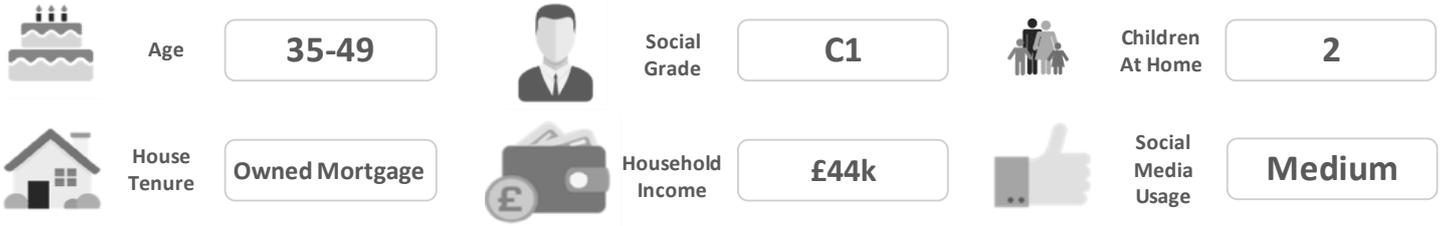


SIZE



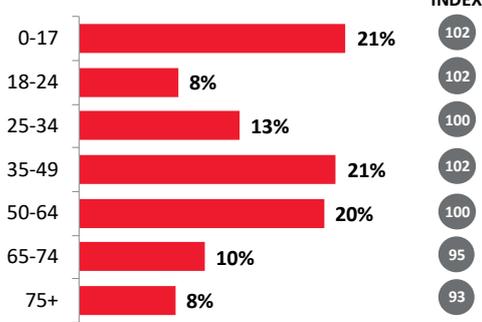
KEY FEATURES - Monthly user households compared to Maidstone households

(Based on most over-represented in the profile)

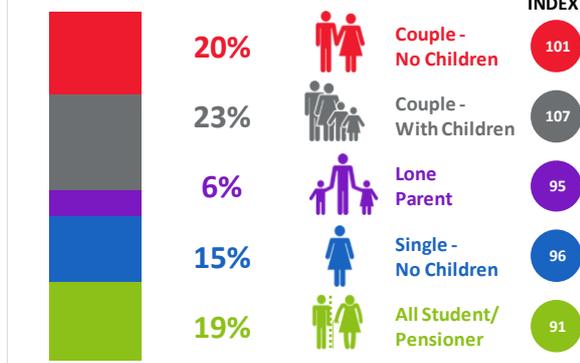


DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



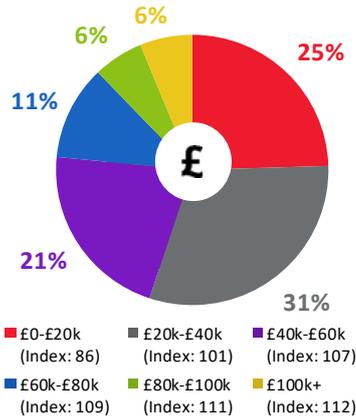
FAMILY



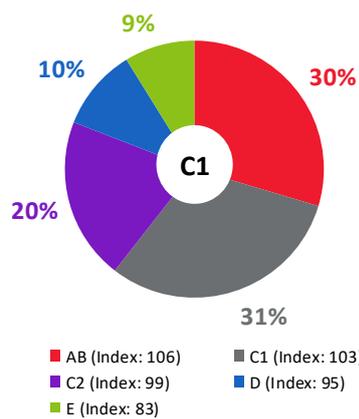
KEY INSIGHTS

- The average age of the population in the profiled households is slightly younger when compared to the base.
- Households containing couples with children occur more in this profile than in the base.
- 6.2% of the profile live in households with an income of over £100k.
- The dominant Social Grade is C1 and the most over-represented is AB.
- There is a higher proportion of people in this profile who are employed full-time than in the base.

