



The Vodden Report 3: An Agenda for Change

Findings from the new report
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Background: Travel to and from school

 A typical private school bus will have between 50 and 70 pupils on the journey.

Department for Transport Travel surveys (DfT 2014, DfT 2018a, DfT 2018b).

In 2014

 The average journey for primary school pupils was 1.6 miles, taking approximately 13 minutes.

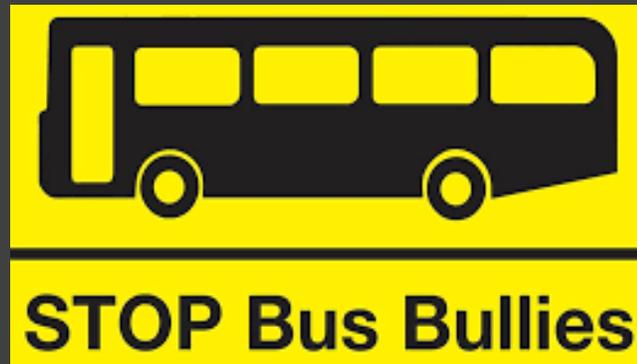
 For secondary school pupils, the average journey was 3.4 miles, taking approximately 25 minutes.

 The school bus was the most common means of transport for secondary school pupils.

In 2018

 6% of primary school pupils and 33% of secondary travelled to school using other means, which included by bus.

 Between 2013 and 2017 of those pupils aged 5 to 16 years, 13% travelled to school by local bus and 4% travelled by private bus.



Background

The prevalence of bullying on the school bus.

 Raskauskas (2015) video recordings of 30 school bus journeys.

 Recorded over a one month period.

 Ranged from 10 to 44 minutes long.

 From one school district in California.

 Identified 53 incidences of bullying across the 30 journeys.

 More incidences occurred in the afternoon journeys (home) compared to the morning journeys (to school)

 Physical and verbal bullying were the most commonly observed.

 Indirect and cyberbullying more difficult to observe?

 No gender differences observed in being bullied, but males more likely to perpetrate bullying.

 The impact of having a friend on the bus

 20% of those being bullied appeared to have no friend.

 56.7% had a friend who was not involved in the bullying.

 23.3% had a friend who was involved in the bullying.



STOP Bus Bullies



Background

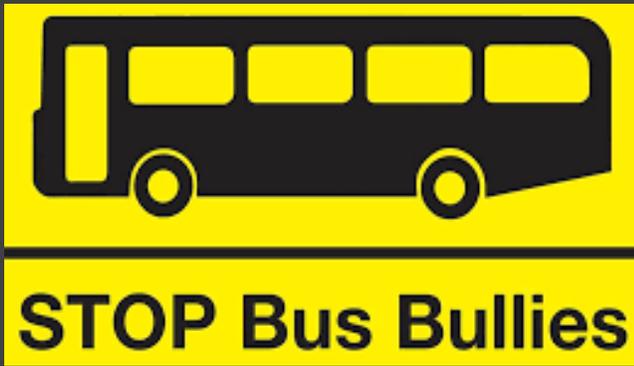
The prevalence of bullying on the school bus.

 deLara (2008) surveys and semi-structured interviews with 30 bus drivers in school districts in New York.

-  90% had witnessed verbal bullying.
-  70% had witnessed psychological intimidations
-  27% had witnessed physical aggression
-  20% had witnessed sexual harassment.
-  27% felt that bullying probably occurs without them noticing.

 Hendrix, Kennedy and Trudeau (2019) conducted a short survey of 2,595 transport officials in the US.

-  25% of the total sample reported bullying as a common experience.



Background

The prevalence of bullying on the school bus in the UK.

- 🚌 Bullying Intervention Group survey (Katz, 2017) of 9,814 pupils:
 - 🚌 13.09% (N=941) of participants reported experiencing bullying on the bus to or from school.
 - 🚌 57.16% (N=4,109) of participants reported witnessing such behaviour.

- 🚌 The Vodden Report 2014: survey of 254 participants examining experiences of bullying on the school bus.
 - 🚌 48% of participants reported that they experienced bullying on the school bus.
 - 🚌 The most commonly experienced form of bullying was verbal bullying, followed by physical bullying.
 - 🚌 30% of participants reported that the bullying lasted more than a year.
 - 🚌 31% reported that the bullying had started on the school bus.
 - 🚌 16% of participants reported that the driver knew about the bullying and did nothing.
 - 🚌 7% of participants reported that the bus driver actively participated in the bullying.

- 🚌 Vodden (2015) Survey of 94 school bus drivers reporting on their experiences of bullying.
 - 🚌 67.4% (N=62) of participants reported witnessing bullying on the school bus.
 - 🚌 68.8% (N=55) had witnessed physical bullying.
 - 🚌 98.9% (N=79) had witnessed verbal bullying.

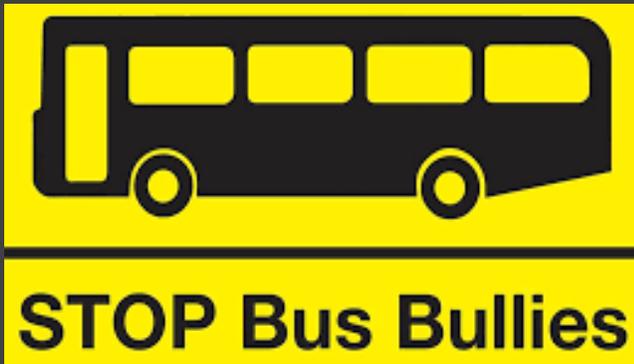


Background

Bullying policy & guidance

 The DfE (2017) highlights the role of the school in managing bullying which occurs outside the school:

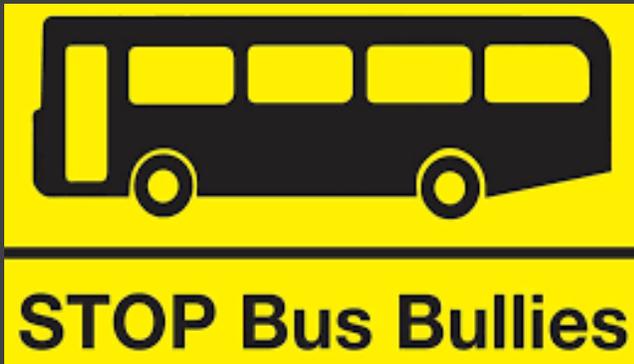
 “School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school’s disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils’ conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils’ behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.” (Page 6).



Background

Safeguarding pupils on the school bus

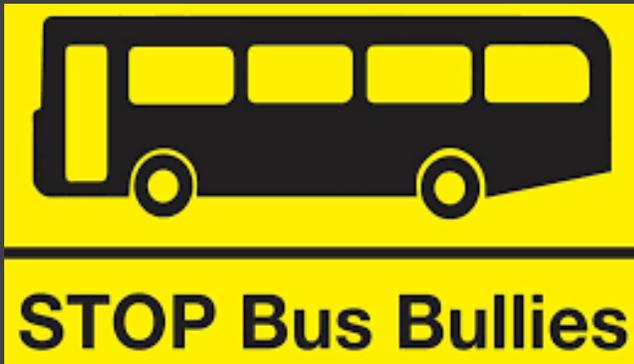
- 🚌 Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE, 2014):
 - 🚌 The DfE expects schools to promote appropriate standards of behaviour on the journey to and from school, and to utilise sanctions where necessary to address poor behaviour.
 - 🚌 The DfE also highlight that local authorities can withdraw the provision of transport in response to poor behaviour.
- 🚌 Specifically regarding safeguarding, the guidance states:
 - 🚌 “It is the responsibility of the individual local authority to ensure the suitability of its employees and any contractors or their employees by undertaking the required safeguarding checks on those whose work or other involvement will bring them into contact with children, or more widely, vulnerable adults. This should include bus drivers, taxi drivers and escorts, as necessary.” (Page 18)



Background

Safeguarding pupils on the school bus

- 🚌 The guidance suggests that Local Authorities should regularly audit their travel provision:
 - 🚌 “The audit should also consider data relating to personal safety and security, and other factors that influence travel choices, such as poor behaviour on school buses and/or the incidence of bullying on the journey to school. School travel plans will help local authorities understand any specific local issues, including perceptions of pupils and parents.” (Page 8).



Background

Safeguarding pupils on school trips

 Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE, 2014) does not include guidance on a ratio of adults to children/ young people on private school buses.

 Drawing parallels with school trips, the National Union of Teachers provides the following guidance on adult to pupil ratios on school trips:

 Years 1-3 (ages 5 years to 8 years): 1 adult per 6 pupils.

 Years 4-6 (ages 8 years to 11 years): 1 adult per 10-15 pupils.

 Year 7+ (ages 11 years +): 1 adult per 20 pupils.

 Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) (2012) also suggest

 The ratio of pupils to adults requires careful consideration.

 When there is minimal supervision children and young people will engage in poor behaviour, including bullying.

 Greater supervision may be required when using double decker buses.

 Appropriate supervision ensures that the bus driver can focus on driving with minimal supervision.



STOP Bus Bullies



Background

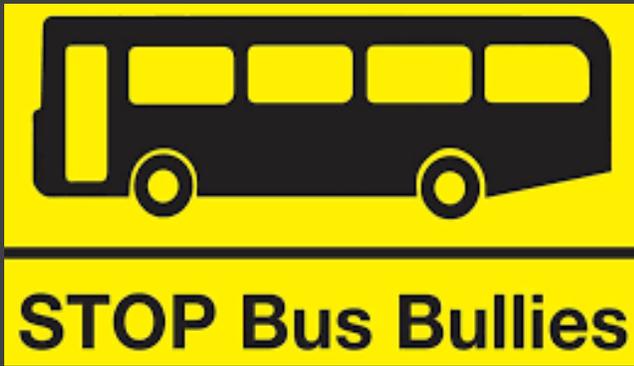
The impact of bullying on the school bus

On bus drivers

- 🚌 Goodboy, Martin and Brown's (2016) surveyed 117 public school bus drivers in the US.
 - 🚌 Found that witnessing bullying was related to anxious driving and job stress.
- 🚌 Qualitative research in the US also reports that while drivers intervene in bullying behaviours, they feel unsupported by education officials (Brown, Karikari, Abraham & Akakpo, 2018, Hogenkamp & Bolden, 2019).

On pupils

- 🚌 Pupils who were bullied on school buses reported low self-esteem and depression (Vodden, 2014).
- 🚌 Many note their overall experiences as negative (Henderson, 2009).
- 🚌 Not all perpetrators are disciplined for their behaviour (Allen, Young, Ashbaker, Heaton and Parkinson, 2003).
- 🚌 Many of those who are bullied on the school bus received no constructive help (Vodden, 2014).



deLara, 2008: Driver suggestions for tackling bullying

-  Seat children close to the driver who are susceptible to bullying or being victimized.
-  Separate children who are fighting or having difficulty and assign seats.
-  Be “aware of everything” and watch for the moods and signs of troubled kids.
-  Talk with bullies about being respectful on the bus.
-  Intervene before anything happens, and discuss the day with the kids.
-  Maintain a good relationship with each child.
-  Ask about interests and hobbies.
-  Try to engage potential bullies in positive conversations.
-  Above all, talk to the students with respect.



