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Public Perception of Safety on Public Transport

January 2010



PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF SAFETY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT - RESULTS FROM JANUARY 2010 OMNIBUS

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Symbols and Conventions

Rounding of figures - In tables where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be an apparent slight discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total shown.

Multiple response questions - Respondents can give more than one response to these types of questions if they wish and therefore if individual percentages are summed they may add to more than 100%. These types of questions have been highlighted with the footnote "Percentages sum to more than 100% due to multiple responses".

The following symbols have been used throughout:

0 = less than 0.5 (including nil)

Only differences which are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) are included in this report. This means that there is at least a 95% probability that there is a genuine difference between results and the difference is not simply explained by random chance or sample error.

For further information, there is a User Information section on page 3 and Technical Notes on page 11.

User Information

In keeping with government policy, no hard copies of this report have been published, but are available on request. Requests or enquiries concerning this publication should be directed to:

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Background

The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey carried out in January 2010 included 4 questions from the Department for Regional Development (DRD) to determine the current public perception of how safe it is to use public transport: if they feel safe; what makes them feel unsafe; what would make them feel safer and if this stops them using public transport. This was the first time these questions were asked.

Uses of the data

One of the aims of DRD's Regional Transportation Strategy is having a safe and reliable public transport system. As part of this, it is important to measure public perception of safety on public transport.

Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey methodology

The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey is conducted several times each year by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and is designed to provide a snapshot of the behaviour, lifestyle and views of a representative sample of people aged 16 and over in Northern Ireland. The survey comprises two distinct parts: core questions about the respondents and their individual circumstances, and a variety of questions commissioned by clients, on a range of issues. 1,217 respondents took part in the January 2010 Omnibus Survey.

Sample design

A sample of 2,200 addresses per year is drawn from the Land & Property Services (LPS) list of private addresses using a methodology which is designed to provide representative geographic coverage across NI. This is the most up-to-date listing of private households and is made available to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for research

purposes. People living in institutions (though not the private households in such institutions) are excluded.

The interviewers list all members of the household living at the address who are aged 16 or over. From this list of eligible adults, the interviewer's computer randomly selects one adult who is then asked to complete the interview. As only one person is selected for interview, the data are weighted to adjust the results to those that would have been achieved if the sample had been drawn as a random sample of adults rather than addresses. Weighting is based on household size with higher weights given to individuals in larger households as they have a lower chance of being selected for interview.

$$\text{Weight} = \frac{\text{Number of adults aged 16 and over in household} * \text{Total number interviewed}}{\text{Total number of adults aged 16 and over in sample}}$$

Sampling error

No sample is likely to precisely mirror the characteristics of the population it is drawn from due to sampling and non-sampling errors. An estimate of the amount of error from the sampling process can be calculated. The absence of design effects in the survey means that standard statistical tests of significance can be applied. For simple random sample design, the sampling error (s.e.) for any percentage p can be calculated by the formula:

$$\text{s.e. (p)} = \sqrt{p*(100-p)/n}$$

A 95% confidence interval for the population percentage can be calculated using the following formula. This means that if 100 similar, independent samples were chosen from the population, 95 of them would yield a percentage within this range of values.

$$95\% \text{ confidence interval} = p \pm 1.96 * \text{s.e. (p)}$$

Data quality assessment

Very good – data are collected by the Central Survey Unit (CSU) and the sample is selected to be representative of the Northern Ireland population. Data undergo various validation checks as part of the processing. CSU is the leading social survey research organisation in Northern Ireland and is one of the main business areas of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), an Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel. The Unit has a long track record and a wealth of experience in the design, management and analysis of behavioural and attitude surveys in the context of a wide range of social policy issues. CSU procedures are consistent with the Official Statistics Code of Practice (<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf>).

Note that all survey estimates are subject to a degree of error and this must be taken account of when considering results (see notes on sampling error above). This error will be reasonably small for the majority of Northern Ireland level results but care should be taken when looking at results based on smaller breakdowns.

