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NORTHUMBERLAND
COUNTY COUNCIL

Hexham Bus Station Research

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1. Background and Objectives

Northumberland County Council are consulting on options for the future of bus service provision in Hexham, and have recently completed an options appraisal of potential sites for the a new bus station. They are gathering feedback from consultation with members of the public, local communities and local stakeholders.

To inform any future decision over the bus station, the council commissioned Public Knowledge, an independent market research company, to survey the local bus user population in order to better understand the profile of those who get buses into and out of Hexham, why they come to Hexham, how long they spend in the centre of the town (if at all) and where bus users go in the centre of the town.

2. Methodology

To collect data a face-to-face methodology was selected allowing for targeted interviewing of bus users. Public Knowledge designed an objective specific questionnaire in collaboration with Northumberland County Council. The questionnaire was approximately 3-5 minutes in length (this can be seen in the appendices for reference).

Face-to-face data was collected by experienced MRS trained interviewers in the centre of Hexham everyday between the 11th and 17th August 2014. Interviewer shifts covered peak commuter-times (from 7am and 8am, throughout the day until 6pm, 7pm and 8pm) and interviewers were stationed at the bus station, the main bus stops outside of the hospital, at Priestpopple and Beaumont Street and also in the market place area.

In total 651 interviews were achieved with a random sample of bus users in Hexham from the ages of 17 years. A sample of this size has a margin of error of +/-3.84% at the 95% confidence level and is therefore considered to be robust overall. Whilst some interviews were carried out away from the bus station, use of the bus station amongst those interviewed is high with only 1% (n=5) saying they never use the bus station when travelling by bus to and from Hexham.

3. Data Processing and Analysis

Completed questionnaires were returned to our head office and data input with 10% of data input checked for accuracy. Throughout the report the research findings have been illustrated using easy to read colour charts, which provide an immediately accessible graphical overview of the answers given by respondents. The charts are clearly labelled and the corresponding question from the questionnaire included at the bottom of each chart for ease of reference, in addition to the 'base' or sample size for each question.

Within this report any mention of 'significance' refers to statistical significance. Statistical significance is used to refer to a result that is unlikely to have occurred by chance and in this case is tested using Pearson's chi-square. Significance can be calculated to different percentages, with higher percentages representing more noteworthy responses.

Survey data was assessed for statistical significance according to the following variables:

- Gender
- Age
- Home location
- Disability/age related condition
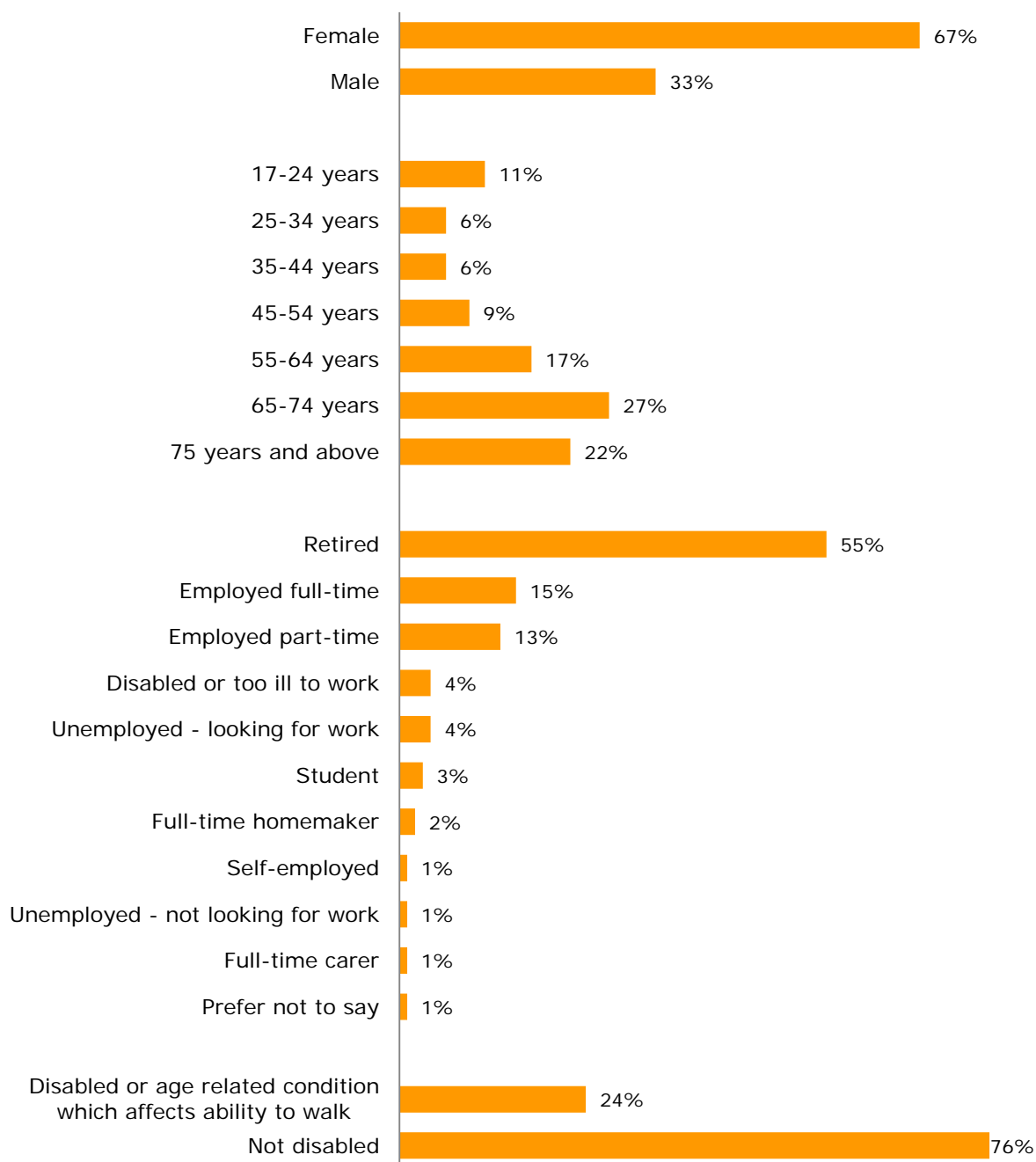- Interview date