STOP Bus Bullies



Vodden Report 3

We aim to address the following research questions:

-  How many local authorities in England adhere to the government's recommendation to conduct audits on safety on school transport? What strategies do local authorities use to monitor pupil safety on the journey to and from school?
-  What are bus drivers' experiences of witnessing bullying on school buses? What approaches are used on their buses to ensure safety and how effective did participants perceive such strategies to be?
-  What are young adults' recollections of bullying on school buses? What approaches were taken to ensure safety in school buses, and how effective did participants perceive such strategies to be?



Local Authority Survey



1. On page 8 of the Home to School Travel and Transport guidance the DfE suggest that "*Local authorities should audit infrastructure in accordance with any relevant guidance and the requirements of any infrastructure implemented. Specific school routes audits are considered good practice. The specifics of the audit and how often it should be reviewed are for a local authority to decide on as appropriate.*"
 - Has your local authority undertaken an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure with your local authority?
2. Also on page 8, the DfE states "*The audit should consider data relating to personal safety and security, and other factors that influence travel choices, such as poor behaviour on school buses and/or the incidence of bullying on the journey to school.*" We're particularly interested in pupil's experiences travel to school on private buses (not public transport).
 - In your last audit, did you collect data on any of the following (please tick all that apply).
3. The former Department for children, schools and families 'Safe from Bullying on Journeys' guidance, sets out some recommendations for Local Authorities. They state: "*As with preventing bullying, local authorities have a role to play in coordinating the response to bullying. This can be done, for example, by operating a monitoring and referral system so that different partners can share information about which routes and areas are bullying hotspots. Where hotspots are identified, the local authority should work with different partners involved to make sure that the bullying is addressed, for example by arranging for a police presence on buses.*"
 - Do you have a monitoring system so that information on bullying in school buses can be shared with you?
 - Do you have a referral system so that information on bullying in school buses can be shared with you?



STOP Bus Bullies



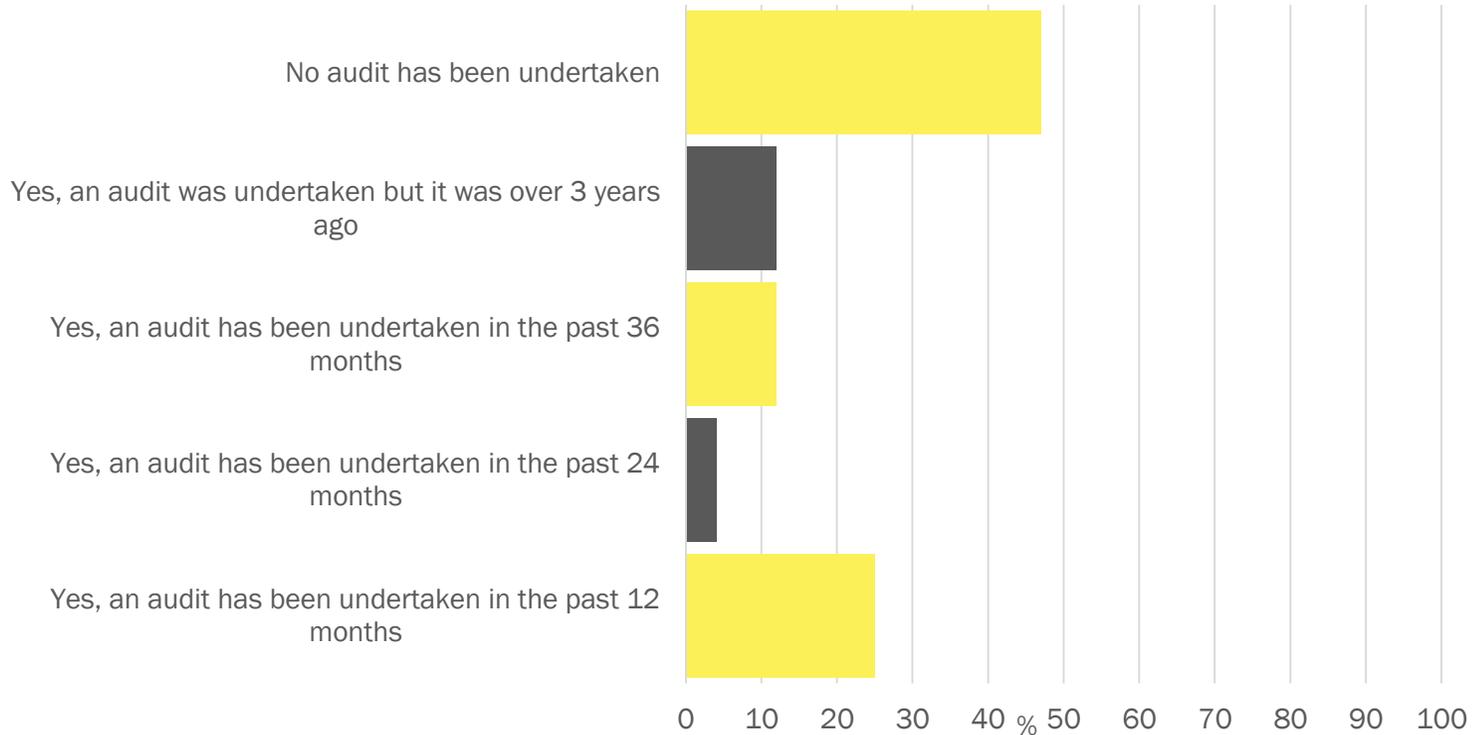
Local Authority Survey

-  The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete online.
-  The survey was distributed via email to all local authorities in England (N=152).
-  79 (52%) LA representatives completed the survey.
-  11 (7%) LAs responded stating that they have no private school buses operating in their region.
-  No response from 62 (41%) of local authorities.

Local Authority Survey Auditing Infrastructure



STOP Bus Bullies

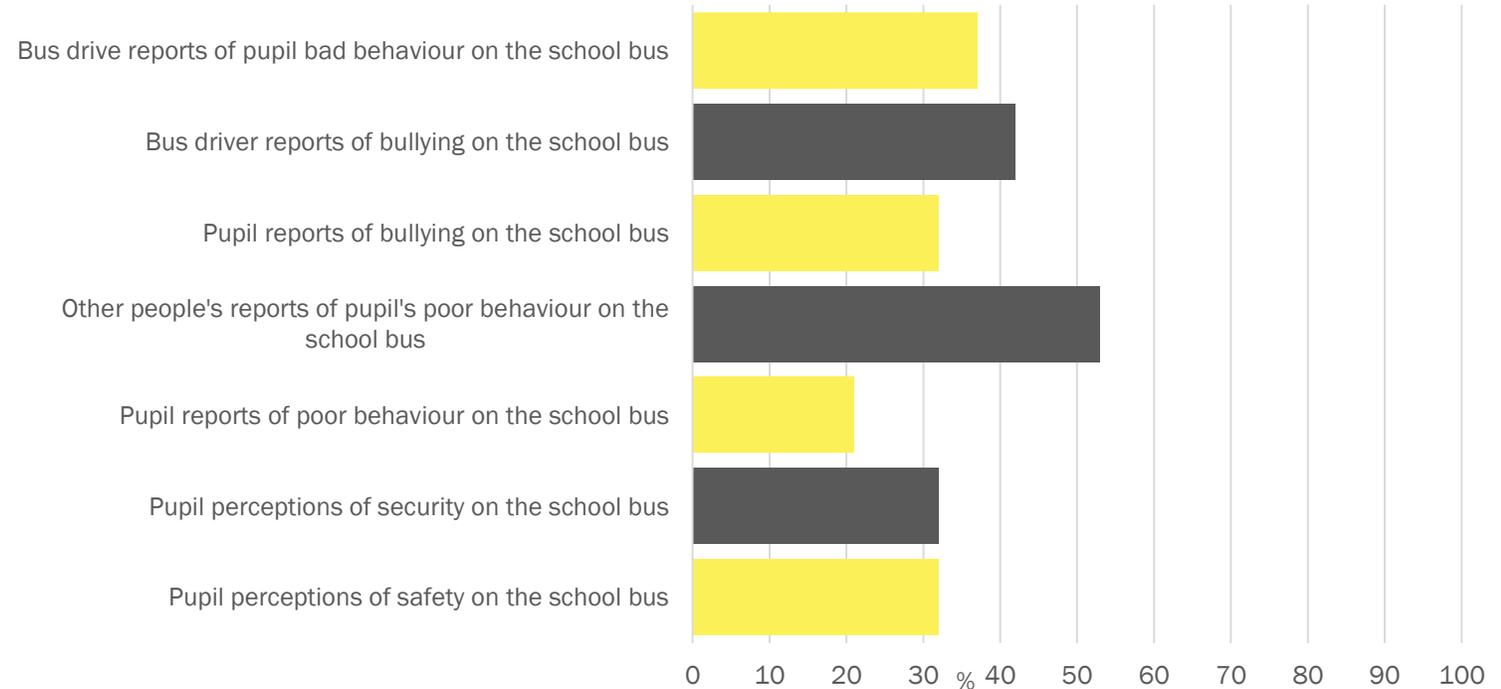


	Yes, an audit has been undertaken in the past 12 months	Yes, an audit has been undertaken in the past 24 months	Yes, an audit has been undertaken in the past 36 months	Yes, an audit was undertaken but it was over 3 years ago	No audit has been undertaken
■ LAs	25	4	12	12	47

Local Authority Survey Auditing Personal Safety & Security



STOP Bus Bullies



	Pupil perceptions of safety on the school bus	Pupil perceptions of security on the school bus	Pupil reports of poor behaviour on the school bus	Other people's reports of pupil's poor behaviour on the school bus	Pupil reports of bullying on the school bus	Bus driver reports of bullying on the school bus	Bus drive reports of pupil bad behaviour on the school bus
■ LAs	32	32	21	53	32	42	37

Local Authority Survey Referral & Monitoring Systems



Monitoring systems

-  47% has a system for monitoring bullying on school buses.
-  37% have a more general monitoring system.
-  17% have no monitoring system.

Referral systems

-  46% has a referral system for reporting bullying behaviour.
-  39% reported having a more general system.
-  14% have no referral system.

Local Authority Survey Referral & Monitoring Systems



STOP Bus Bullies



“I am specifically employed to deliver education to students regarding bullying and be the first point of contact if problems occur.”

“On many routes we have bus monitors (normally year 11, 12 & 13 students) who monitor behaviour on the buses and report back to staff.”

“All our SEN transport has passenger assistants on board who would deal with and report to us and the school.”

“If we have any bullying issues, we send them to the school to investigate and deal with, if they want a warning letter or ban sent out from the transport team if they request this.”

“The authority has an accident/incident protocol. Any incidents on transport, including bullying, should be reported to the transport team by a parent, school or transport provider.”

Bus Driver & Young Adult Surveys



STOP Bus Bullies



The survey

 An online survey was developed for the purposes of the survey and included questions examining participants reports of:

 Feeling safe on the bus.

 Experiences of witnessing bullying on the bus, and the types of behaviours witnessed.