1 Key points from safety on public transport questions

Key results from the January 2010 Omnibus survey include:

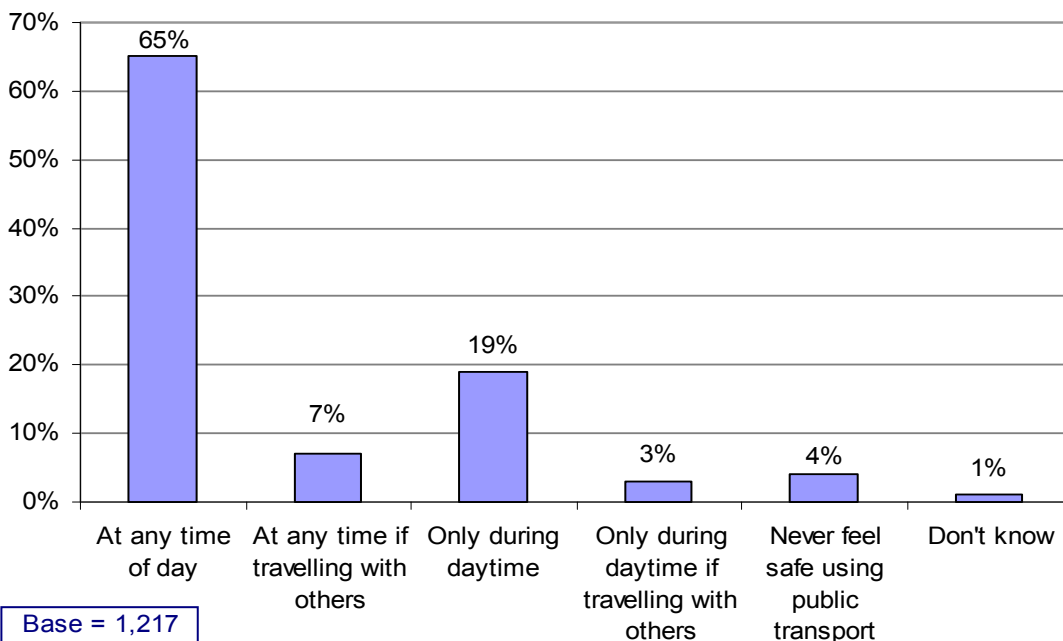
- Overall, 65% of respondents felt safe travelling on public transport at any time of day, 30% felt safe if travelling during daylight and/or with others and 4% never felt safe when using public transport.
- Those who did not say that they felt safe “at any time of day” were asked what made them feel unsafe. The most commonly given reason was noisy or disruptive passengers, stated by 56% of respondents.
- All respondents were asked what measures would be most effective in making them personally feel safer. The most popular answer, given by 57% of respondents, was a policy of not allowing people who are drunk, rowdy or under the influence of drugs on board buses/trains.
- Four fifths (80%) of respondents said personal safety considerations would not stop them using public transport, 16% said it would only stop them using public transport in some situations (such as travelling alone or after dark) and 3% said they would never use public transport because of personal safety reasons.

2 Do you feel safe using public transport? (Figure 2.1)

2.1 Overall results

- Overall, 65% of respondents felt safe using public transport at any time. 4% stated that they never felt safe using public transport.

Figure 2.1: Do you feel safe using public transport ... ?