Please note, where 0% is charted this represents a number of respondents less than 1% of the sample.

This report is accompanied by data tables and raw data files where further information can be found, if required.

4. Sample Profile

The 'natural fall out' methodology (i.e. a random sample of bus users with no imposed quotas on age or gender) has achieved a high proportion of older respondents (66% of the sample is aged 55 years and above) and a high proportion of females (67% female vs 33% male).

Figure 1: Demographic breakdown of total sample

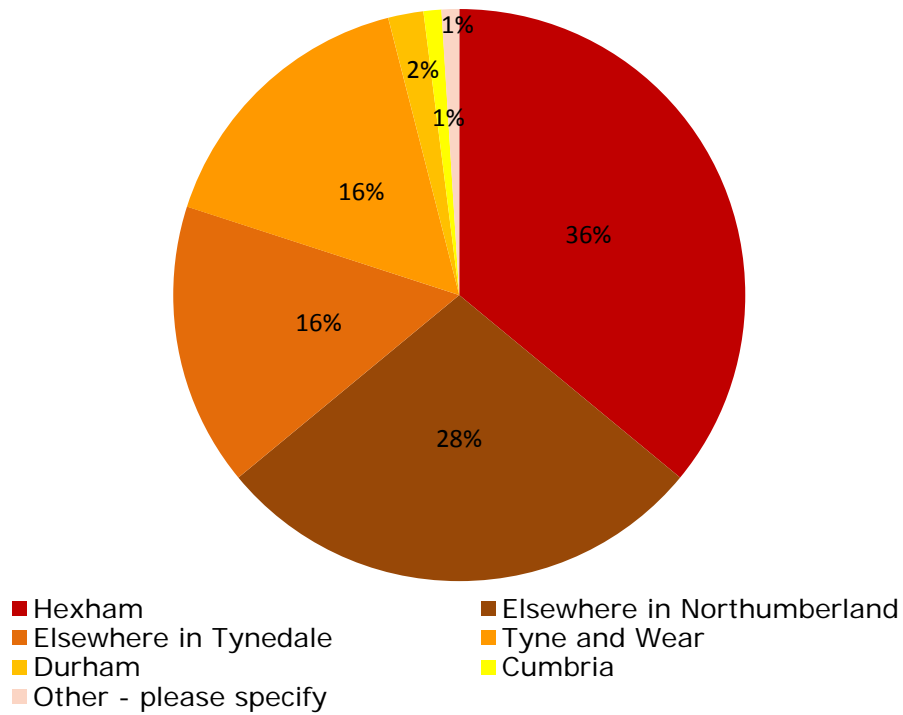| Category	Percentage
Female	67%
Male	33%
17-24 years	11%
25-34 years	6%
35-44 years	6%
45-54 years	9%
55-64 years	17%
65-74 years	27%
75 years and above	22%
Retired	55%
Employed full-time	15%
Employed part-time	13%
Disabled or too ill to work	4%
Unemployed - looking for work	4%
Student	3%
Full-time homemaker	2%
Self-employed	1%
Unemployed - not looking for work	1%
Full-time carer	1%
Prefer not to say	1%
Disabled or age related condition which affects ability to walk	24%
Not disabled	76%

Base: Total 651

Reflecting the generally older age of respondents, more than half of the sample (55%) identified themselves as being retired. More than a quarter (28%) are employed either full-time (15%) or part-time (13%).