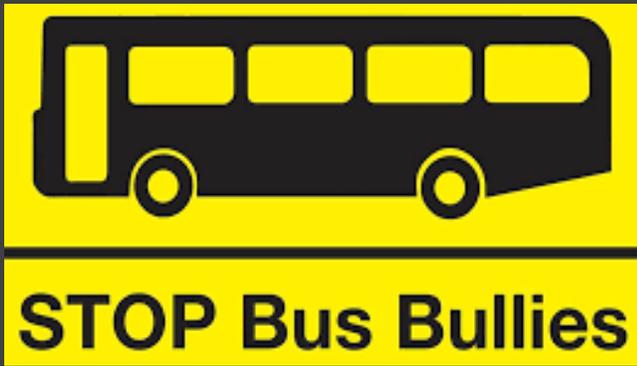
 Opinions of the usefulness of CCTV and having another adult present on the bus, in tackling bullying, along with questions on what they think would be helpful.

 Bus drivers were recruited through social media and via email.

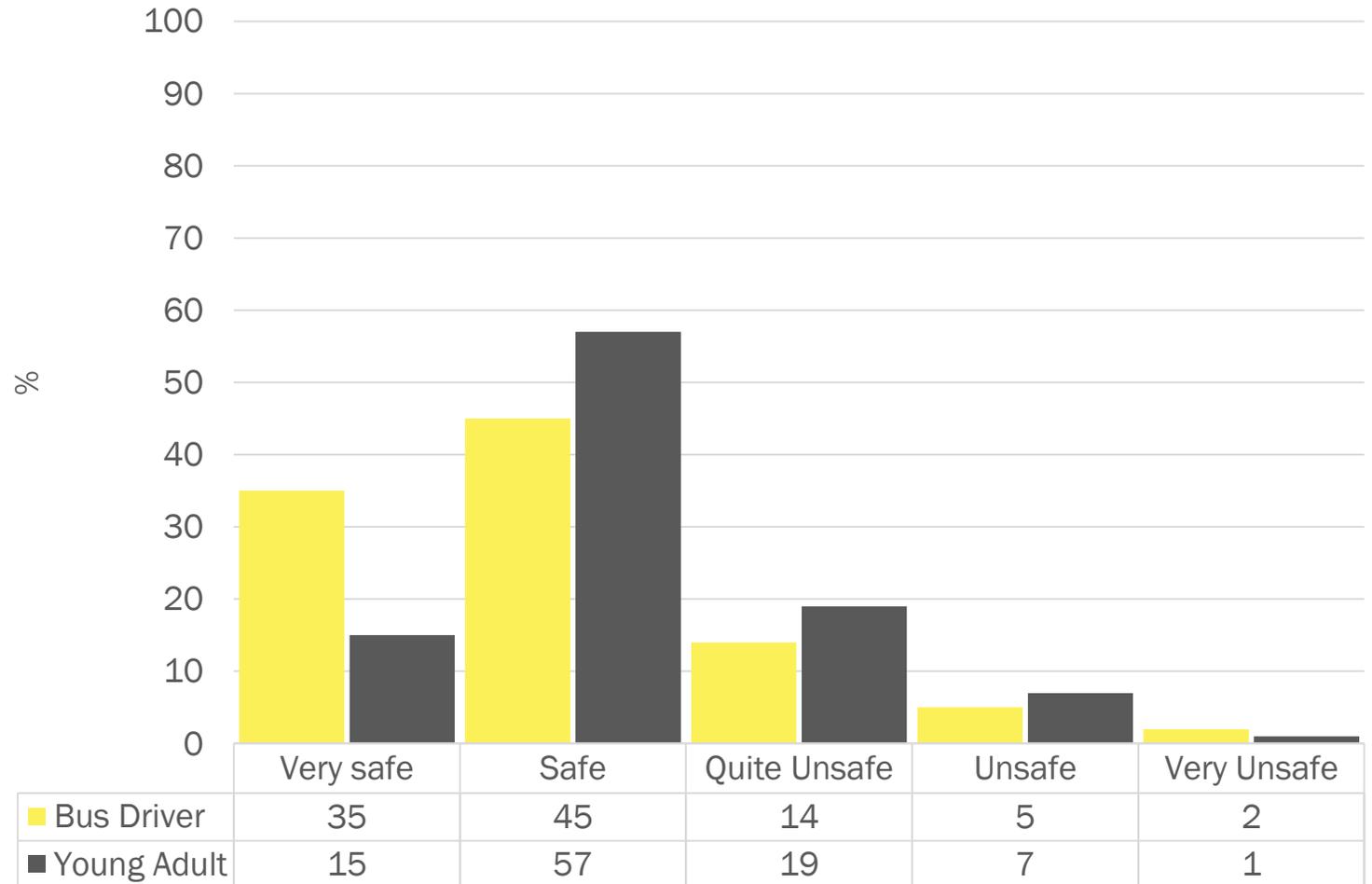
 Young adults were recruited via email, typically through universities.

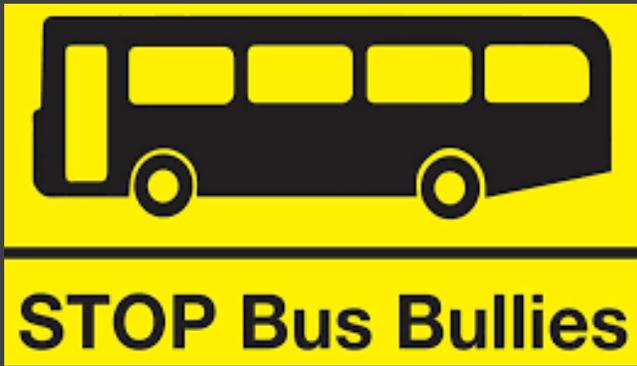
Participants

 68 bus drivers completed the driver survey, 58 (85% were male), and the majority (68%) reported that they had been driving a school bus for five years or more.

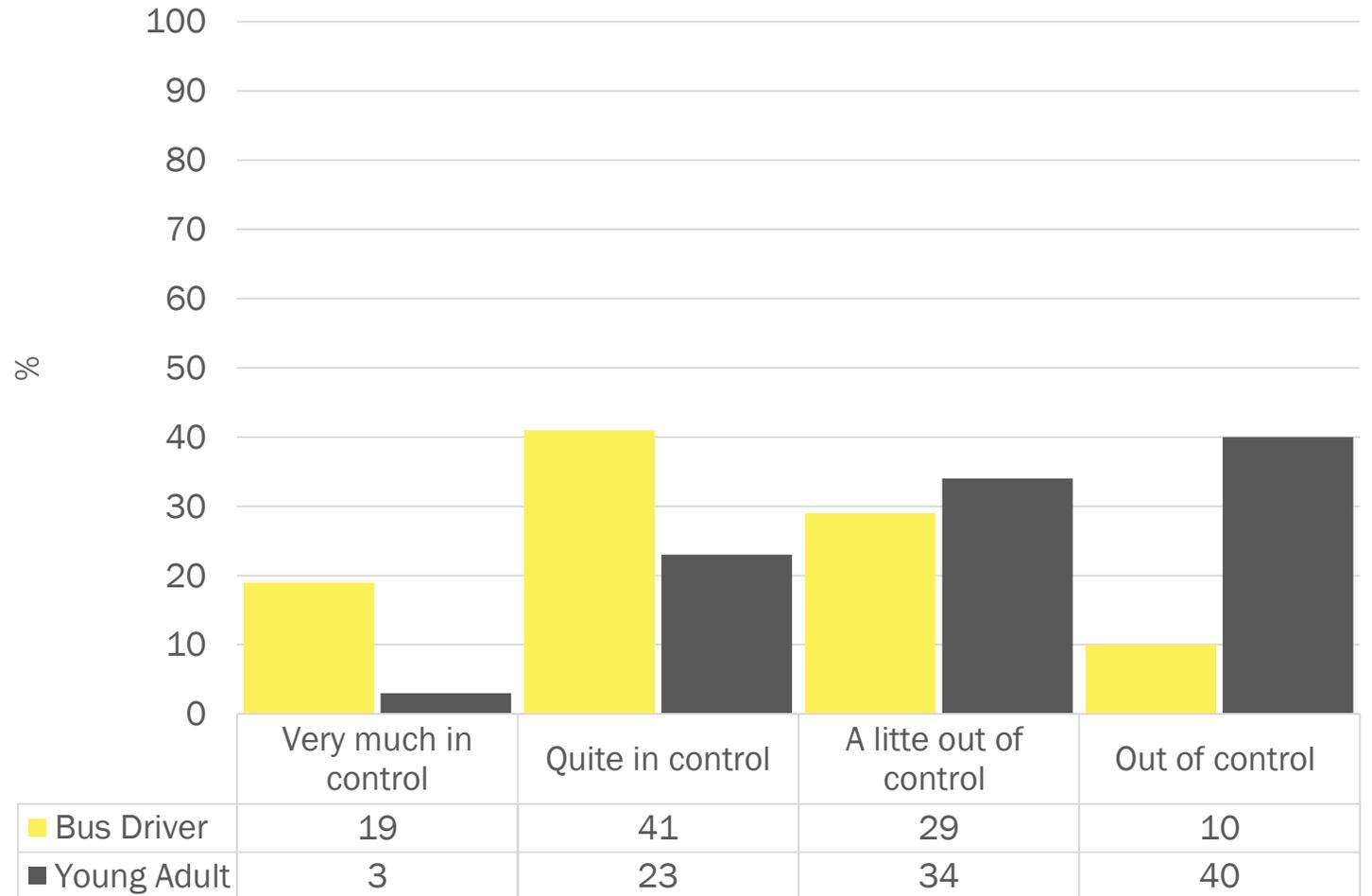


Participant reports of feeling safe on the bus.





Bus driver in control?





Comments on safety and being in control: bus drivers

“In control if you make it clear to the students and children from the start in a friendly and fun way I believe that if you go about it in a militant way the students pick up on this behaviour and use it to their advantage to test you as an individual.”

“Children are very intimidating, and that is why I have finished driving school buses. I have not yet found a school where the children are not unruly on buses, and also have fun in damaging the fittings.”

“I have had coke bottles being thrown around the coach, one time the bottle ended up under the brake pedal”

“Impossible to be in full control with an average of 50 pupils on board.”

“Can't have eyes on the road and on what's happening very dangerous.”



STOP Bus Bullies



Comments on safety and being in control: young adults

“In my earlier years I felt unsafe, but as time went on and I became older I started to feel safer.”

“On one occasion on the A52, two boys were fighting upstairs against the side windows and the entire window fell out and shattered onto the main road. No one was injured.”

“Intimidated by all students because the bus was very crowded and loud. Intimidated by pupils from other schools as they threw acorns (which blinded a pupil on a similar private bus).”

“I always knew I was going to get to/from school safe but I was still always slightly scared of verbal bullying that tended to occur, especially in younger years.”

