

Report of transport user surgery held in Tooting

May 2012

Report on Transport User Surgery held by London TravelWatch



London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media
- Liaise with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users and respond to their consultations
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.

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1 Tooting Transport Users Surgery

As part of its stakeholder engagement work during 2011/12 London TravelWatch held an event to engage with transport users in Tooting following successful events in Stratford, Croydon and Romford which had been inspired by Bus Users' UK's successful and long-running 'bus surgeries'.

Tooting's population has expanded steadily in recent years, due to the area's popularity with commuters looking for somewhere affordable to live. It has a large Asian community. Tooting is on the Northern Line - with tube stations at the top and the bottom of the hill that slopes down the High Street; Tooting Bec and Tooting Broadway. It also has good bus links, with routes to and from Central London, Croydon, Sutton and Kingston amongst others. It was decided to hold a surgery in Tooting to engage with residents on several key local issues such as the upgrade of the Northern Line and transport to St Georges Hospital and Springfield Hospital. Tooting is a busy shopping destination at the weekend and the idea of holding the event on a Saturday was that people would be in less of a rush on a Saturday and would have more time to stop and talk to us. In addition, it would reach working people who might not be able to attend an event held on a weekday.

The Tooting Transport Surgery took place on Saturday 10 March 2012 between 10am and 2pm. It offered an opportunity to speak face-to-face with users of transport services and to explain how London TravelWatch could help them and learn more about transport users' journey patterns and concerns in different parts of London.

Staff were based inside Tooting Broadway Underground Station and outside the entrance to South Thames College and the Sainsburys supermarket, which was adjacent to two busy bus stops. They were also on hand to talk to passersby outside the station.

Tooting was very busy throughout the time that London TravelWatch was there and the good weather on the day might well have helped. We spoke to several hundred people and they were generally positive about transport in their area, although a few issues such as the perceived high cost of public transport and poor disabled access did crop up on a number of occasions.

We handed out promotional bags and pens, 'How to complain' leaflets, copies of our transport users' priorities document and a questionnaire which people could either fill in on the day or take away and post back.

We approached Transport for London (TfL) about the possibility of someone attending to be on hand to answer questions about the Northern Line but this

was not possible so they provided us with a briefing sheet with details on the project. Members of the Casework Team were on hand to take complaints on the day.



2 Travel Survey findings

At the transport surgery, London TravelWatch handed out surveys to transport users. The aims of the survey were to establish the travel patterns of transport users in Tooting and gain a more in depth understanding of key public transport issues for people living in the area. We handed out 640 surveys and a total of 212 were returned to us, either on the day or through the post; a response rate of 33%, significantly higher than the response rate at any of the previous surgeries.

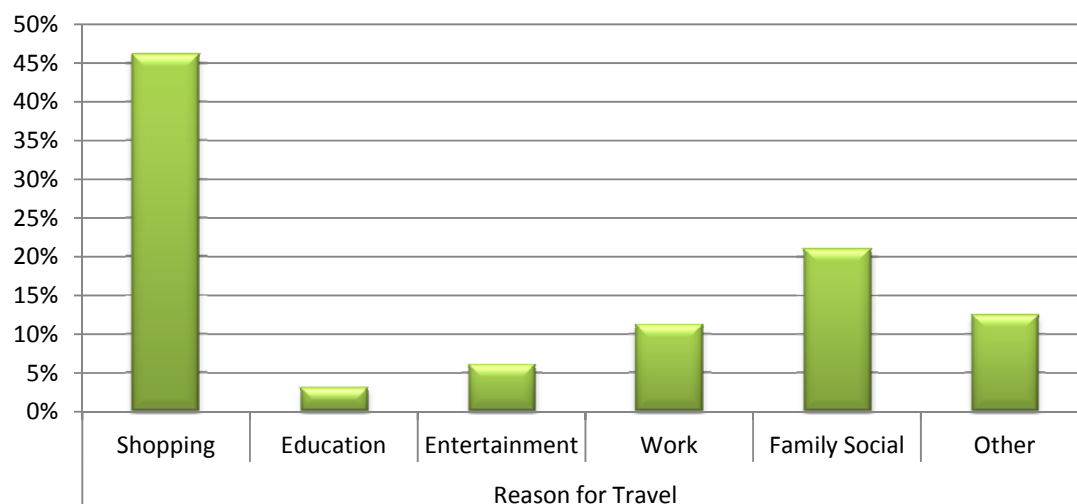
The survey provides a snapshot of transport users in London. The findings of the survey are not statistically significant but provide an interesting insight into the travel patterns and needs of transport users in Tooting.