More than three-quarters of those interviewed (76%, n=493) said they do not have a disability or age related condition that affects their ability to walk, suggesting that a large proportion of bus users are mobile. Just under a third (32%) of those who said they have a disability or age related identified themselves as living east of Hexham and 46% living to the West (22% could not be confirmed as they did not provide postcode details).

5. Key Findings

The initial stage of the survey established where respondents lived, the frequency of bus journeys and where they travelled to and from on the bus. Over a third (36%) live in Hexham with a further 28% living elsewhere in Northumberland, the figures are shown in Figure 2. The youngest age group of 17 to 24 year olds are significantly more likely to be coming from elsewhere in Northumberland compared to the other age groups, 46%. There are some gender variances to note too; of the females, 40% live in Hexham compared to 29% of males and of the males 36% live elsewhere in Northumberland compared to 24% of the females.
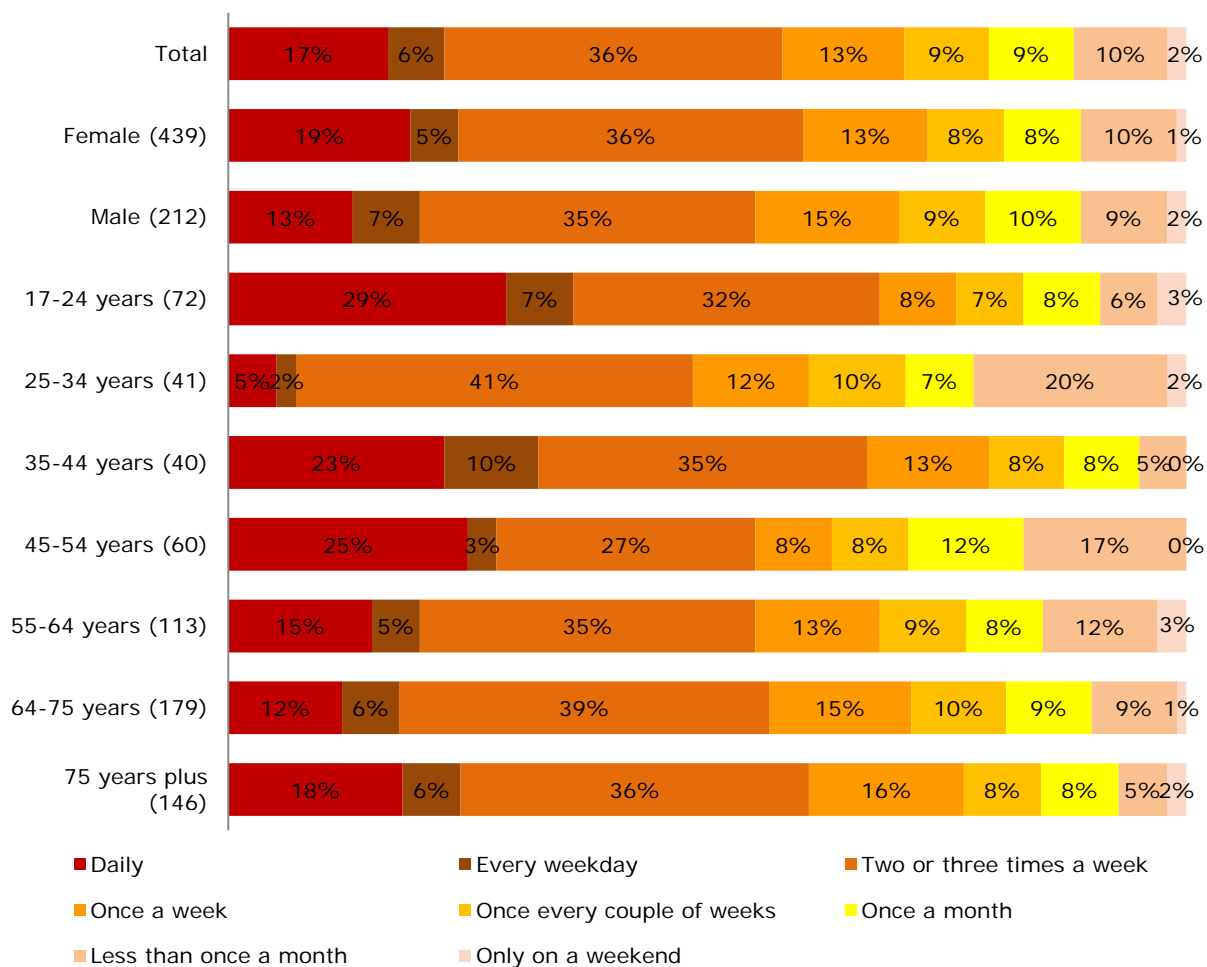
Figure 2: Home locations

D3b. Where do you live?
Base: Total 651

With regards to frequency of usage it is the youngest group of 17 to 24 year olds and females that are significantly more likely to be using the bus services on a daily basis. Figure 3 illustrates the frequency of usage by these groups.