Source: Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey January 2010

2.2 Comparison by various characteristics

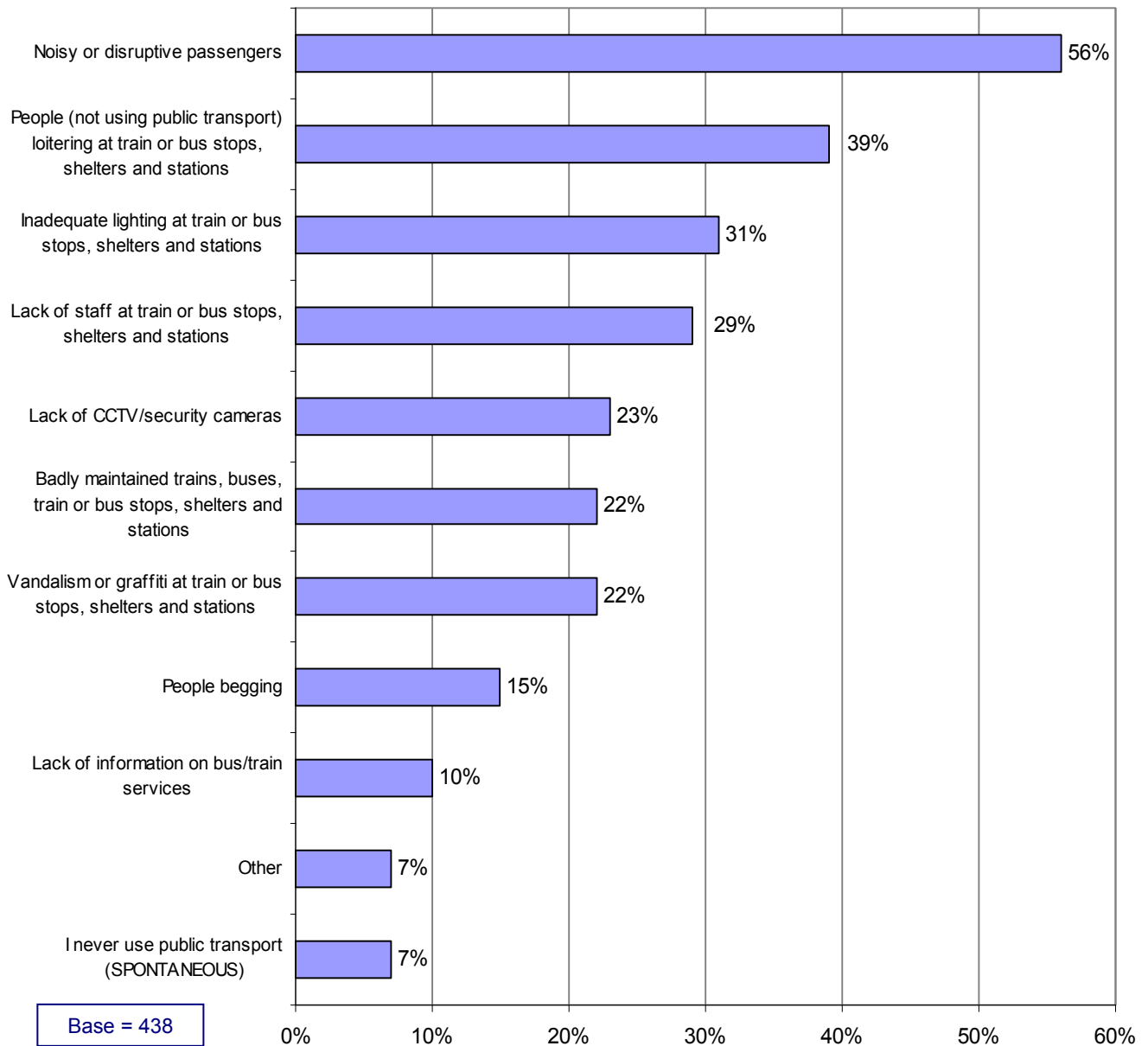
- A higher proportion of females (6%) said they never felt safe using public transport than males (3%).
- Almost 1 in 10 (9%) respondents with a disability said they never felt safe using public transport compared to around 1 in 30 (3%) of those with no disability.
- A higher proportion of people living in the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) (6%) said they never felt safe using public transport than people living in rural areas (3%).
- There was no real difference between age groups comparing the proportions who never felt safe using public transport.

3 What makes you feel unsafe using public transport? (Figure 3.1)

3.1 Overall results

- If respondents did not say that they felt safe at any time of day, they were asked the follow up question “What makes you feel unsafe using public transport?”.
- The main reason given for feeling unsafe was “noisy or disruptive passengers” (56% of respondents gave this answer), followed by “people (not using public transport) loitering at train or bus stops, shelters and stations” (39%). The third most popular reasons were “inadequate lighting at train or bus stops, shelters and stations” (31%) and “Lack of staff at train or bus stops, shelters and stations” (29%).

Figure 3.1: What makes you feel unsafe using public transport?