There was a prize draw to encourage participants to return the survey of a £50 Oyster card.

Journey purpose, frequency and modes of transport

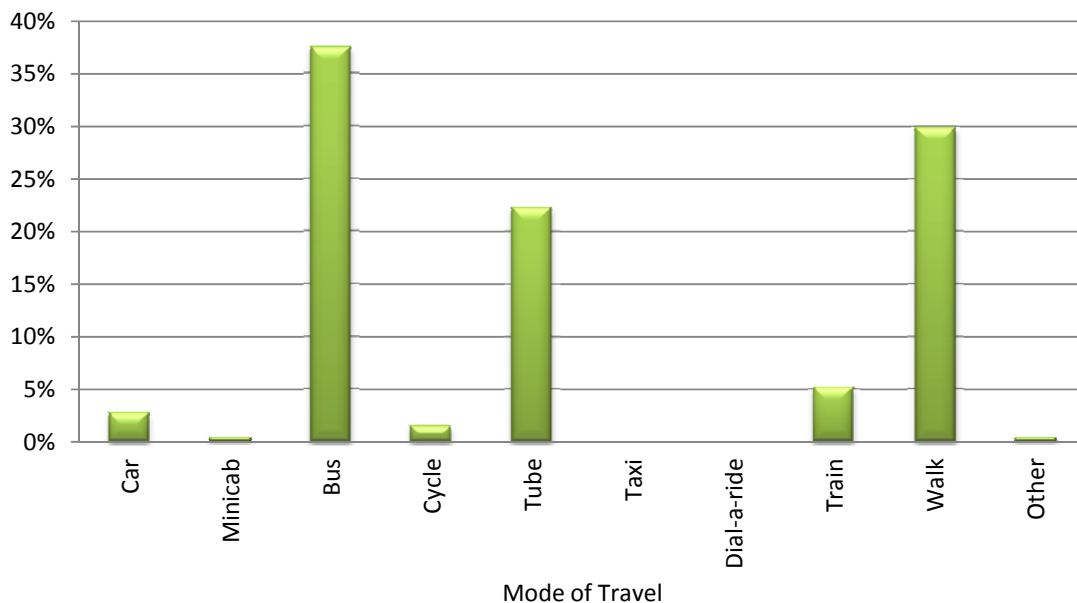
The first section of the survey looks at the reasons for travelling, how frequently people travel and the mode of transport they use and why. The majority of respondents' reason for travel was shopping (46%), followed by family/social (21%). 11% of respondents were travelling to/from work. Interestingly, at the Romford and Croydon surgeries over two thirds of respondents gave shopping as their reason for travel (just over a quarter chose this reason in Stratford).