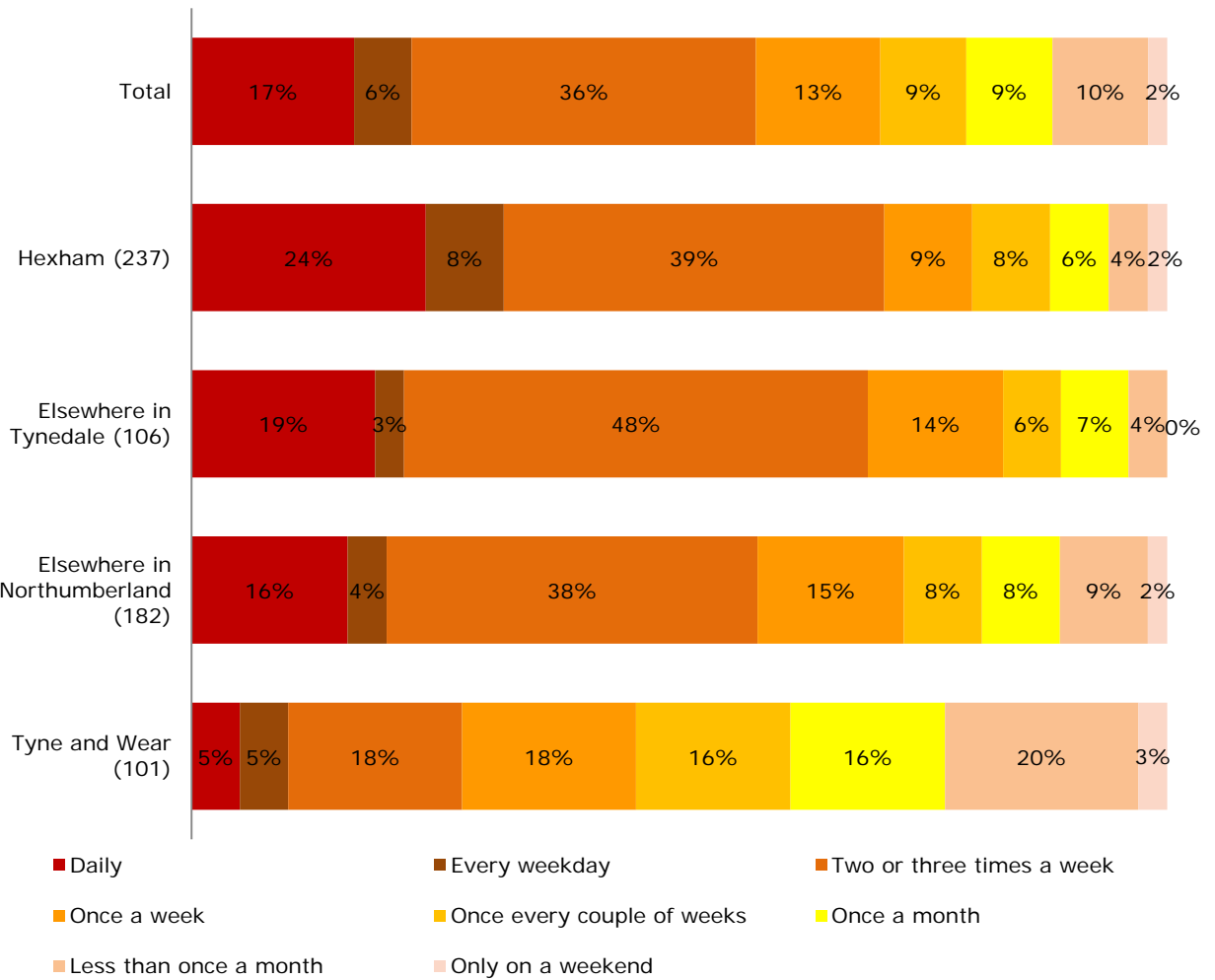## Figure 3: Frequency of bus usage by total sample, gender and age group

Q1. On average, how often do you travel by bus to or from Hexham?
Base: Total 651, see category axis

The next chart (Figure 4) illustrates the frequency of bus travel to or from Hexham by the respondent's home location.

