

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Topic Guide for Focus Group with Parents and Guardians

1 Introducing the project

- This focus group is part of a study on school transport and safer journeys to school
- We will be discussing your childrens' experiences of travelling to and from school and of school transport and your own experiences of assisting your childrens' school transport needs
- The discussion will last no longer than 45 minutes
- We will be taking notes and may also be recording the discussion as it is important to record exactly what each of you say.
- Any information will be confidential and your name will not be used outside of this discussion.

2 Travel in a typical school week

- where they live and what school their children go to
- description of a typical routine weekday
- journeys to and from school made - mode of transport used – do you take them to and from school?
- Any problems getting your children to travel to school?

Prompts to obtain more information

- *structure on a daily basis where possible*
- *distinguish by type of trips – regular or special journeys for particular reasons*
- *Crossing main roads?*
- *Particular routes used? Why? Time taken? Areas? Safety and security concerns? School uniform?*
- *Usually accompanied or unaccompanied? By yourself or someone else?*
- *Choice of mode influenced by? Weather? Mood? Time taken?*

3 Use of public transport

- Use of bus or train to get to school
- Does your child use a scheduled Translink (Ulsterbus/NI Railways/Metro) service?
- Does your child use an Education and Library board service?
- Fares or free transport entitlement?
- Experiences of assisting them or getting them to use public transport on school journeys

Prompts to obtain more information

- *Why? Route? Distance traveled? Service frequency and timings?*
- *Social aspects? Problems with other pupils/students on bus?*

4 Car Journeys

- Do you give your children a lift to and from school?
- Does someone else give them a lift on your behalf? Why? Car access?
- Every day or on special occasions?
- Times and routes taken. On the way to somewhere else? Work?

Prompts to obtain more information

- *Reasons for choice?*

- *Benefits of choice?*
- *Can this cause congestion or car parking problems near the school?*
- *Distances to be traveled?*
- *Available alternative modes? Bus/train/walking/cycling?*

5 **Walking**

- Do your children walk to and from school?
- Everyday or just sometimes?
- How far is the school?
- How long does it take them to walk?
- Do they have to cross any roads?
- Are there crossing points and/or patrols (lollypop men/women)

Prompts to obtain more information

- *Reasons for choice?*
- *Benefits of choice? Health? Environment?*
- *How does it make them feel? How does it make you feel?*
- *Security and safety concerns? Areas? Roads to be crossed? Uniform?*
- *Alone or in a group? Any other concerns for their welfare?*

6 **Cycling**

- Do your children cycle to and from school?
- Everyday or just sometimes?
- How far is the school?
- How long does it take them to cycle?
- Do they have to use any roads? Busy? Cycle lanes/paths?
- Do they feel safe? Do you feel content for their safety?
- Are there secure bicycle facilities at school?

Prompts to obtain more information

- *Reasons for choice?*
- *Benefits of choice? Health? Environment?*
- *How does it make you feel?*
- *Security and safety concerns? Areas? Roads to be crossed? Busy roads? Pavements? Uniform?*
- *Alone or in a group? Any other concerns for their welfare?*

7 **Street environment and areas**

- Do your children use busy roads? Does this concern you? Why?
- Are they main roads or minor roads?
- Are there times or places they feel unsafe? Why? Where?
- Are there times or places you feel they could be unsafe? Why? Where?
- How would they normally cope when they feel unsafe? How do you cope?
- Weather and seasons – travelling on dark mornings and/or afternoons?

Prompts to obtain more information

- *Security and safety concerns? Areas? Roads to be crossed? Busy roads? Pavements? Uniform? Sectarian or bullying issues? Self consciousness?*
- *Are there features of the area(s) that make them feel unsafe? What? Why?*
- *Avoid areas? Does this mean a longer trip?*
- *Differences in the street environment in the winter? During wet and dark weather? Perhaps means a change in the way they travel?*

Thank you very much for your time and contribution.