Graph 1 – Respondents' reason for travel on the day of the survey



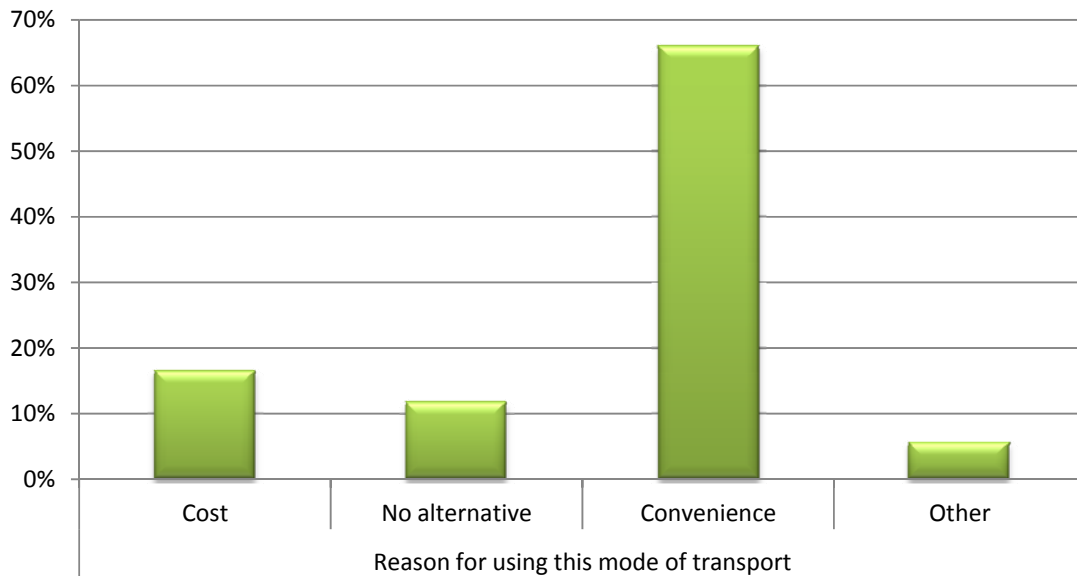
The majority of people surveyed had used the bus (37%), although a large percentage said that they walked (30%) or used the tube (22%).

Graph 2 – Modes of travel used by respondents on day of the survey¹



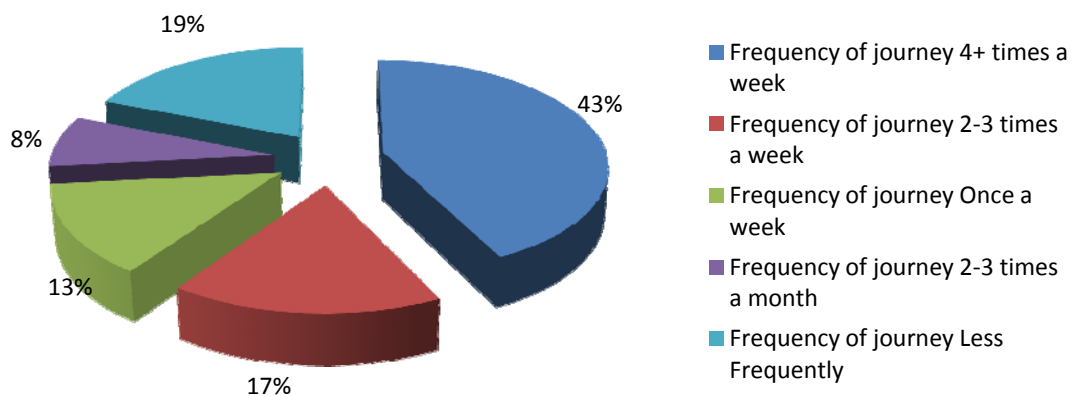
Convenience was clearly very important to respondents when they chose which method of transport to users with two thirds of people listing this reason – a similar result to the one we found in our three previous surgeries. Almost a fifth of respondents said that the cost was the reason why they chose the method of transport that they did and this could in part explain why more people used the bus than the tube.