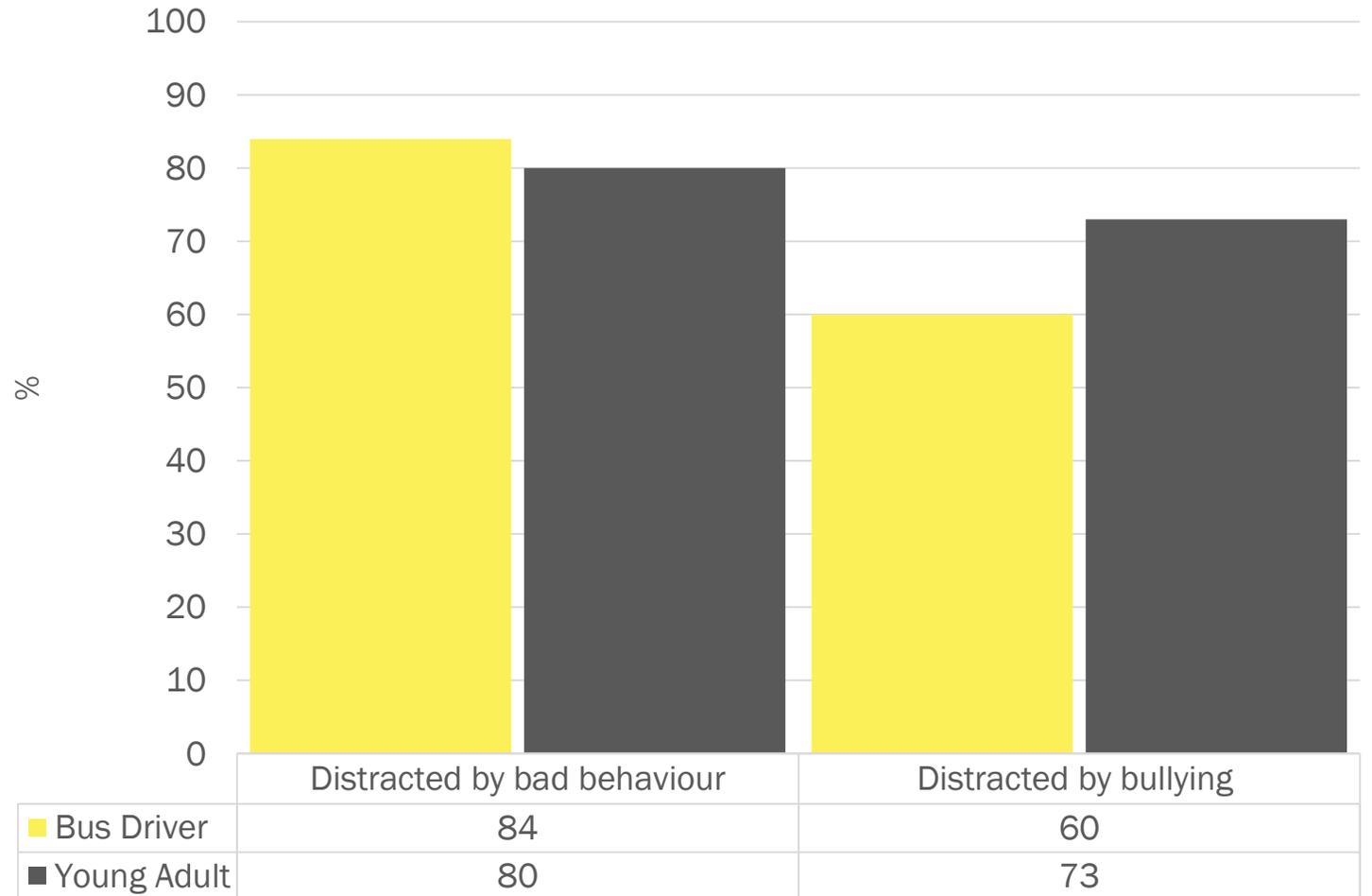
“Drivers were prone to distractions from pupils on the bus as they were loud and sometimes shouted abuse at other pupils and/or the driver.”



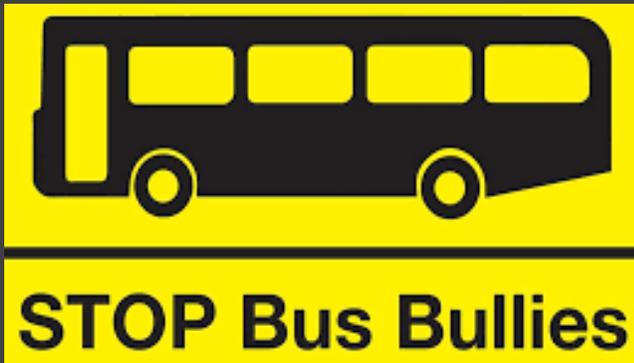
STOP Bus Bullies



Bus driver distracted?



Comments on the driver being distracted: bus drivers

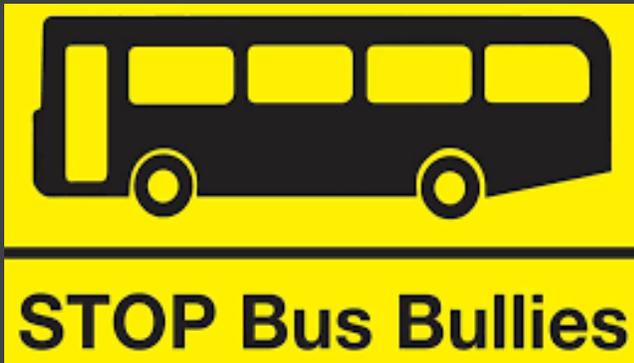


“When you realise a person is being bullied you try to keep an eye out through the rear view mirror to prevent it continuing.”

“I stop the bus and address the problem before it escalates.”

“When running up and down the coach on a a38 (a road) when you are doing 62mph and trying to drive and see what they are doing or fighting over.”

“Students throwing things that hit me. Students shouting and misbehaving. Jumping up and down on seats or swinging from luggage racks. These distract the driver - particularly if they become visible in the rear view mirror. I have also had serious incidents of very bad behaviour that have distracted me from driving including sounding stopping signals, forcing windows out of frames, smoking or using substances and fighting.”



Comments on the driver being distracted: young adults

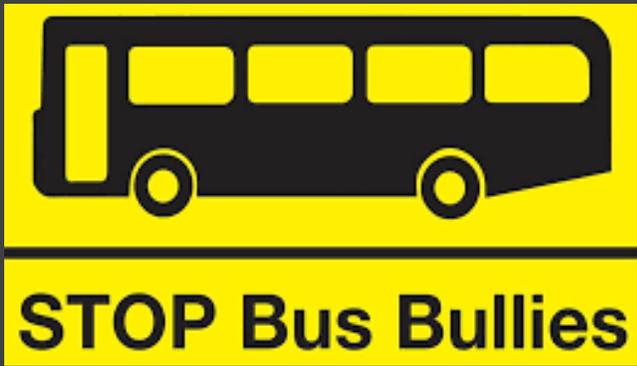
“Once we bumped a car on the side of the road because the driver was shouting at two people to stop a fight.”

“If people were throwing things across the bus, he would get distracted and shout at them.”

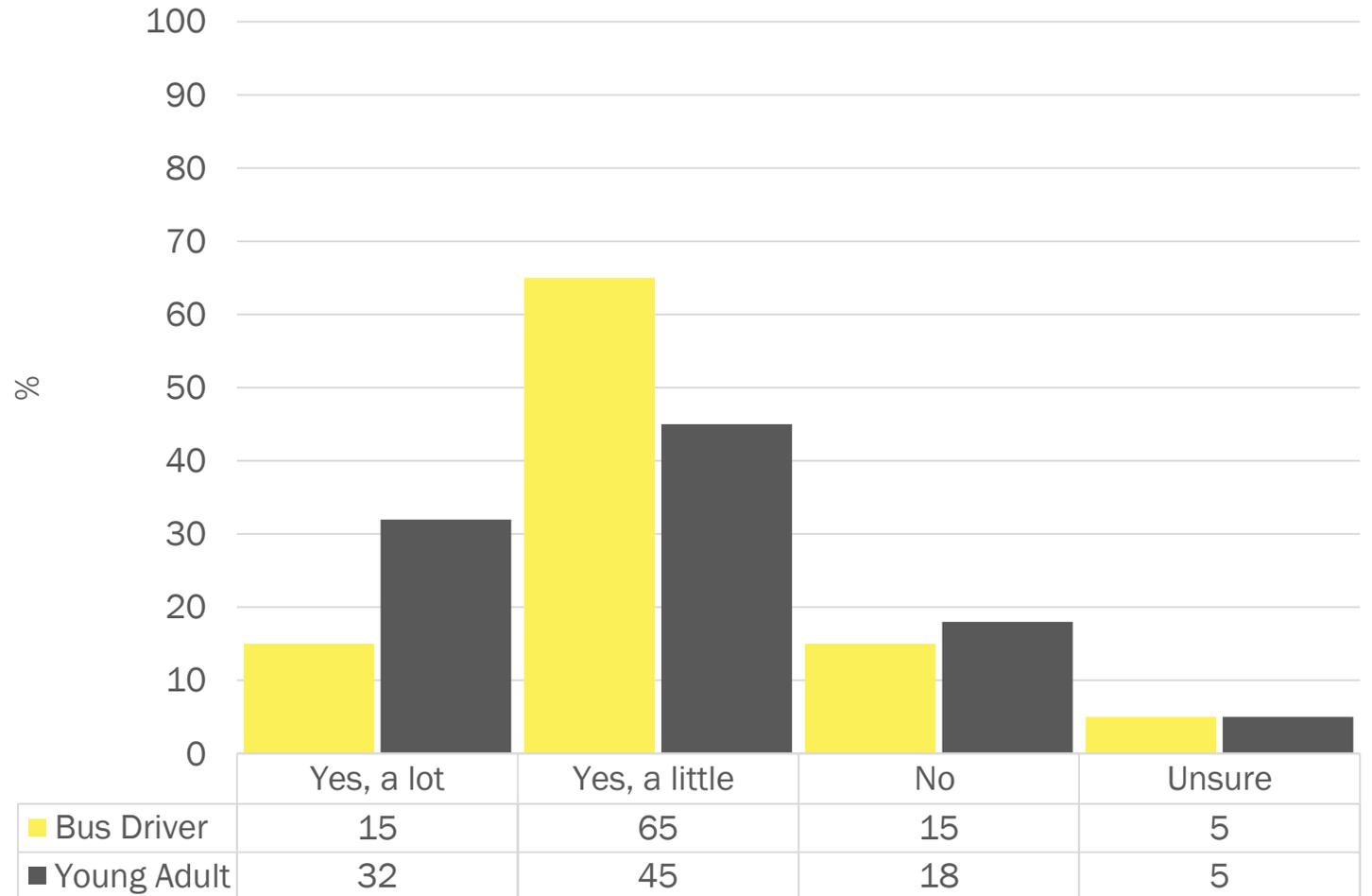
“Most of bullying happened at the back of the bus, often unaware to the driver.”