Figure 4: Frequency of bus usage by home location

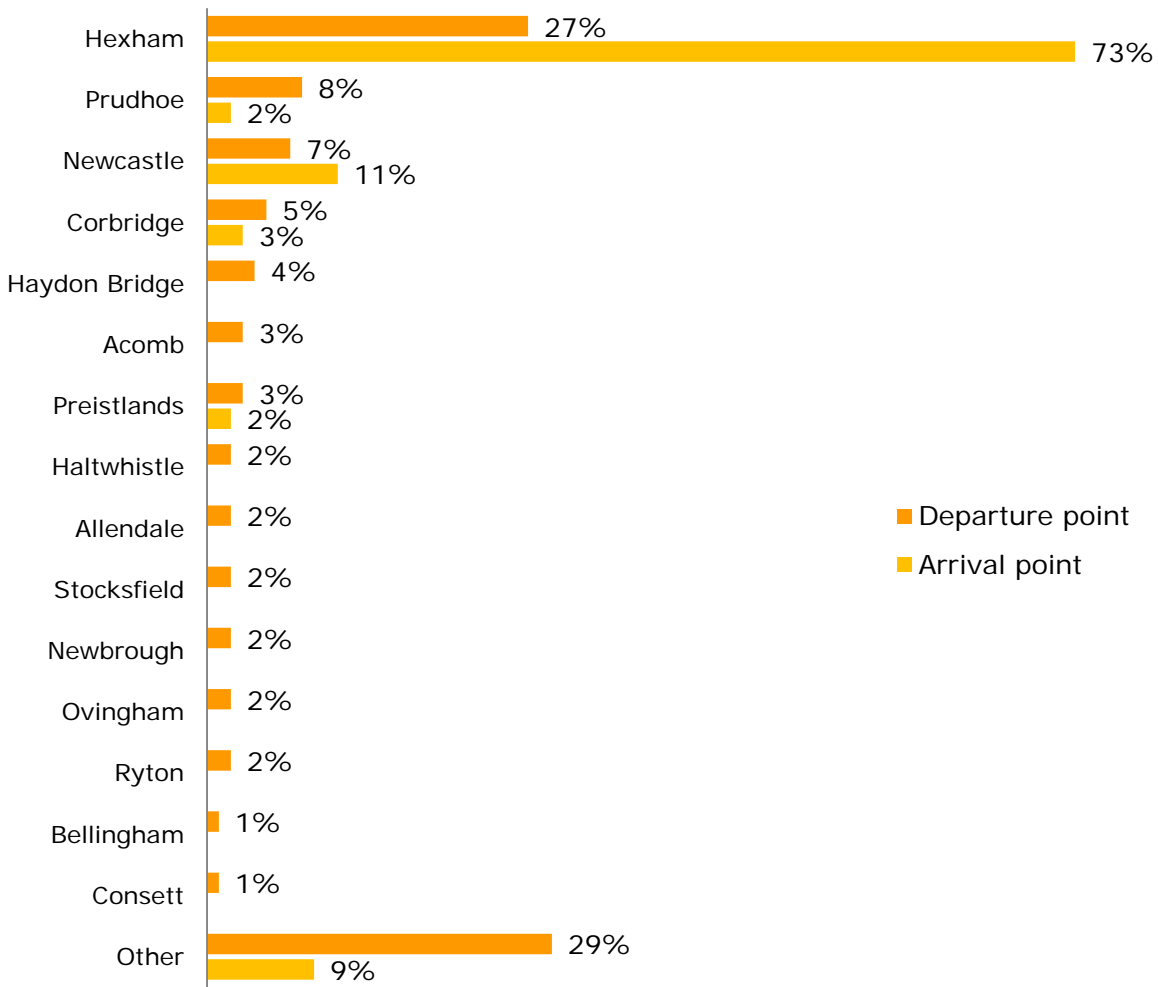|	Daily	Every weekday	Two or three times a week	Once a week	Once every couple of weeks	Once a month	Less than once a month	Only on a weekend
Total	17%	6%	36%	13%	9%	9%	10%	2%
Hexham (237)	24%	8%	39%	9%	8%	6%	4%	2%
Elsewhere in Tynedale (106)	19%	3%	48%	14%	6%	7%	4%	0%
Elsewhere in Northumberland (182)	16%	4%	38%	15%	8%	8%	9%	2%
Tyne and Wear (101)	5%	5%	18%	18%	16%	16%	20%	3%

Q1. On average, how often do you travel by bus to or from Hexham?
Base: Total 651, see category axis

Those that live in Hexham are significantly more likely to be using buses on a daily basis (24%), those that live 'elsewhere in Tynedale' are more likely than those from other locations to use the buses two or three times a week (48%) and those from Tyne and Wear are using buses to and from Hexham the least often with over half (52%) using them once every couple of weeks or less often.