Source: Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey January 2010

Percentages sum to more than 100% due to multiple responses

3.2 Comparison by various characteristics*

- The main reason given by males for feeling unsafe was “noisy or disruptive passengers” (58%). For females, 2 main reasons were given: “noisy or disruptive passengers” (54%) and “people (not using public transport) loitering at train or bus stops, shelters and stations” (46%).
- “Noisy or disruptive passengers” was the top reason given for feeling unsafe by people living in the BMUA (57%), urban areas outside the BMUA (57%) and rural areas (53%). This was also the most popular reason given by people with a disability (52%) and with no disability (57%).

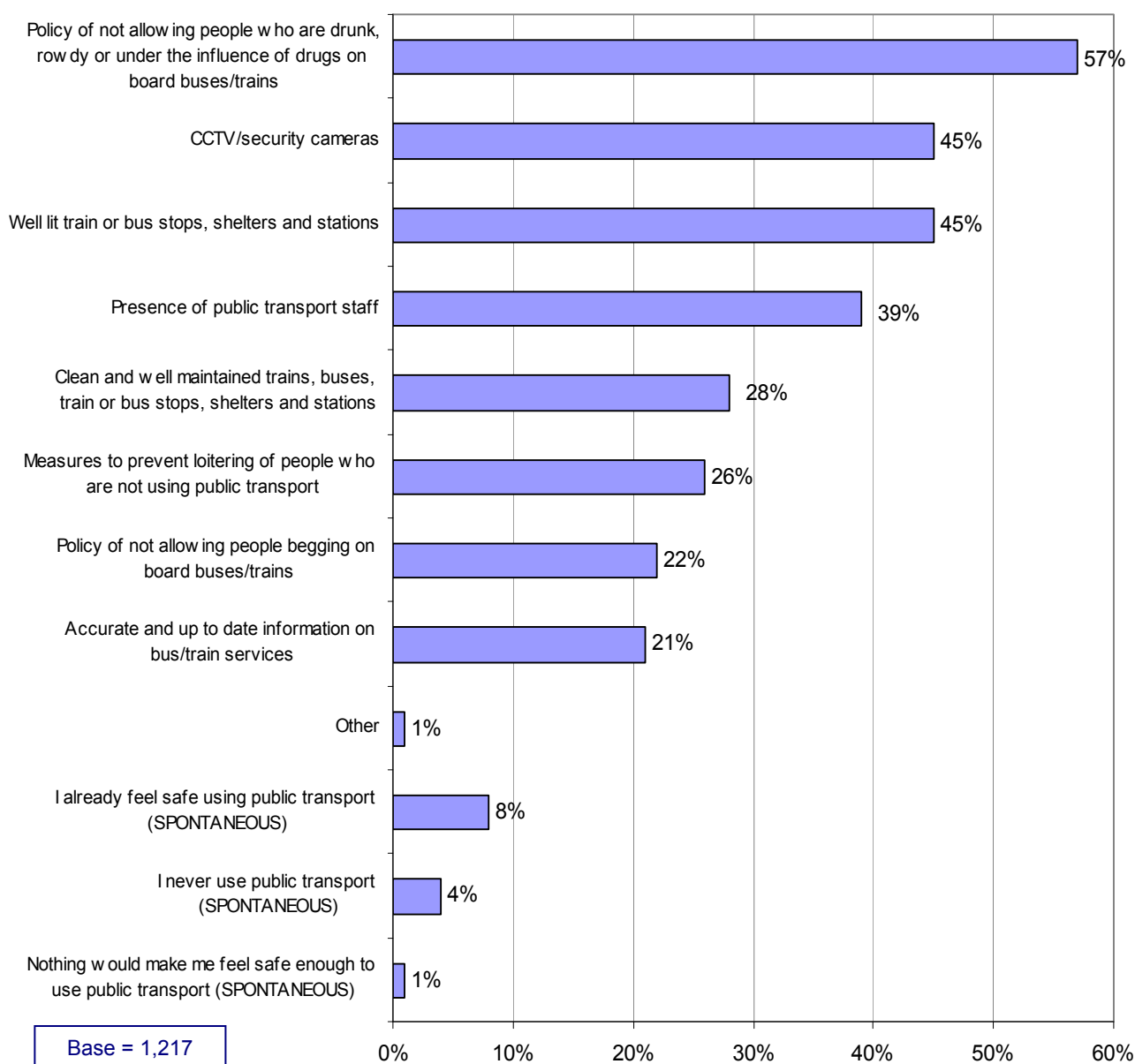
* Sample size too small for comparison by age groups