Graph 3 – Reason for choosing these modes of travel by survey respondents



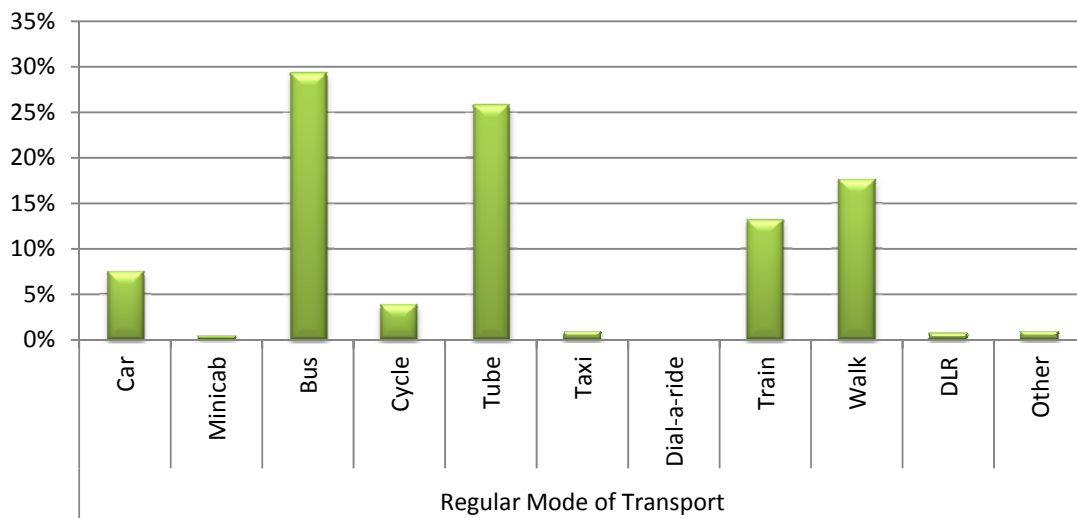
Most respondents (43%) said that they made the journey they were making on the day of the surgery four or more times a week with a similar number making it two to three times a week (17%) or once a week (13%).

Graph 4 – Frequency of travel by survey respondents



When respondents listed the regular modes of transport they used, the bus (29%) and the tube (26%) were the most popular. Less than 5% said that they cycled, lower than one might have expected given that a cycle superhighway runs through Tooting.

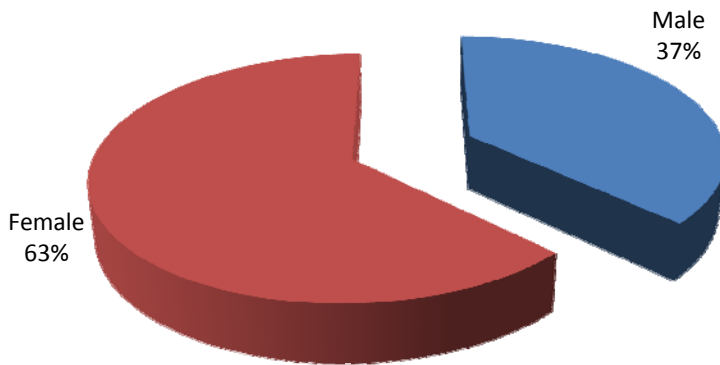
Graph 5 – Regular mode of transport used by respondents to the survey



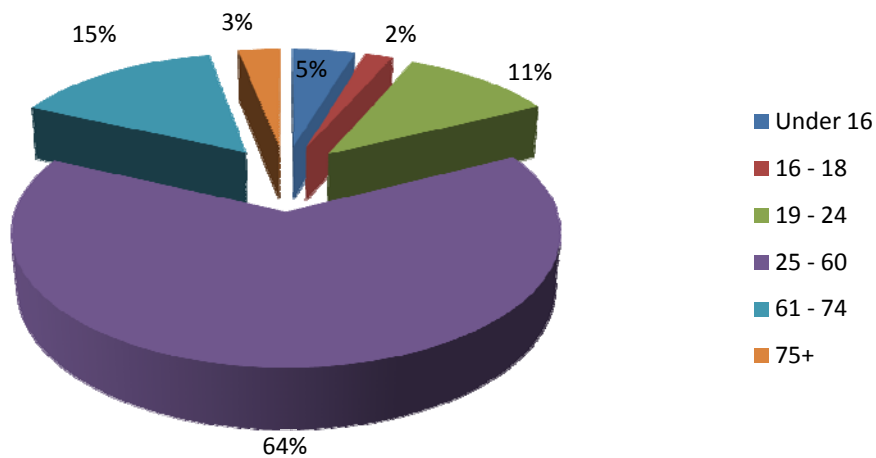
Profile of respondents to the survey

The majority of respondents to our survey were female (63%). Around two thirds of respondents were aged between 25 and 60 years old, with 15% of respondents aged between 61 and 74 years old. Over half of respondents were white, with a quarter identifying themselves as ‘Asian’ and 13% as ‘Black’. Two thirds of respondents said that they did not travel with children. 95% of respondents said that they did not have difficulty walking. 40% of people who filled in the surveys lived in Tooting, with 12% from nearby Mitcham and 6% from both Steatham and Wimbledon.