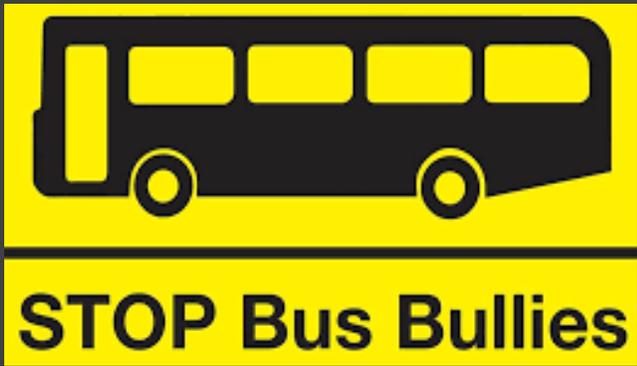
“Bus drivers may not be aware that such behaviour is occurring as they simply may not be able to hear it or see it taking place. It was easy for students to bully others on buses for this reason and although it wasn't prevalent, it did take place.”

“He dealt with bad behaviour, but never seemed distracted from his driving duties”

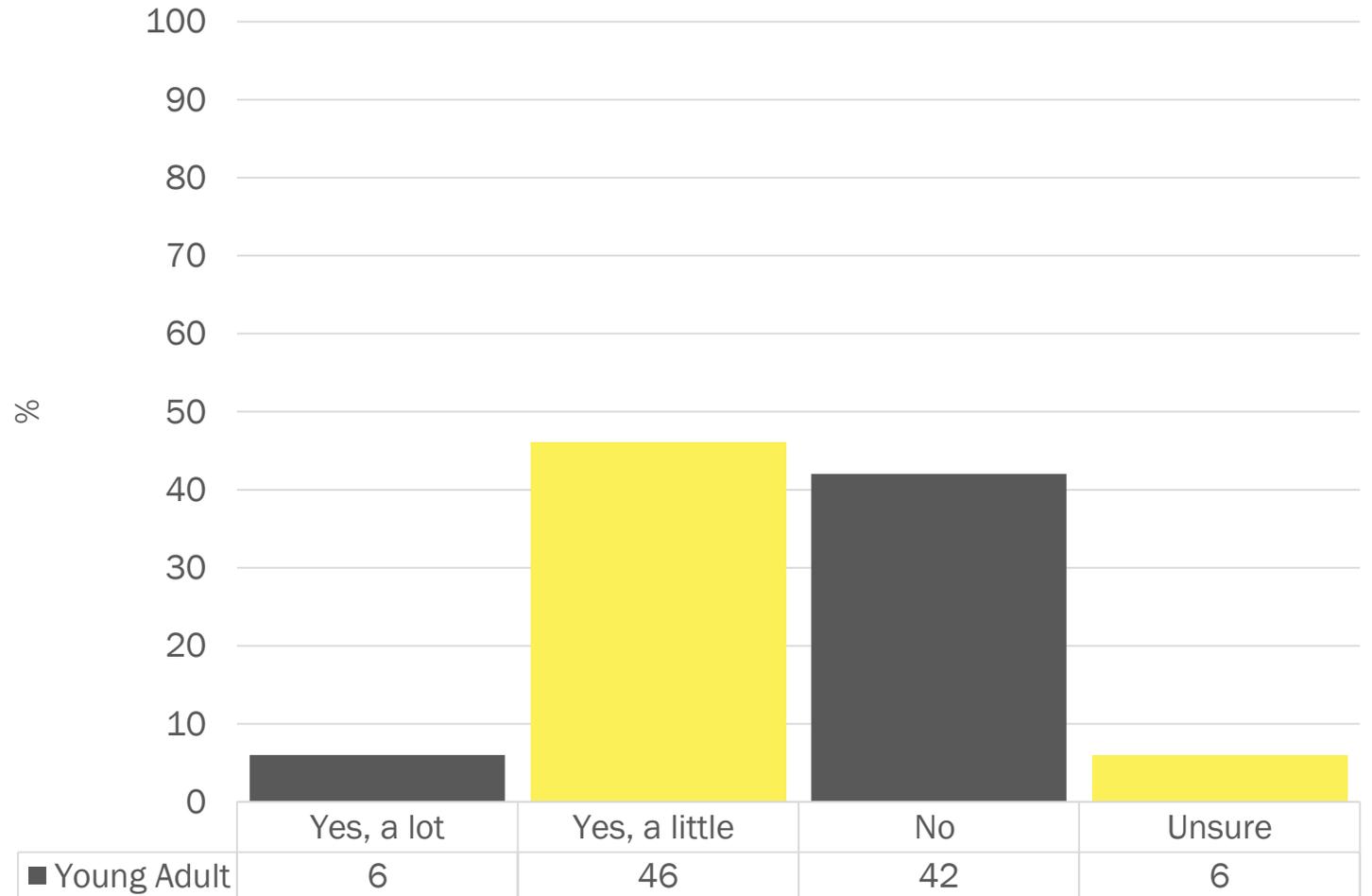


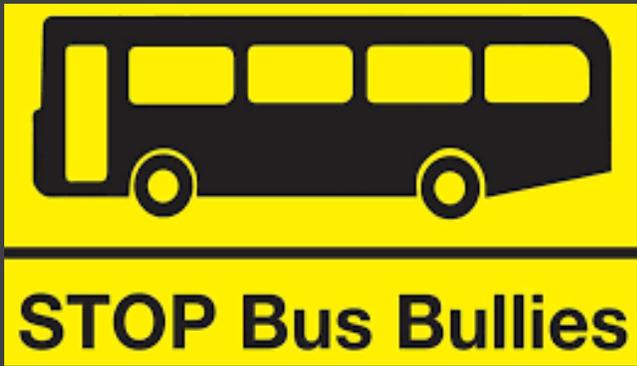
Witnessed Bullying



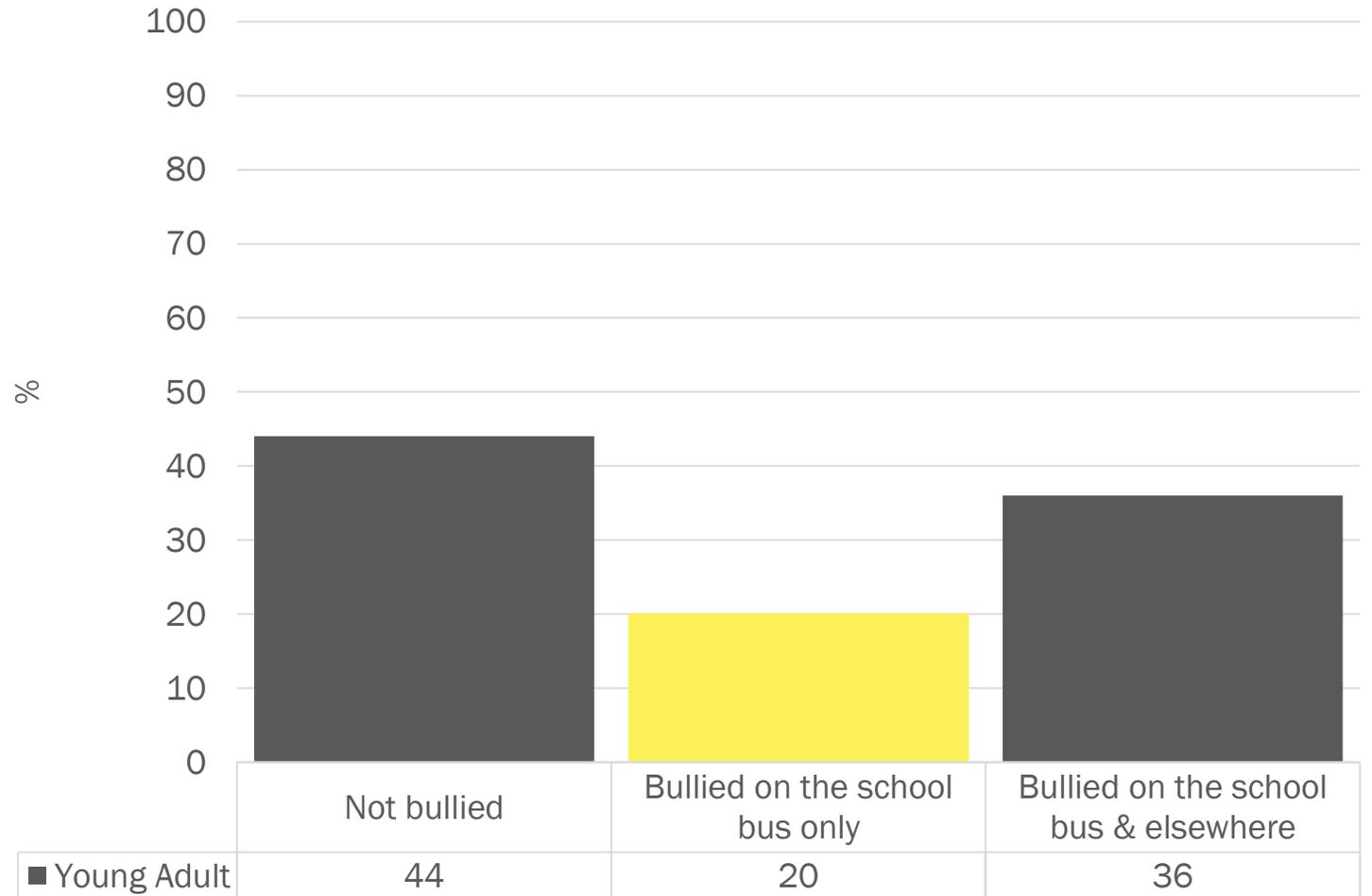


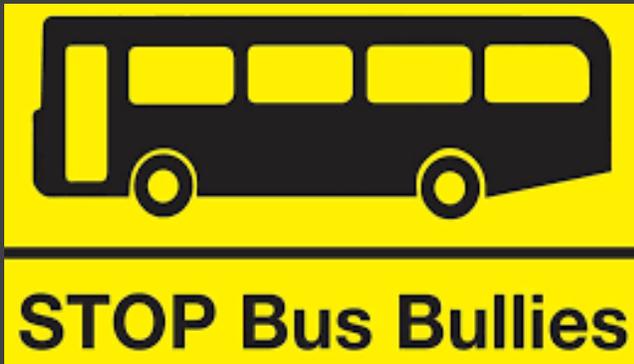
Young adults recalling being bullied on the bus





Young adults recalling being bullied on the bus





Types of bullying

 Witnessed by drivers, most prevalent behaviours:

-  Pupils being teased
-  Pupils being called names
-  Pupils being insulted
-  Being yelled at
-  Pupils being pushed and shoved

 Witnessed by young adult, most prevalent behaviours:

-  Being teased
-  Being insulted
-  Being called names
-  Being pushed or shoved
-  Being yelled at

 Experienced by young adults, most prevalent behaviours:

-  Being teased
-  Being insulted
-  Being called names
-  Being left out or excluded from a group
-  Being the object of “daggers” or dirty looks



STOP Bus Bullies



Bullying on the bus: Young adults

“Sometimes I would be made fun of on buses. I wasn't particularly popular and thus was a target to certain students. If I fell out with my friends they sometimes would belittle me on the bus and make snide remarks. However, nothing physical or threatening occurred to me.”

“In year 7, I was targeted by many of the older students on the bus over my weight and appearance. I had things stolen from me and was often beaten with newspapers and other things thrown at me like bottles.”

“Had food, books, golf balls thrown at me and my friends from older students who were sat at the back of the bus and constant verbal abuse.”