4 What measures would be most effective in making you personally feel safer using public transport? (Figure 4.1)

4.1 Overall results

- All respondents were asked about measures that would make them feel safer using public transport.
- The most popular measure for making people feel safer was “policy of not allowing people who are drunk, rowdy or under the influence of drugs on board buses/trains” (57%). The second most commonly given reasons were “well lit train or bus stops, shelters and stations” (45%) and “CCTV/security cameras” (45%), followed by “presence of public transport staff” (39%).

Figure 4.1: What measures would be most effective in making you personally feel safer using public transport?



Source: Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey January 2010

Percentages sum to more than 100% due to multiple responses

4.2 Comparison by various characteristics

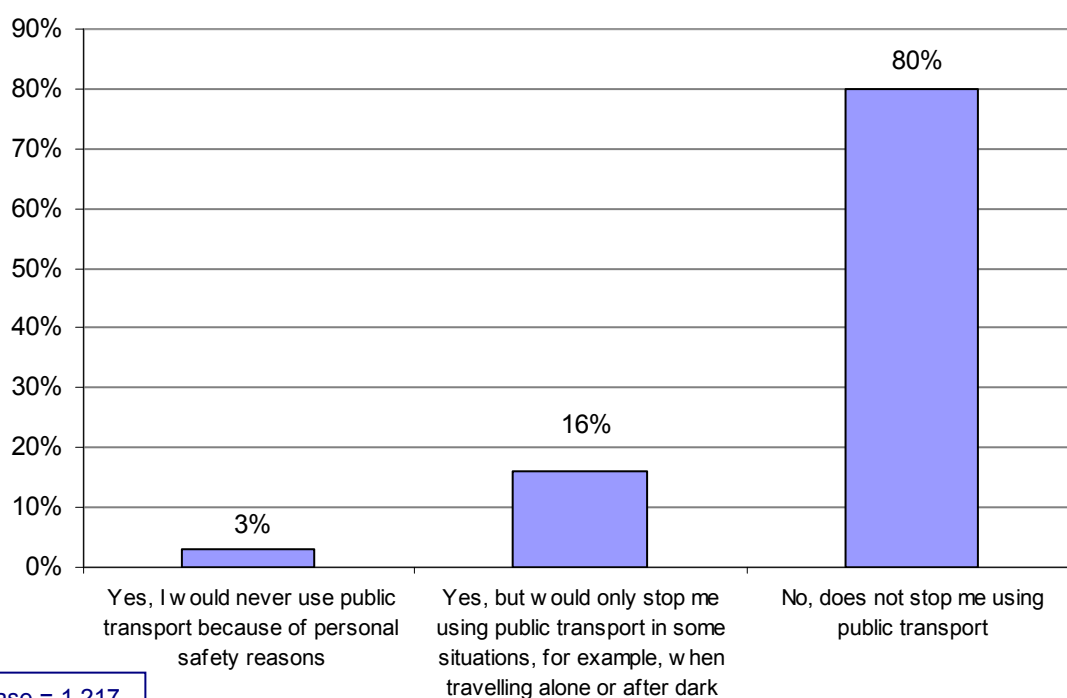
- “Policy of not allowing people who are drunk, rowdy or under the influence of drugs on board buses/trains” was the most popular answer given by males (54%) and females (59%) to the question “What measures would be most effective in making you personally feel safer using public transport?” This was also the most commonly given answer by people with a disability (53%) and people with no disability (58%).
- For people living in the BMUA (60%) and urban areas outside the BMUA (59%) a “policy of not allowing people who are drunk, rowdy or under the influence of drugs on board buses/trains” was the most popular measure to make them feel safer using public transport. For people living in rural areas there were 2 most popular measures, “policy of not allowing people who are drunk, rowdy or under the influence of drugs on board buses/trains” (53%) and “well lit train or bus stops, shelters and stations” (47%).
- Among older age groups the “policy of not allowing people who are drunk, rowdy or under the influence of drugs on board buses/trains” was the most popular measure for making them feel safer using public transport: 61% of 35-59 year olds and 53% of the 60+ age group. In the 16-34 age group there were 3 most popular measures: “policy of not allowing people who are drunk, rowdy or under the influence of drugs on board buses/trains” (54%), “well lit train or bus stops, shelters and stations” (48%) and “CCTV/security cameras” (47%).