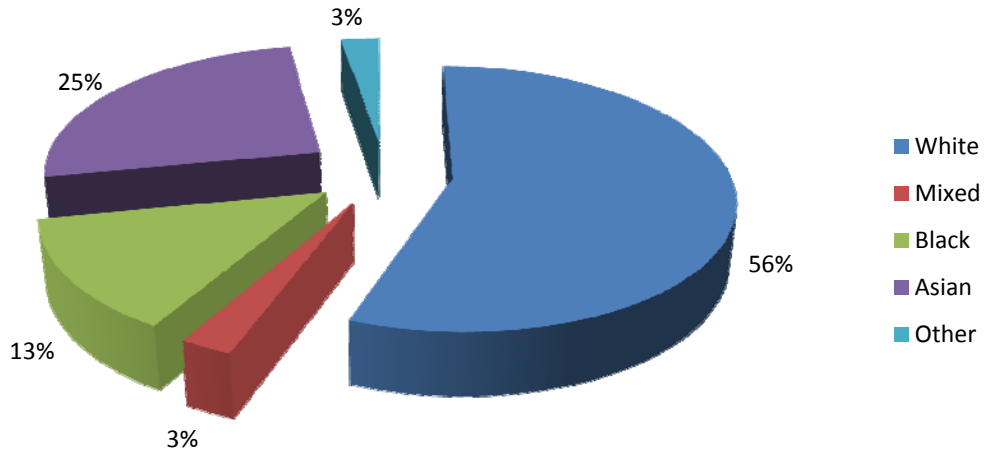
Graph 6 – Gender of respondents



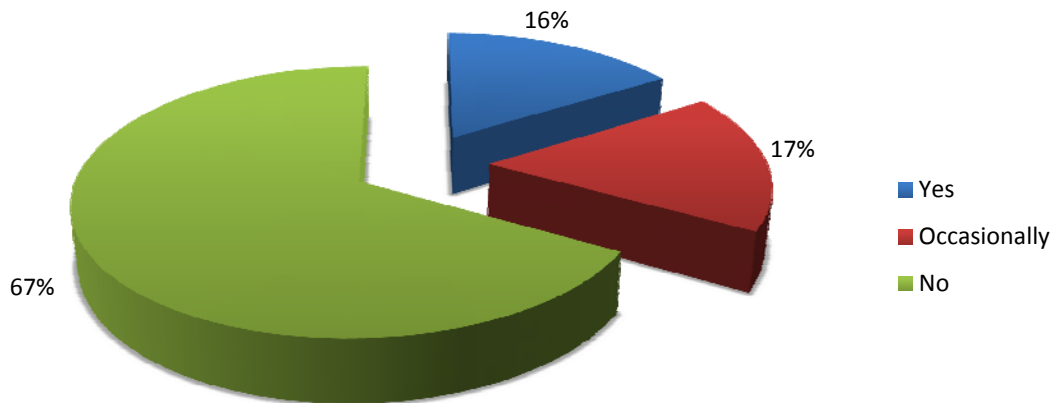
Graph 7 – Age profile of survey respondents



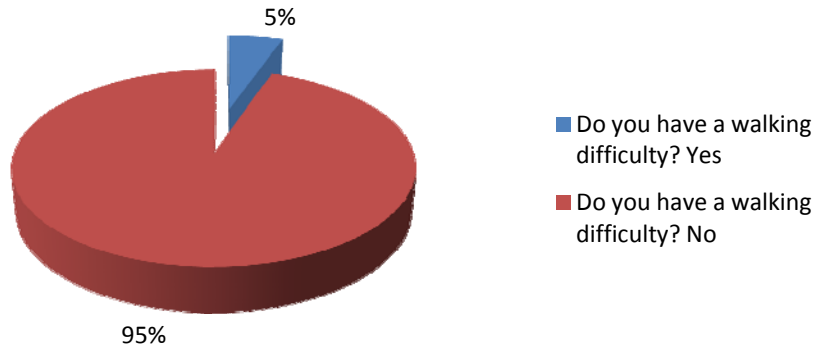
Graph 8 – Percentage of survey respondents by ethnic group