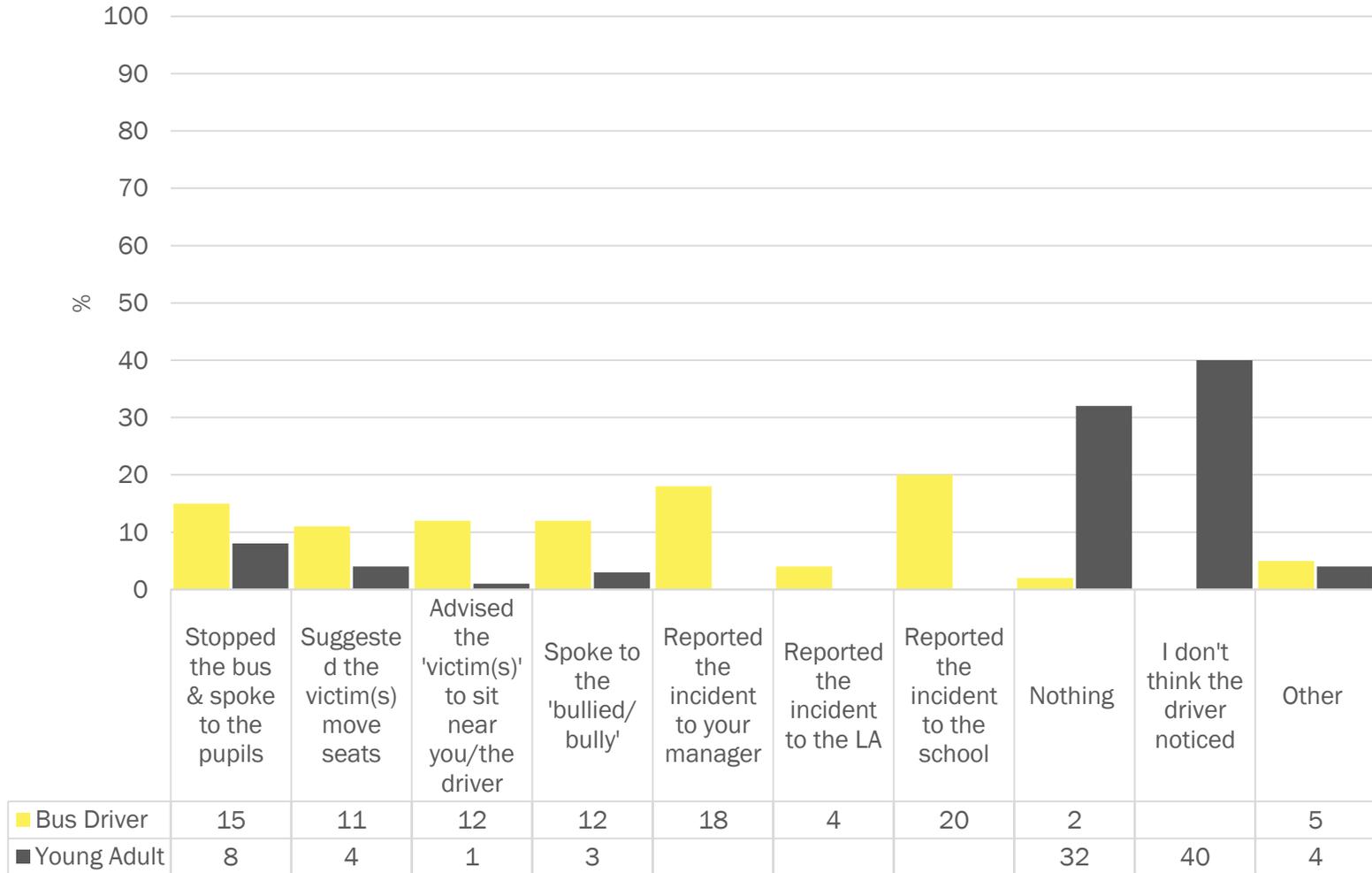
“I was only in sixth form when I had to get the school bus, bullying did go on but I was one of the oldest and so I did not get bullied.”



STOP Bus Bullies



Intervening in bullying



Intervening in bullying on the bus: Bus driver comments



STOP Bus Bullies

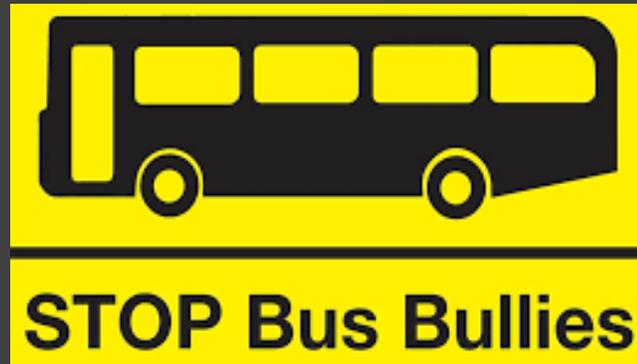


“I also spoke to the student that was the victim and made it clear that these people are people to ignore and are simply jealous and have their own issues that they are taking out on themselves. I stated be the bigger person and ignore it and if it was to get physical speak on the coach to let me now and any other areas to tell an adult in charge.”

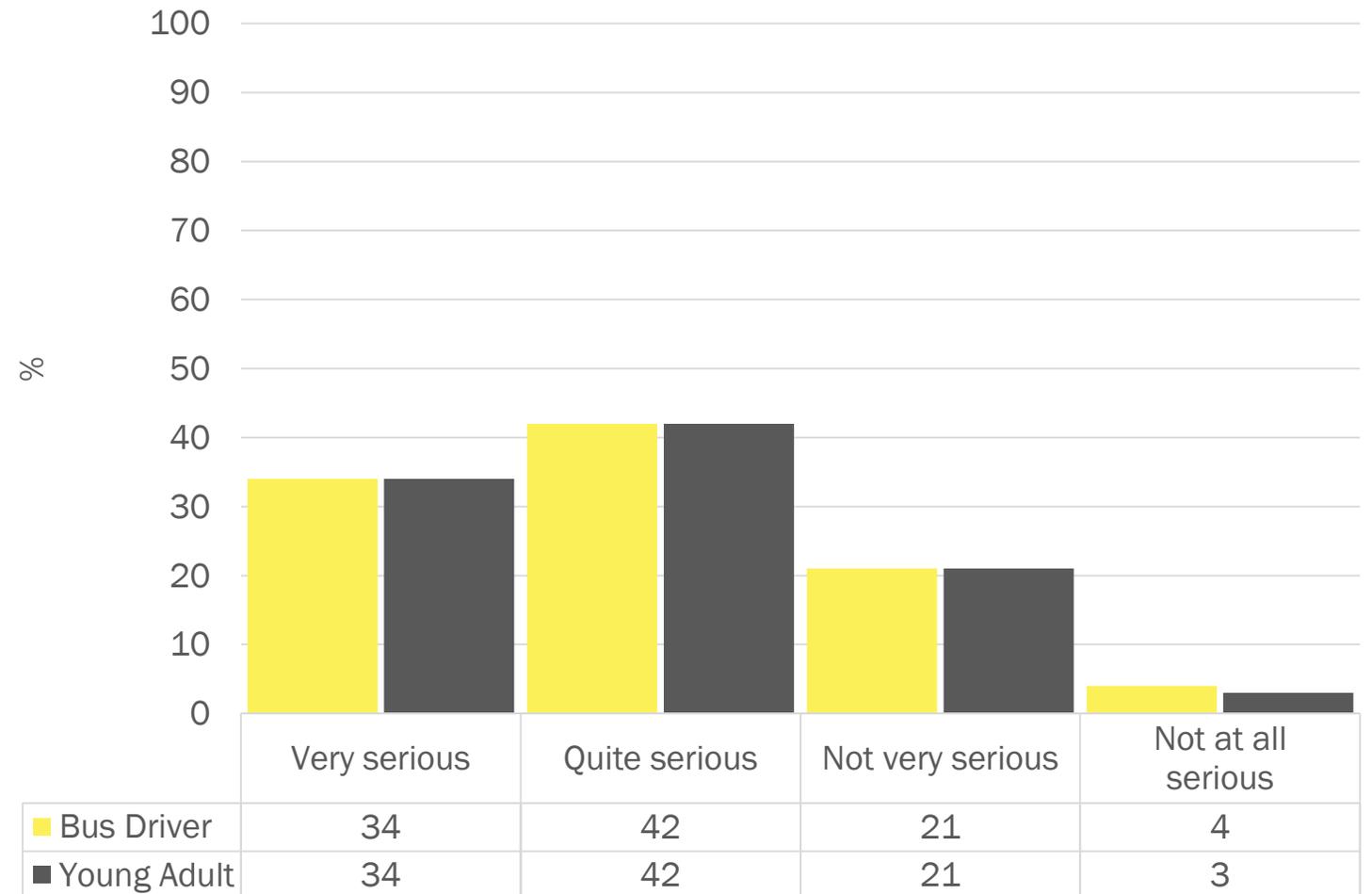
“When you realise a person is being bullied you try to keep an eye out through the rear view mirror to prevent it continuing.”

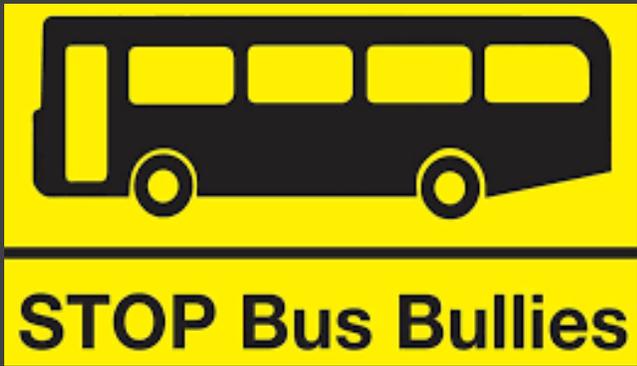
“I have become aware of student(s) abusing other student(s) both verbally and physically. Where I judge this to be bullying rather than simple horseplay I have intervened. It is sometimes difficult to judge when this is the case, but certainly if a child appears upset (e.g. if they are crying or in obvious distress) I will try to intervene.”

“Driving a bus does not allow opportunity to monitor passengers for bullying all the time. Noise draws the drivers attention but the physical safety of all passengers and road users takes priority over childish behaviour.”



Bullying a serious issue on school buses?