With regards to arrival and departure points, within this sample group, Hexham is more commonly an arrival point than a departure point; this is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Departure/arrival points

Location	Departure point	Arrival point
Hexham	27%	73%
Prudhoe	8%	2%
Newcastle	7%	11%
Corbridge	5%	3%
Haydon Bridge	4%	
Acomb	3%	
Preistlands	3%	2%
Haltwhistle	2%	
Allendale	2%	
Stocksfield	2%	
Newbrough	2%	
Ovingham	2%	
Ryton	2%	
Bellingham	1%	
Consett	1%	
Other	29%	9%

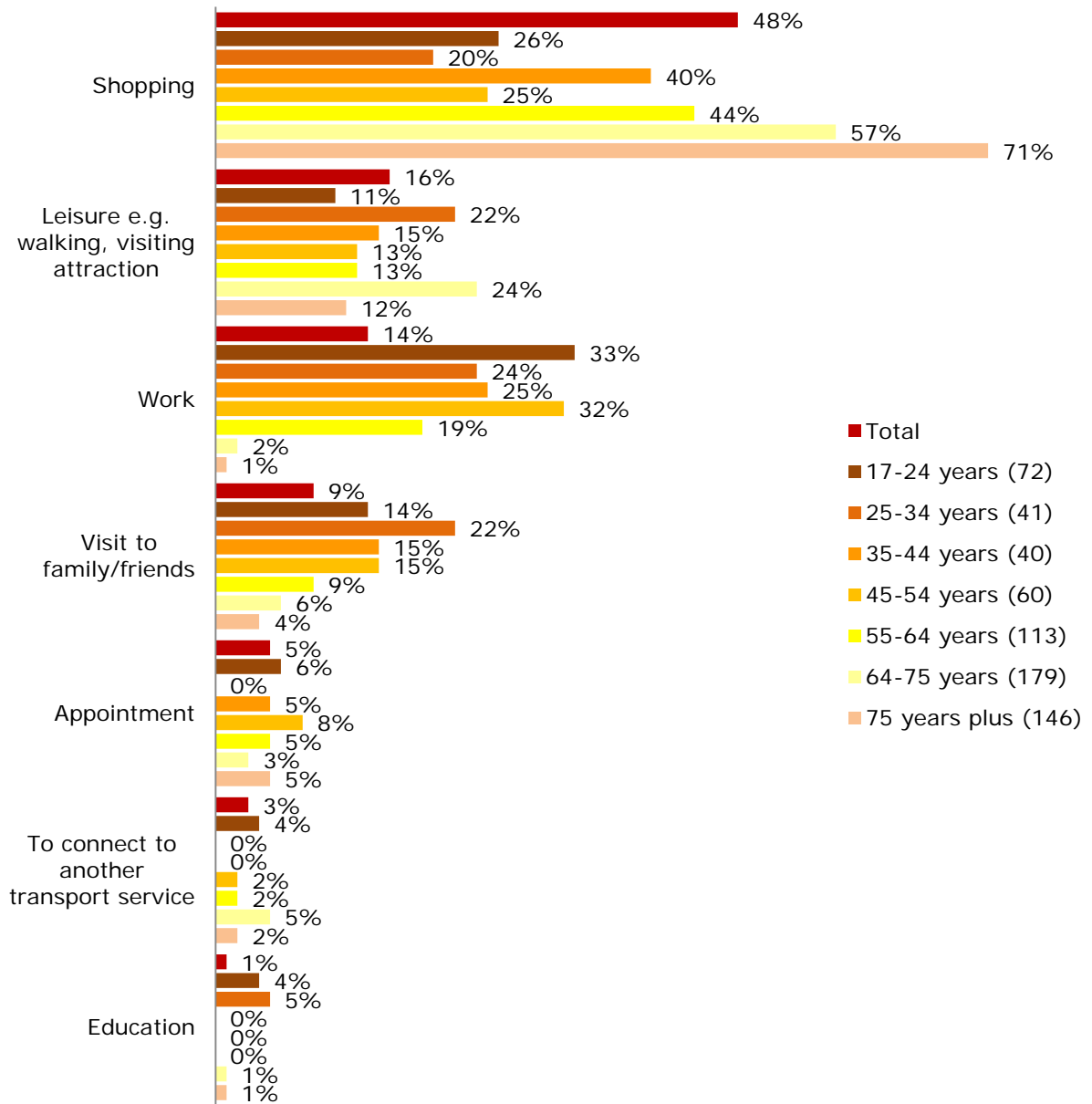**Q2a/2b. What is your most common bus journey via Hexham?**
Base: Total 651

From the sample of respondents who live in Hexham, 66% use Hexham as a departure point and all of those that live in Hexham use the bus station. Respondents who live in Hexham have various arrival points: Hexham (37%), Newcastle (28%), Corbridge (6%), Priestlands (4%), Prudhoe (3%), Carlisle (3%) and others (19%).

The age group of 75 years plus are significantly more likely than any other age group to select that there point of arrival is Hexham (79%). A significantly high proportion of respondents from this age group are departing from a multitude of points; 38% are departing from 'other' points.