5 Does how you feel about your personal safety stop you using public transport? (Figure 5.1)

5.1 Overall results

- Overall, 3% of respondents said they would never use public transport because of personal safety reasons. 80% said that personal safety considerations would not stop them using public transport and 16% said it would only stop them in some situations (such as travelling alone or after dark).

Figure 5.1: Does how you feel about your personal safety stop you using public transport?



Base = 1,217

Source: Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey January 2010

5.2 Comparison by various characteristics

- Similar responses to the question were given by different age groups, people living in different areas and those with or without a disability.
- More males (87%) than females (74%) stated that personal safety considerations did not stop them using public transport. Just over 2 in 10 females (22%) compared to 1 in 10 males (10%) stated they would only stop using public transport in some situations. The same proportion (3%) of males and females stated they would never use public transport because of personal safety reasons.

Technical Notes

1. Significance tests – comparison by various characteristics

Significance tests (see definition below) were carried out to compare the following groups to see if there was a difference in answers given:

- Gender of respondent
- Age group of respondent (16-34, 35-59, 60+)
- Area where respondent lives (Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA), urban areas outside BMUA and rural areas) – see point 3 for definition
- Whether the respondent has a disability or not – see point 4 for definition

For example, the proportion of males giving a particular answer was compared to the proportion of females giving that answer. A result falling outside of a given range (which varies according to the significance level of the test) would be considered significant and show there is very likely to be a difference between male attitudes and female attitudes.

Significance tests were carried out at 5% significance level (range = -1.96 to +1.96). This means that there is at least a 95% probability that there is a genuine difference between responses given by, for example, males and females and the difference between the two genders is not simply explained by random chance or sample error. Sample error is produced when the figures are derived from a sample of the population rather than from the entire population. The NISRA Omnibus survey provides a representative sample of the population of Northern Ireland. People living in institutions (though not in private households in such institutions) are excluded from the survey.

2. Determining main reason or most popular measure

The bullet points in Section 3 state the main reason given by respondents for feeling unsafe using public transport. The most popular measure for making people feel safer using public transport is given in the bullet points in Section 4.

The main reason/most popular measure is the answer given by the highest proportion of respondents. Significance tests (see point 1 for definition) are carried out to see if the other results are significantly different from this.

Where there is only one main reason/most popular measure given, the other results are all significantly different from the highest proportion.

Where there is more than one main reason/most popular answer, one or more of the other results are not significantly different from the highest proportion. Any results that are not significantly different are grouped together.

3. Urban and rural areas

Area is based on where the respondent lives. These have been classified using the statistical classification of settlements defined by the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group.

- Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA): Band A
- Urban areas outside of the BMUA: Bands B to E
This includes Derry Urban Area (Band B) and large, medium and small towns (Bands C-E with populations ranging from 4,500 or more to under 75,000).
- Rural areas: Bands F to H
This includes intermediate settlements (Band F), villages (Band G) and small villages, hamlets and open countryside (Band H) with populations ranging from less than 1,000 to under 4,500 and including open countryside.

4. Disability status

Disability status is defined as whether the respondent has a disability or not.

The definition of disability is those answering yes to both of the following questions:

'Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long-standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time.' Yes/No

'Does this illness or disability limit your activities in any way?' Yes/No

5. Definition of "similar"/"no real difference"

Where the term "similar" or "no real difference" has been used when comparing results, it means that there is no significant difference (see definition in point 1 above) between the results being compared.