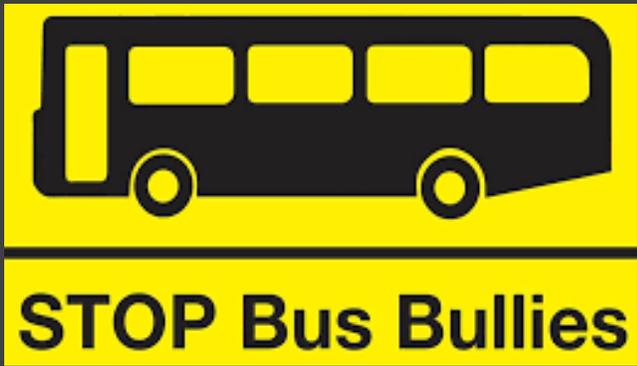




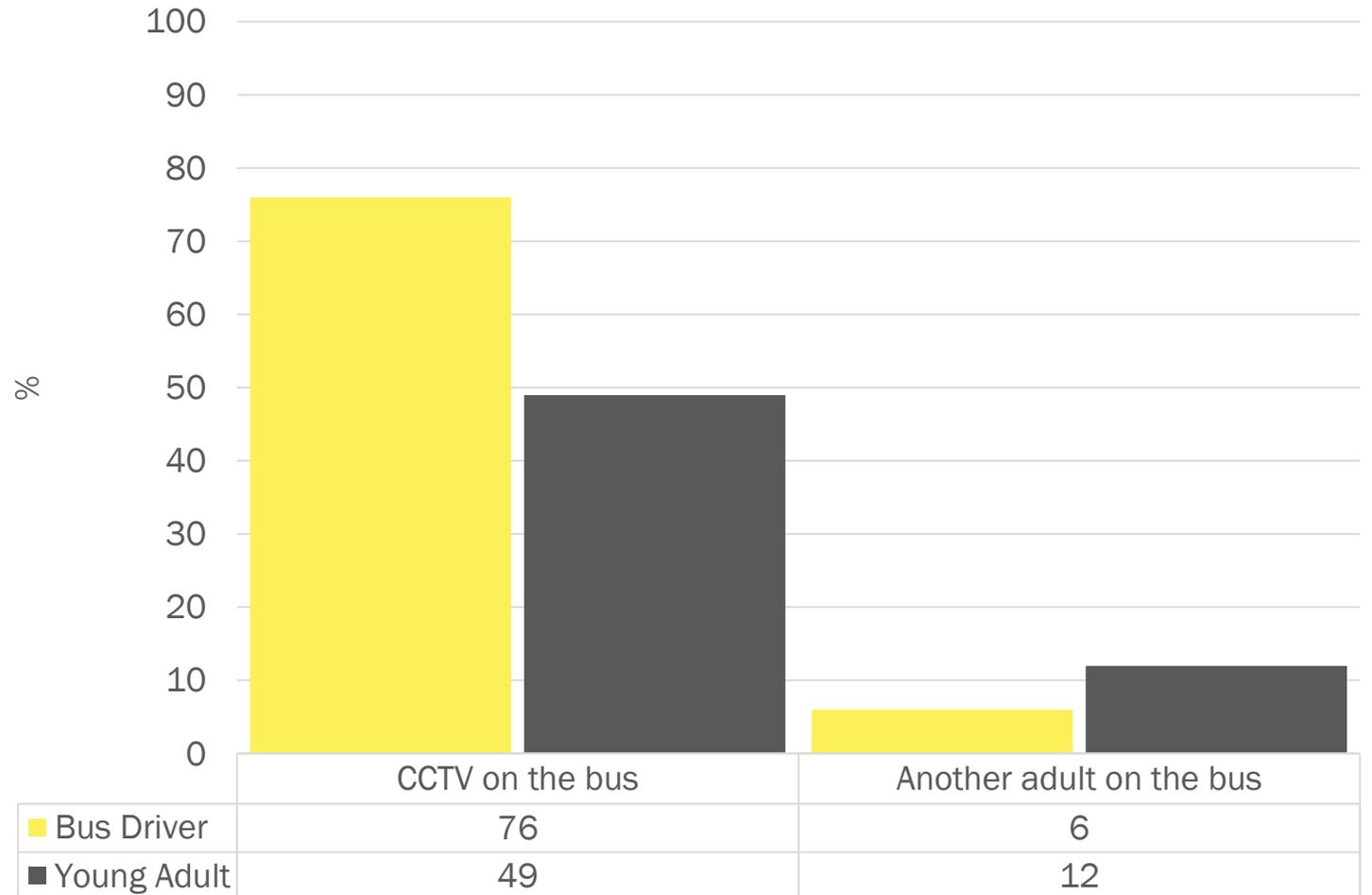
Bus drivers received training?

 23% of bus drivers reported receiving training on how to tackle bullying on their buses.

-  “Not on a bus but 13 years as head bouncer (doorman) has its advantages to dealing with bullies.”
-  “Through Driver CPC training and my own interest in school transport and keeping abreast of developments.”
-  “Told to stop in a safe place, stay in cab and phone police if continues.”
-  “Safeguarding at county hall.”
-  “Nothing specific relating to children.”
-  “We had a pamphlet handed out over a year ago (to all staff, not just school drivers) about vulnerable children but that was it.”



Anti-Bullying Strategies

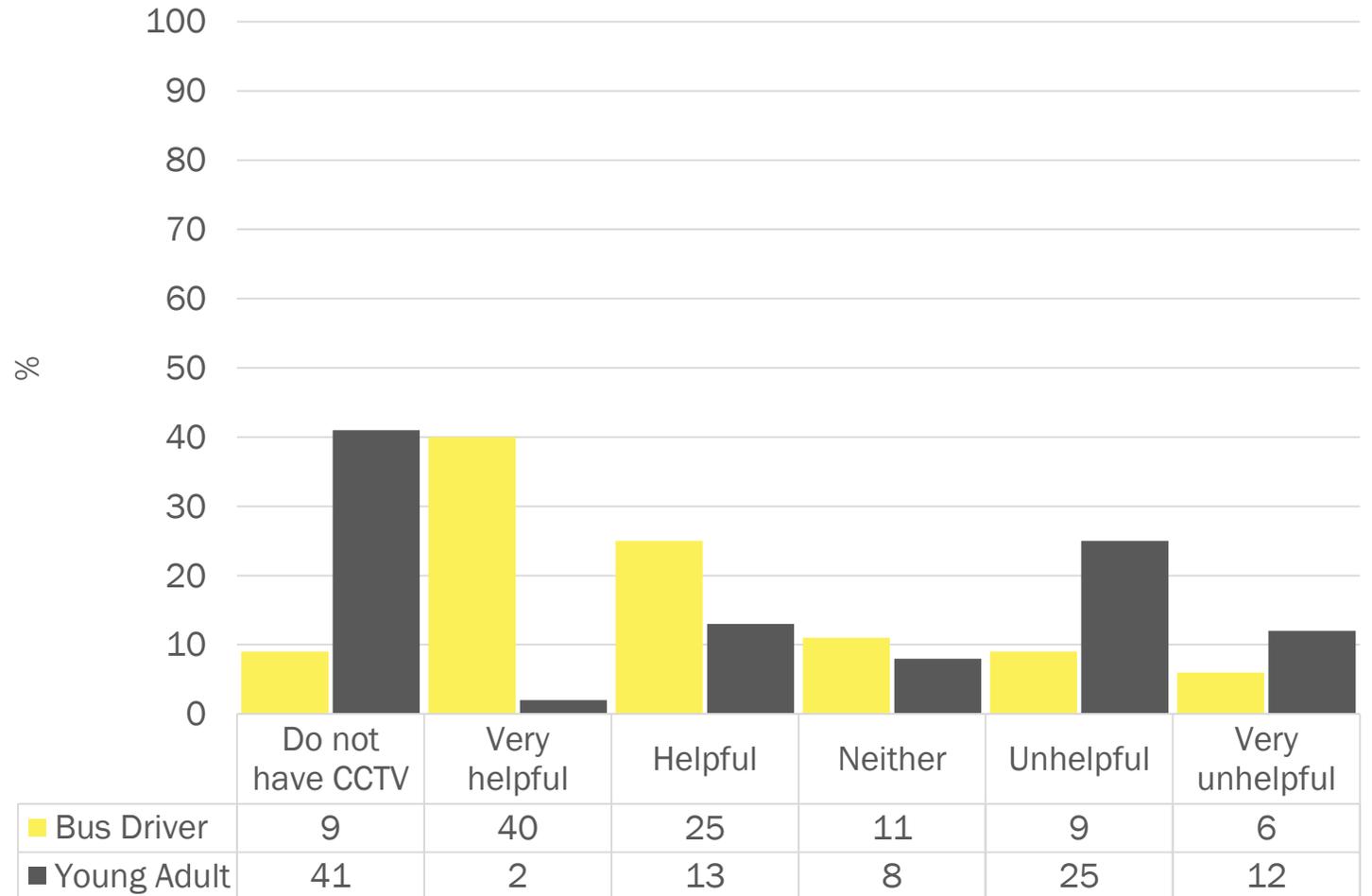




STOP Bus Bullies



Is CCTV helpful?





STOP Bus Bullies



Thoughts on CCTV: Bus drivers

“CCTV is good if the cameras are in a good position to monitor the passengers on board and is of good quality.”

“I think CCTV is a key for evidence in bullying and misbehaving children. I think it is important to have sound and a good number of camera's spread over the bus. In some cases my employer had to use hidden cameras as the children would try and damage them.”

“CCTV is good if the cameras are in a good position to monitor the passengers on board and is of good quality.”

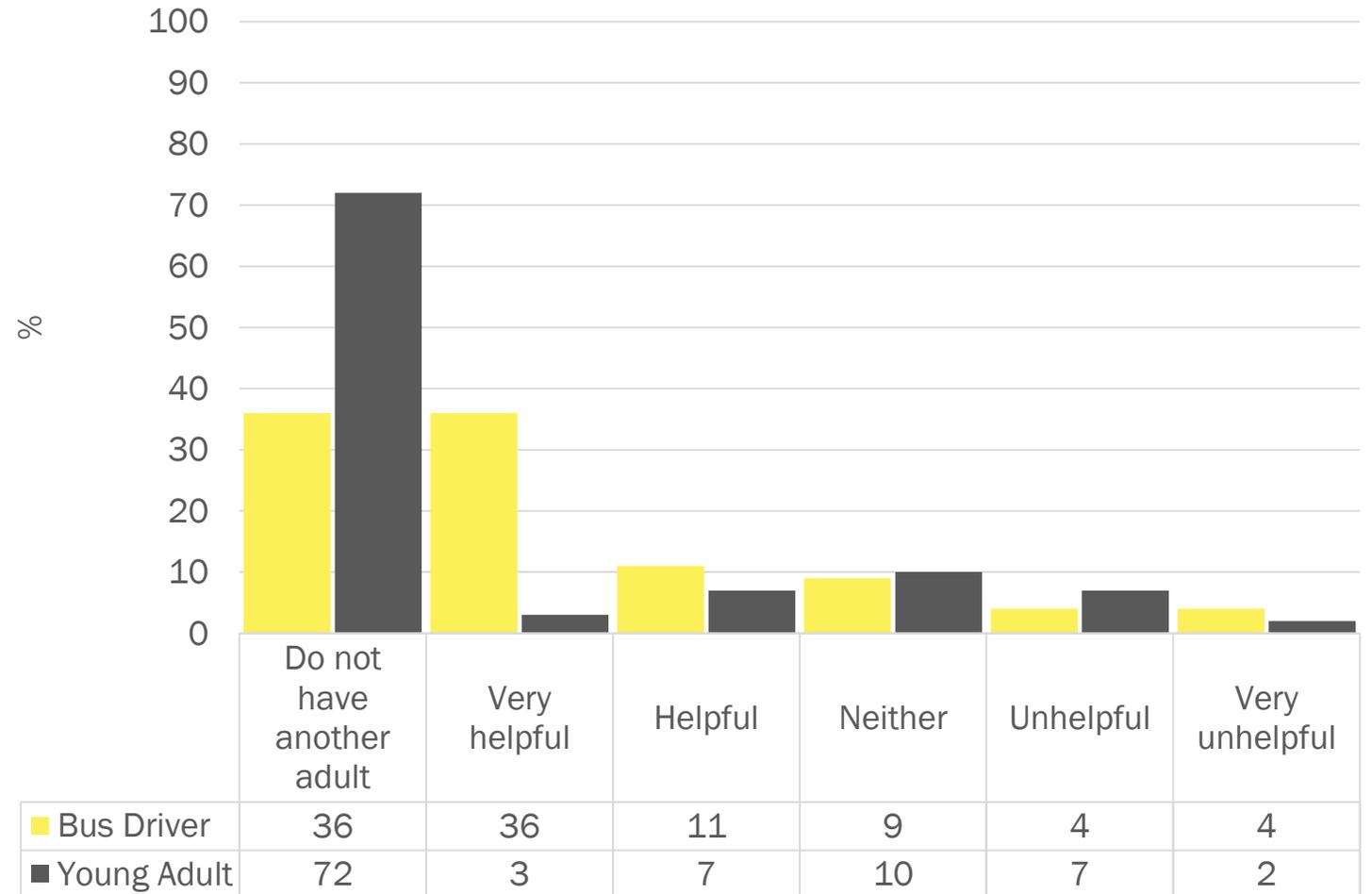
“While it provides a vision of events a lot of the more hurtful bullies use words and/or social media to terrorise their victims and so images are often not all that helpful.”