The survey next established the purpose for visiting. Shopping is the key motivator for travelling into Hexham by bus. The purposes for visiting are illustrated by the different age groups in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Purpose for visit by age group

Q3. What is your main purpose for travelling into Hexham by bus?
Base: Total 651, see legend

Females (52%) and those that classify themselves as disabled or have age related conditions that affect walking (60%) are significantly more likely than any other sub-group to select shopping as their main purpose for travelling into Hexham by bus.

Home location is a determining factor in the purpose for visit. Those that live in Hexham are significantly more likely to select 'shopping' (54%) and 'visiting family/friends' (13%). Those that live elsewhere in Tynedale are also significantly more likely to select 'shopping'

(58%). In contrast those from Tyne and Wear are significantly more likely to select 'leisure' (30%) and significantly less likely to select 'shopping' (31%).
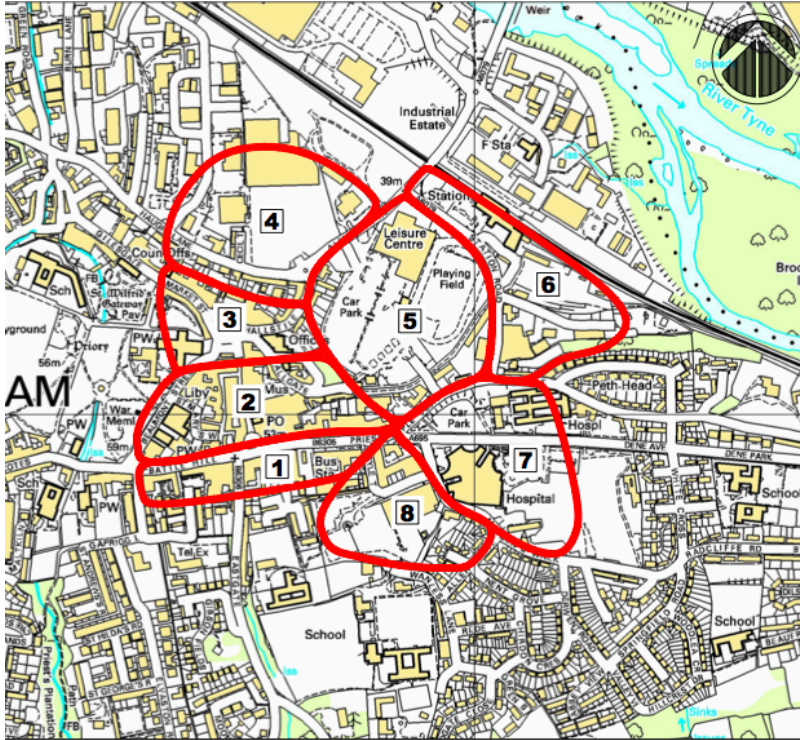
Those who have a disability or an aged related condition that affects their ability to walk are significantly more likely to select 'shopping' as their main purpose for travelling into Hexham by bus (60%) compared to those who do not have a disability (44%).

Selection of 'education' as the main reason for travelling into Hexham by bus was low, however this is likely to be an underestimate as the survey was conducted during school summer holidays.

When asked directly 'When travelling by bus to and from Hexham do you use shops and services in the centre of the town?' 92% of respondents say 'yes'.

