

Fact Sheet 3

Perceptions of security on bus travel

This is the third fact sheet in a series of nine, produced by the Department for Transport. It presents findings from research conducted during 2002/03 into people's experiences and perceptions of crime on public transport¹.

This fact sheet presents findings relating to the use of buses and coaches, and goes on to set out people's perceptions of personal security on bus travel. Finally, it identifies what measures make people feel safer while travelling by bus.

Use of buses and coaches

- The bus is the most common and frequently used mode of public transport used by adults and young people.
- 46% of women and 40% of men use the bus at least three or four times a week.
- Bus use is highest amongst those aged 16-24 years, with 58% travelling by bus at least three or four days a week.
- In contrast, around 70% of adults say they never travel by long distance coach.
- Only 16% of men and 17% of women have used a long distance coach in the last year.
- People over 45 are more likely to travel by long distance coach, with a third using this mode at least once in the last year.
- For adults most bus journeys are to travel to work or college and for shopping.
- The bus is used by adults for over 60% of social or leisure trips during the day, but this falls to 35% in the evening.
- Young people between 14 and 16 years are more frequent and consistent bus users than those aged 12 and 13.
- For these young people, the most common bus journeys are to school or college, for shopping and for social and leisure trips during the day. As with adults, many fewer young people, especially young women, use the bus for evening leisure trips.
- A quarter of young people have travelled by long distance coach at least once in the last year. Two thirds of young people say they never travel by long distance coach.

Personal security on bus travel

- Only a small minority of women and men feel insecure when waiting for or travelling on a bus during daylight.
- For both women and men this insecurity increases after dark, although travelling on the bus is the part of the public transport journey that gives rise to least concern.

¹ This research comprised a literature review, a national interview survey of 2419 households, twelve case studies and twelve escorted journeys. Full reports of the literature review and study findings can be found on the Department for Transport website www.dft.gov.uk (see Crime and Public Transport section).

- After dark, 40% of women and 18% of men feel insecure while travelling on a bus, compared with 51% of women and 20% of men travelling on a train, and 60% of women and 32% of men travelling on the underground.
- Waiting at the bus stop provokes more insecurity, with 49% of women and 20% of men feeling insecure after dark.

"I don't feel safe after 9 o'clock, wherever it is and especially on the tube. It's the buses for me in the evenings." (Young woman)

Making people feel safer on bus travel

- CCTV is the most popular form of reassurance for people waiting for a bus (from 17% in 1996 to 25% in 2002).
- The next most popular form of reassurance for those waiting for a bus is a well-lit environment (18%), followed by shelters and stops being visible from the road (14%) and having a public telephone nearby (11%).
- Respondents living in Greater London, cities and towns are more likely than those in rural areas and shires to favour CCTV surveillance while waiting for buses. Those in rural areas and shires are more likely to choose up to date and accurate timetables and the provision of real-time information.
- CCTV surveillance is the most favoured form of reassurance for people while travelling on the bus (from 19% in 1996 to 26% in 2002).
- The next most popular measure is having a member of staff on board in addition to the driver, although this has decreased slightly in popularity from 24% in 1996 to 22% in 2002.
- The next most popular measure would be for passengers to see drivers refusing to carry people under the influence of alcohol and drugs (19%).
- Those living in Greater London, other cities and towns are more likely than those in rural areas and shires to choose CCTV cameras on board. Those in rural areas and shires are more likely to favour the driver refusing to carry people under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- While there are few differences between the preferences of women and men while waiting for the bus, there are some differences while on bus. Women are more likely to choose having an additional member of staff and the driver refusing to take those influenced by alcohol or drugs, while men are more likely to choose CCTV and on-vehicle radio contact for the driver.

'It's nice, bright, well lit. I like the way you can see all the staff, there's always a lot around or seems to be.' (Woman at bus station)

"It's clean, brighter and the timetables are clear and keep you up to date. You know there's CCTV everywhere watching you." (Man at bus station)

'The drivers are always so helpful and welcoming. It's not so much for safety, it's during the day. But it makes you feel so welcome and you can ask them for help.' (Older woman on bus)