“The schools are not interested.”

“Management don't want to rock the boat.”



Is the presence of another adult helpful?





STOP Bus Bullies



Thoughts on another adult on the bus: Bus drivers

“Should have 2 members of school staff but they won't get on as the kids are so badly behaved.”

“I have had another adult on some school runs and they take little notice on some occasions. One school even had a PCSO on it and the children would swear at them.”

“I think it depends on the kids. But in reality if a bus full of 60-70 kids decides they are all going to play up one extra adult isn't really going to achieve anything.”

“I have known other staff unable to keep control of schoolkids en route and have requested a teacher on board, whereby kids act like angels. Take away the teacher and the same behaviour presents itself.”

“I do think another adult for supervision purposes is a good idea and would nip poor behaviour in the bud quicker before it gets out of hand but the costs of this would be harmful to a lot of smaller companies.”



STOP Bus Bullies



Thoughts on CCTV & another adult on the bus: Young Adults

“There was CCTV from the front of the lower and upper deck. So the driver could see what was going on, I am not sure if this was recorded for later use.”

“Numerous people got caught fighting via CCTV and received punishment from the school.”

“Bus had cameras but everyone knew that they didn't work.”

“Knowing there is the presence of an adult would deter students from being rude and mean to others and could help reduce bullying instances on buses. However, having another adult on the bus could be impractical in practice as this would pose an extra cost to the school. The school may not see it necessary to appoint an adult on the bus if they do not believe the bullying situation to be serious.”

“In the rare times there was another adult on the bus, bullying was reduced significantly.”



STOP Bus Bullies



Some final comments

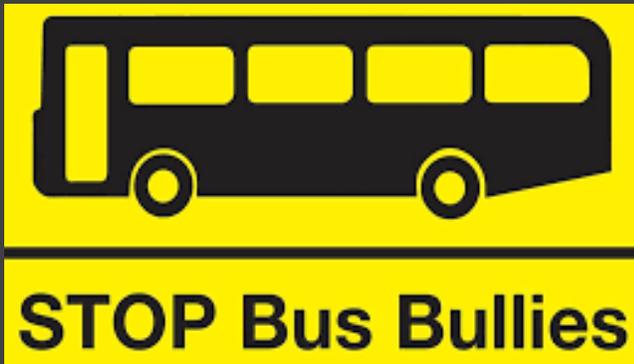
“I was bullied for 5 years at high school, which started on the school bus.” [young adult]

“I just think drivers need to be a bit more assertive and authoritative when it comes to dealing with aggressive and disrespectful behaviour. I often think they are a bit scared to apprehend them because kids of today's era are quite threatening.” [Bus driver]

“70 seaters are not helpful as you cannot see to the back seats. Pupils are not trained on basic bus safety etc. i.e. sitting/seatbelts/leaving the bus. Drivers are not route trained therefore are concentrating more on going the right way than on the kids.” [Bus driver]

“Driving a bus does not allow opportunity to monitor passengers for bullying all the time. Noise draws the drivers attention but the physical safety of all passengers and road users takes priority over childish behaviour”. [Bus driver]

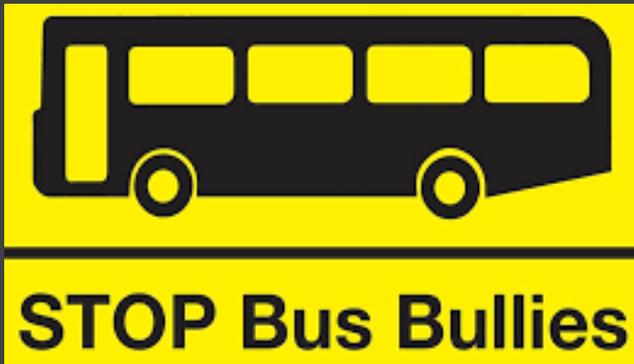
“I feel that if you can get a rapport with the pupils you normally find that the majority will respect what you say and will support you.” [Bus driver]



Key findings

Local Authorities

- 🚌 Almost half (N=37, 47%) of LAs who completed the survey had not completed an audit on their school routes.
- 🚌 32% reported that they conducted an audit including reports of pupil's reports of bullying on the school bus.
- 🚌 42% reported that they conducted an audit including reports of bus drivers reports of bullying on the school bus.
- 🚌 Some LAs provided examples of strategies they use to monitor and tackle bullying.



Key findings

Pupil & Bus Driver Surveys

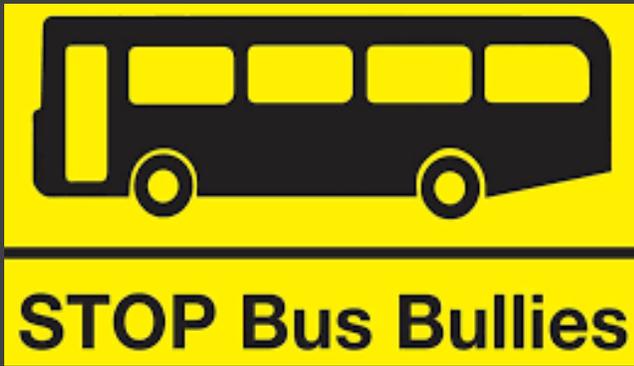
 Witnessing and experiencing bullying on the school bus appears to be a prevalent experience for drivers and pupils.

 Verbal forms of bullying are the most prevalent.

 Some pupils report only being bullied on the bus.

 Qualitative comments highlight how some perceive the school bus to be a threatening and intimidating environment.

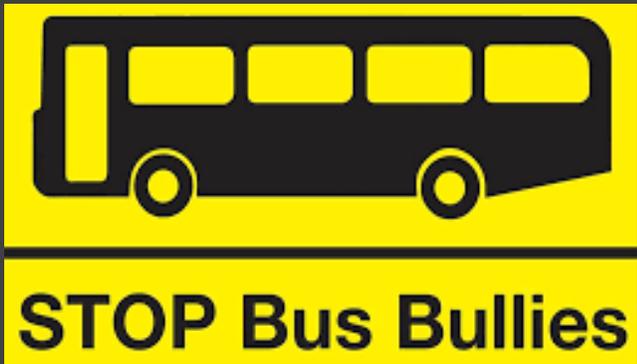
 Qualitative comments also highlight how younger pupils may be particularly at risk.



Key findings

Pupil & Bus Driver Surveys

- 🚌 The majority of bus drivers and, almost half of young adults reported that their bus had CCTV
 - 🚌 Overall viewed as a useful approach to managing school bus bullying. However this depended on
 - 🚌 The quality of the CCTV
 - 🚌 How incidents of bullying were then managed.
- 🚌 The presence of another adult was felt to possibly be useful
 - 🚌 Some were concerned about the cost.
 - 🚌 Some participants felt it would do nothing to improve people behaviour.
- 🚌 Training/ a lesson on how to behave on the school bus was thought to be important (by bus drivers).
- 🚌 The survey also highlighted the importance of positive relationships between bus drivers and pupils.



Evaluation & Future Work

 Multi-informant study, but a small sample recruited through social media.

 Future work should survey children & young people:

 Reactions to bullying on the bus.

 Bystander behaviour: barriers to intervention?

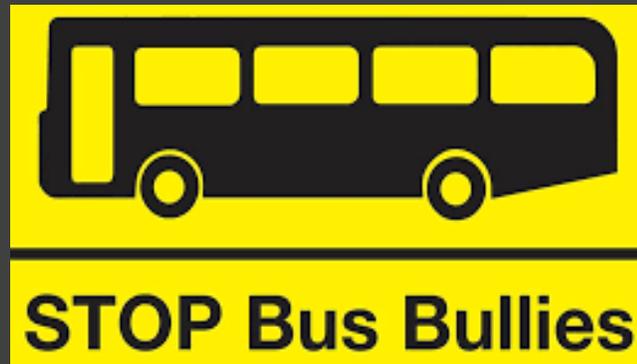
 The school journey more broadly.

 Further mapping of interventions currently used, and evaluation of such approaches.

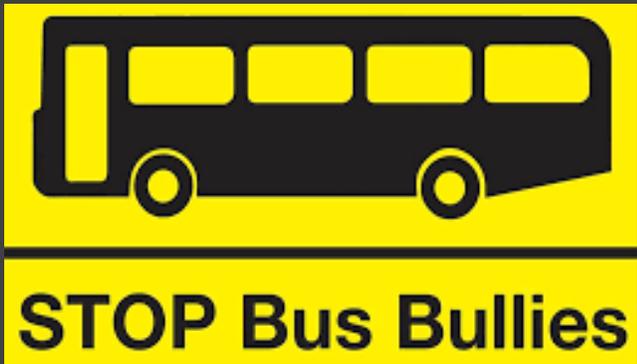
 How do we share details of successful interventions?

 What forum(s) can we use?

Recommendations



1. National policy on the school journey should be reviewed and revised as appropriate, to more clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of pupils, parents, schools and local authorities in tackling bullying on school buses.
2. There should be a rigorous mapping and evaluation of interventions currently used by local authorities, bus companies and schools to promote positive behaviour and tackle bullying on the school bus, and on the journey to and from school more broadly.
3. There is a need to develop and evaluate awareness raising materials for schools and bus companies that a) raise awareness of the issue of bullying on the school bus, and b) provide guidance on how to respond to bullying on the school bus.
4. Conduct research on the school journey more broadly. The focus of this study has been on the experiences of bullying on private school buses. Research should also examine pupils' experiences of bullying while walking to and from school, and on other modes of public transport including the train and bus.
5. A national network should be established, to include those with an interest in safety on transport, for example those from anti-bullying charities, the transport industry, academics and young people, to take this work forward.



Thank you for listening, Any questions?

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