Graph 9 – Respondents travelling with children



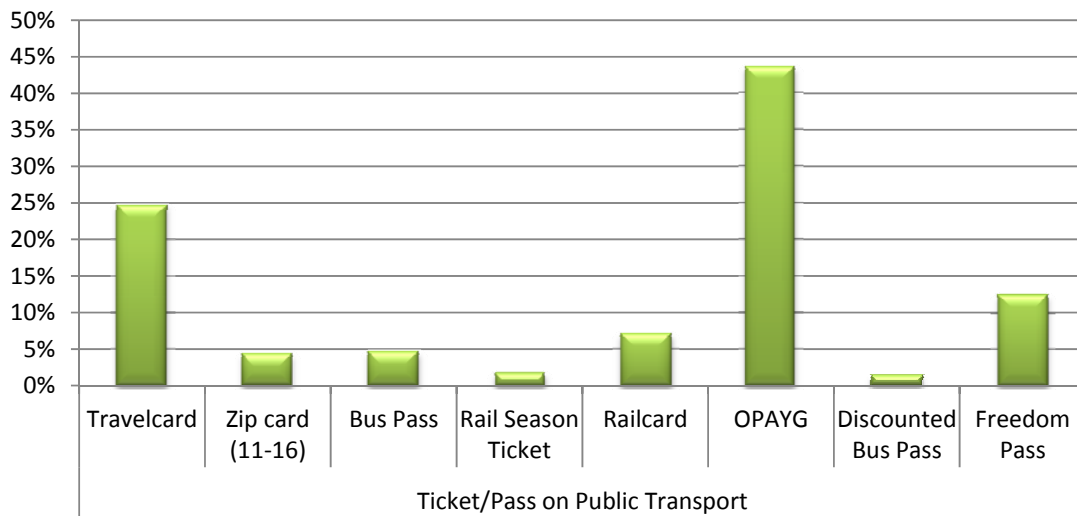
Graph 10 – Percentage of survey respondents who do or do not have difficulty walking



Ticket types used by respondents

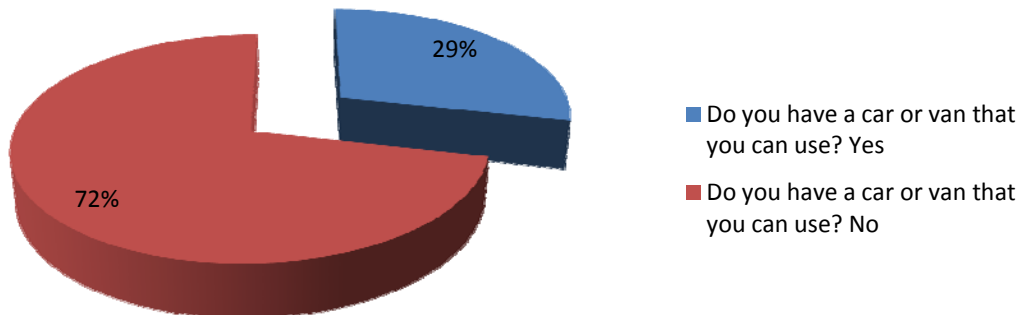
The majority of respondents (44%) said that they used Oyster Pay As You Go (OPAYG) with a quarter using a Travelcard. 13% used a Freedom Pass.

Graph 11 – Ticket types used by survey respondents



Almost three quarters of respondents said that they did not have access to a car or van. This is a significantly higher percentage than at any of our previous transport surgeries.

Graph 12 – Survey respondents travelling who do or do not have access to a car or van



General feedback

A lot of the people surveyed commented that they were happy with public transport in the local area but several respondents said that they thought that it was too expensive. Others said that they would like stations to be cleaner and to have better access for the disabled. Access to hospitals was another issue that was raised by some respondents and safety of public transport late at night was also mentioned.

3 Conclusions

The passenger events give London TravelWatch a chance to speak to transport users directly, giving them an opportunity to tell us any everyday concerns, as well as telling us when things are working well, which we can feedback to transport providers to resolve or use as a best practice example. We manage to reach people we do not often speak to directly, and by holding the Tooting event on a Saturday we enabled people who work during the week to come and speak to us.