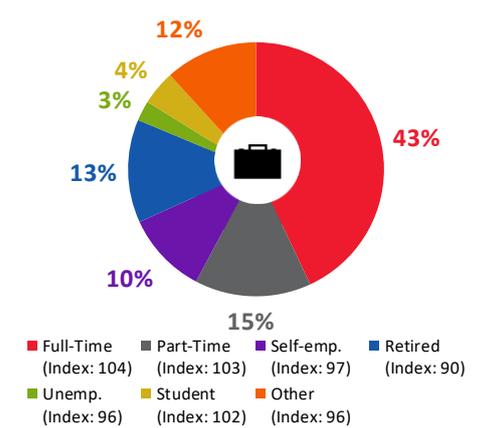
INCOME



SOCIAL GRADE

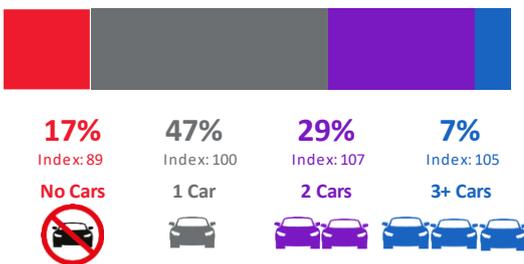


EMPLOYMENT

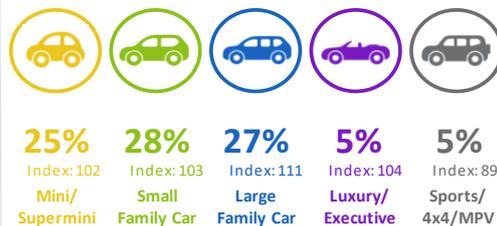


MOTOR & HOME

CARS



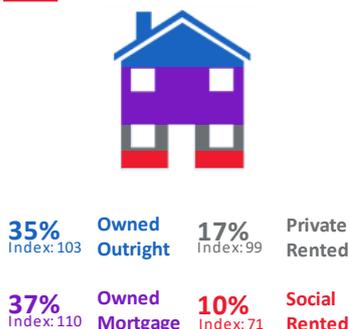
CAR TYPE



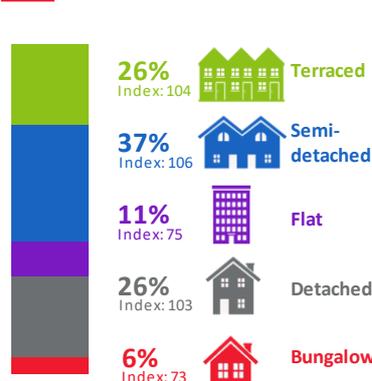
KEY INSIGHTS

- Most households will have access to a small family car.
- A higher proportion, in comparison to the base, are likely to have a large family car.
- Semi-detached houses are 6.2% more likely than in the base.
- 36.6% of the households in the profile are likely to be owned mortgage.
- About 21% of households will have 4 bedrooms.
- The prevailing size is 3-4 people but households with 5 or more people appear more than in the base.

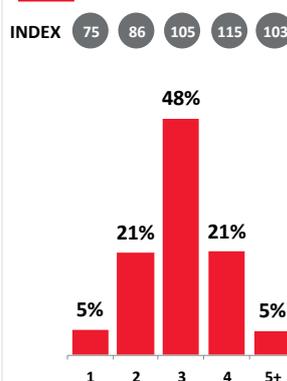
TENURE



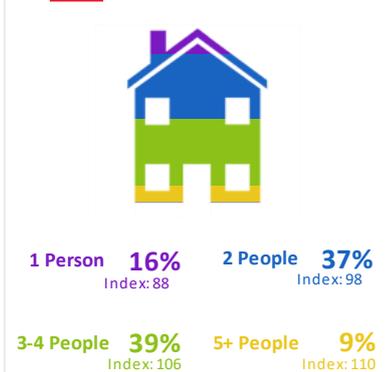
TYPE



BEDROOMS

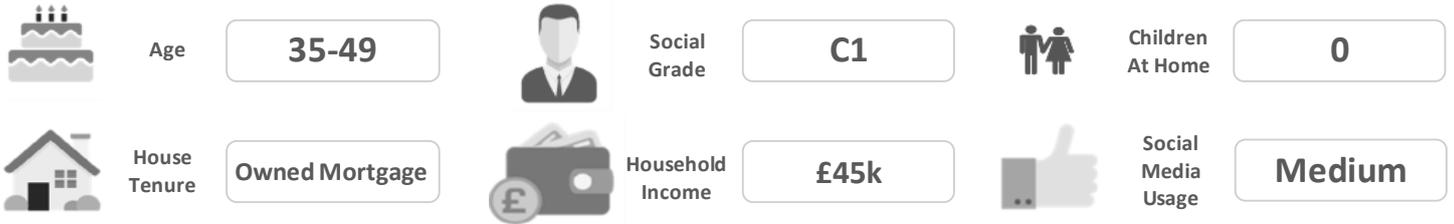


SIZE



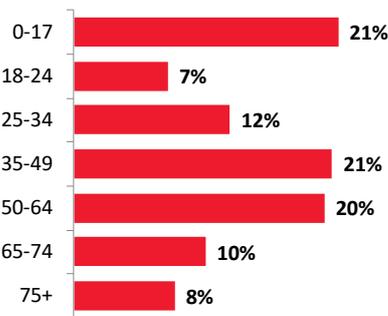
KEY FEATURES - Less than monthly user households compared to Maidstone households

(Based on most over-represented in the profile)



DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



INDEX



FAMILY



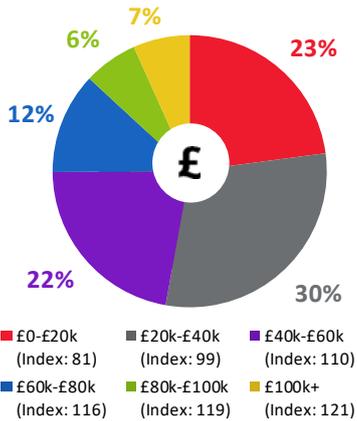
INDEX



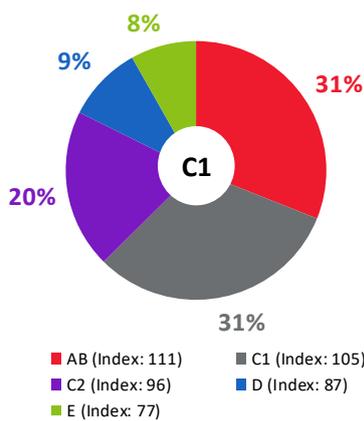
KEY INSIGHTS

- The average age of the population in the profiled households is about the same when compared to the base.
- Households containing couples with children occur more in this profile than in the base.
- 6.7% of the profile live in households with an income of over £100k.
- The dominant Social Grade is C1 and the most over-represented is AB.
- There is a higher proportion of people in this profile who are employed full-time than in the base.

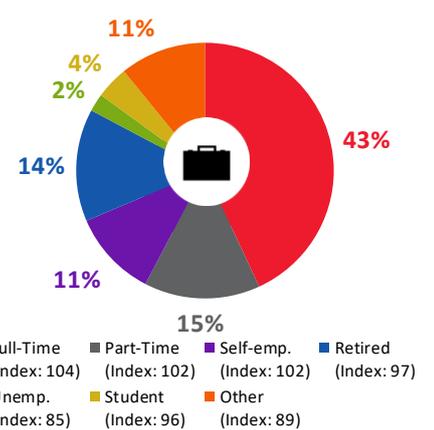
INCOME



SOCIAL GRADE

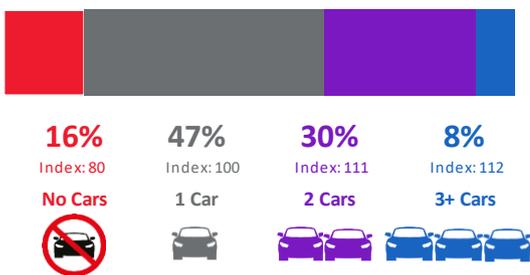


EMPLOYMENT

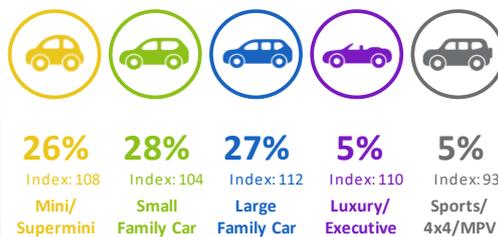


MOTOR & HOME

CARS



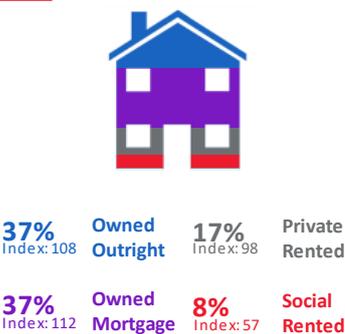
CAR TYPE



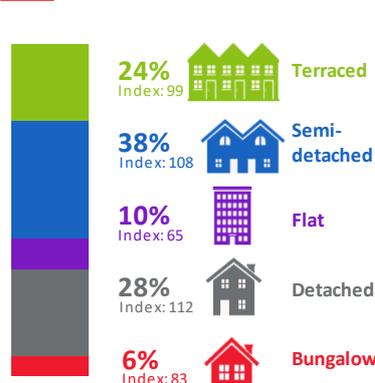
KEY INSIGHTS

- Most households will have access to a small family car.
- A higher proportion, in comparison to the base, are likely to have a large family car.
- Detached houses are 11.7% more likely than in the base.
- 37.2% of the households in the profile are likely to be owned mortgage.
- About 21% of households will have 4 bedrooms.
- The prevailing size is 3-4 people

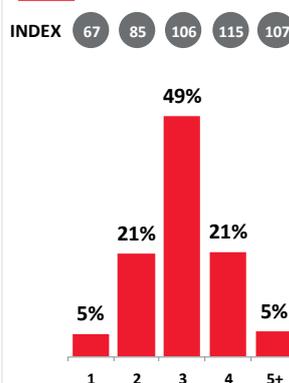
TENURE



TYPE



BEDROOMS



SIZE