The events are also a way of raising London TravelWatch's profile, explaining what we do and what we can do for the travelling public within specific areas, especially amongst people who may not fit the profile of our usual complainants.

While the surveys are not necessarily statistically significant, they do provide an interesting snapshot of travel patterns on a Saturday in a busy outer London area.

Appendix A: Selection of comments

The following are a selection of comments made on the day:

My son is autistic but as I don't drive, we are forced to use the tube daily. The unnecessary loud 'good service today' announcements are frightening for him. I have to position his feet on the escalators and he takes longer to get through barriers, not always appreciated by staff.

Transport in London is ridiculously overpriced.

Would like more bus indicators. Franciscan Road bus routes 249, 319.

77 and 44 [buses] run irregularly.

Everything is brilliant!

Buses not frequent enough. Buses too crowded when [they] come.

It is too expensive travelling by tube + train.

Tooting Bec Franciscan Road 319/249 buses have no indicators.

The prices are outrageous.

I object most strongly to people eating on buses. They eat greasy food and then get hold of "bars" etc. and hand holds, disgusting!

I live in Tooting and would be lost without public transport!

The cost of tube fares is excessive generally + even more so for central London. If I have the time I try and walk everywhere in Zone 1 rather than use the tube.

Keep the buses out of the cycle lanes. The next time a bus rams me up against railings, the bus driver will pay dearly!! You never listen to bikers, but you do when bus drivers start to get hurt, like they do to us!!!

The buses are always too packed and all engine powered motor machines are far too dear!!

Improve hygiene at stations. Bring back the route master on more routes. Limited space on buses for trolleys/shopping bags etc. Extend Oyster card

into more areas for train travel. Introduce express buses which only stop at tube or bus rail stations/connection points - could run peak times only.

They keep moving back the age for pensioners' free travel. I am 60. Most dissappointing!

Make London Car free!!

Happy with transport.

Buses are useless - rather walk than wait. Could walk quicker than wait at Garratt Lane. Tube trains - Don't like escalators often fall over. Don't mind going up - not down.

More cyclists on the road make it more easier. Earlsfield lift - walk from Wimbledon. Vauxhall - que. Clapham to Wimbledon and West Brompton congestion.

Pushchairs lift out of action on entire network. When asking for help it's refused due to H+S issue.

Closures.

Too rough - drivers. Attitudes of drivers. Fares. Bad music. Cleanliness.

Waiting long time for a bus. Bus goes past not stopping.

Please please reduce the fare. It's so expensive.

Tooting is lucky in that we have a tube, main line, and buses fairly close - all could run better especially weekends. As someone who walks I find it really annoying when people on cycles do not stop at traffic light but feel it is their right to ignore them.

In general I am very happy with public transport here in London.

Too expensive.

Public transport is expensive; car journeys are door to door + safer at night than the tube.

Night buses don't feel safe at times - even with CCTV present.

People friendly streets. TfL need to take account of cyclists. In Tooting car parking bays in cycling superhighways causing congestion. Would be easy to segregate cycle routes by removing car spaces. Enjoyable to cycle walks & cycles, reliable - guaranteed time - don't need to pay.

Visitor to London - find transport system really easy to use. Cost of tube a bit expensive. Higher than in Greece.

Rail costs out of London are an absolute disgrace!

I think there should be lifts at Tooting Broadway station and at Tooting BR station disability access is terrible and there is a big hospital close to the tube station in Tooting.

Just let you know that underground system is really contaminated. It would be great something to recycle air more constantly. I have to used it for going to work but I have to admit that it is expensive (especially in peak hour).

The G1 bus (in both directions) is unreliable on most occasions, either turning up late or daparting from Grosvenor way early or not at all. It's the only bus route for Grosvenor way and therefore itsunreliability is an inconvenience.

I regularly use the 57 & 333 bus before 8:30am & after 6:20pm - to & from Thrale Road. They are always overcrowded to a very uncomfortable degree & especially from Tooting Broadway to Thrale Road. I often have to wait at least 5 minutes or much more especially after 9pm. Can I add that there are enormous pot holes at the Thrale Road bus stop. Thanks for doing this survey.

Public transport is expensive.

I'm a single parent and I think the price for a weekly pass is far too dear. I only work part time, I think it should be half price.

Should restrict to one push chair or baby buggy at anytime. Prosecute those that put their feet on the seats or put prominent warning sign.

Public transport is environmentally friendly, and costs less.

My Oyster has been charged for travelling via zone 1 although I take the overground to avoid zone 1. I have zone 2-4 weekly travelcard. The officers/managers at the station are not helping. It's not my fault - put pink validators everywhere!

Trams in the morning too packed, are supposed to be every 6-8 mins, but have often have to wait 12 mins and cannot get on the first tram.

Cost of tube travel is too high. Tube should operate at least until 2-3am on Friday/Saturday nights. Cabs are too expensive.

Enabling children to travel free is brilliant. Jam peak on Morden Lane still difficult, though getting better. Big fan of public transport. Is a priority for Mayor.

Wimbledon - too much traffic.

Too expensive.

I use the Northern Line a lot - and think it's excellent!

Expensive, unpleasant late at night.

I commute daily to city for work. Although able bodied, I have been ill over the last 2-3 years. Travelling is difficult in rush hour as I'm unable to stand for long periods. The reduction in through trains via Charing Cross has lengthened journey + makes it more tiring - difficult to get a seat.

Bus should be clean when end of the route.

Think the tube is brilliant. Frequent, fast, clean. About the best form of transport.

Transport needs to be cheaper to reduce carbon footprint.

Drive won't let me take my dog upstairs. 280/264/127. Driver attitudes.

It's really good transport.

Tooting Broadway underground station is very close to St. George's hospital and the promised lift for disability access was never installed. Both Tooting Broadway and Tooting National Rail stations need lifts for disability access, particularly as they are so close to a very large teaching hospital.

The transport of London is too expensive. It's the only problem that I can find.

I find transport getting too expensive and rather overcrowded and London traffic rather appalling.

Appendix B: Findings from the previous surgeries

Croydon 17th November 2009

For this event, a bus, kindly provided by Arriva London, was parked in North End between 10am and 4:30pm. This is a central location within the town centre close to shops and the market. Croydon was very busy all the time that London TravelWatch were there and we spoke to over 1,000 people on the day, including a wide range of the travelling public – bus users, motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, as well as tram and rail users. The public were generally positive about transport and the complaints and concerns were usually about specific problems, rather than an over-arching pattern. We heard about problems with ramps on buses, and the local bus operators spent time explaining to people what the problems were and how they could try to overcome this. When particular bus routes were mentioned, the operators, in the main, already knew of the problems – usually congestion or routeing. It was also clear how important people's Freedom Passes were to them.

Romford 5th March 2010

For this event, a bus was parked at the South Street end of the Market Place between 10am and 3pm. Romford was less busy than Croydon, and we spoke to more people who never used public transport. In Romford, we found people less satisfied, generally, with the provision of transport in their area. We also heard repeatedly about problems with the specific bus routes owing to roadworks, short turning buses and crowding. We also heard problems about the pedestrianisation of part of the town centre making the buses less convenient. We heard frequent confusion about whether new Freedom Passes could be used immediately.

Stratford 24th March 2011

For this event, we parked a bus outside the rail/underground station, which is next to the bus station and opposite a shopping centre between 10am and 4pm. Stratford bus and train station was very busy throughout the time that London TravelWatch was there. We spoke to over 1,000 people on the day, including a wide range of the travelling public – mainly bus users, but also rail, tube, pedestrians, motorists, cyclist and DLR users. The public were generally positive about transport in their area and the complaints and concerns were usually about specific problems, rather than any over-arching pattern.

At both locations, we found many wheelchair users or mobility impaired people who were not aware that all buses in London were now accessible, or how to

use the ramps on buses. We were able to give advice and practical demonstrations (along with the local bus operators) on how to use the buses, especially the ramps. In some cases, people who did not use buses said they would in future.