The survey concluded with which areas of the town were visited and the duration of visits. The town was split into 9 zones as illustrated in Figure 7.
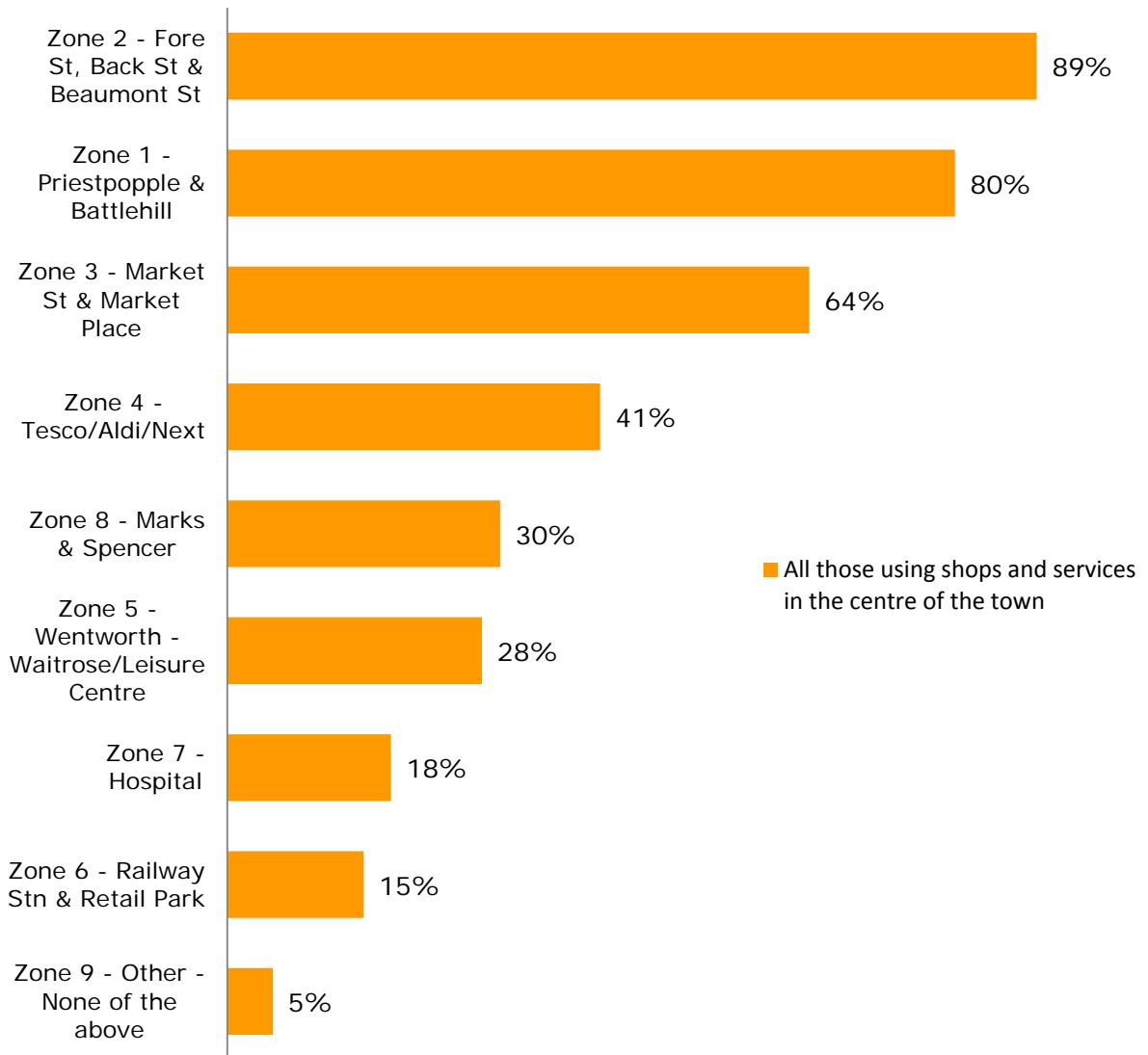
Figure 7: Zones of Hexham

1 PRIESTPOPPLE AND BATTLEHILL
2 FORE STREET / BACK STREET AND BEAUMONT STREET
3 MARKET STREET AND MARKET PLACE
4 TESCO / ALDI AND NEXT
5 WENTWORTH - WAITROSE / LEISURE CENTRE
6 HEXHAM RAILWAY STATION AND RETAIL PARK (HOMEBASE)
7 HOSPITAL
8 MARKS AND SPENCER
9 OTHER - NONE OF THE ABOVE

Figure 8 shows the percentage of respondents that are visiting each zone when they are using the shops or services in the centre of the town.

Figure 8: Usage of town zones

Zone	Percentage
Zone 2 - Fore St, Back St & Beaumont St	89%
Zone 1 - Priestpopple & Battlehill	80%
Zone 3 - Market St & Market Place	64%
Zone 4 - Tesco/Aldi/Next	41%
Zone 8 - Marks & Spencer	30%
Zone 5 - Wentworth - Waitrose/Leisure Centre	28%
Zone 7 - Hospital	18%
Zone 6 - Railway Stn & Retail Park	15%
Zone 9 - Other - None of the above	5%

Legend: All those using shops and services in the centre of the town

Q5. And on those occasions, which of the following areas do you visit when in Hexham?
Base: All those using shops and services in the centre of the town 601

The two distinct areas that are being used are Zone 1 and Zone 2. Whilst there are no statistical variances between the genders there are some statistical variances amongst the different age groups; this is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Q5. And on those occasions, which of the following areas do you visit when in Hexham?

Zone	Area	Total	17-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years plus
1	Priestpopple & Battlehill	80%	60%	76%	82%	83%	83%	83%	85%
2	Fore St, Back St & Beaumont St	89%	77%	73%	85%	87%	95%	90%	93%
3	Market St & Market Place	64%	55%	68%	76%	64%	73%	63%	59%
4	Tesco/Aldi/Next	41%	46%	59%	64%	55%	44%	35%	29%
5	Wentworth - Waitrose/Leisure Centre	28%	28%	43%	30%	38%	39%	22%	17%
6	Railway Stn & Retail Park	15%	15%	27%	18%	32%	18%	10%	9%
7	Hospital	18%	9%	27%	15%	25%	26%	16%	15%
8	Marks & Spencer	30%	18%	32%	33%	36%	34%	28%	31%
9	Other - None of the above	5%	6%	14%	6%	2%	6%	6%	3%

Base: All that visit the centre of the town 601
High statistical significance
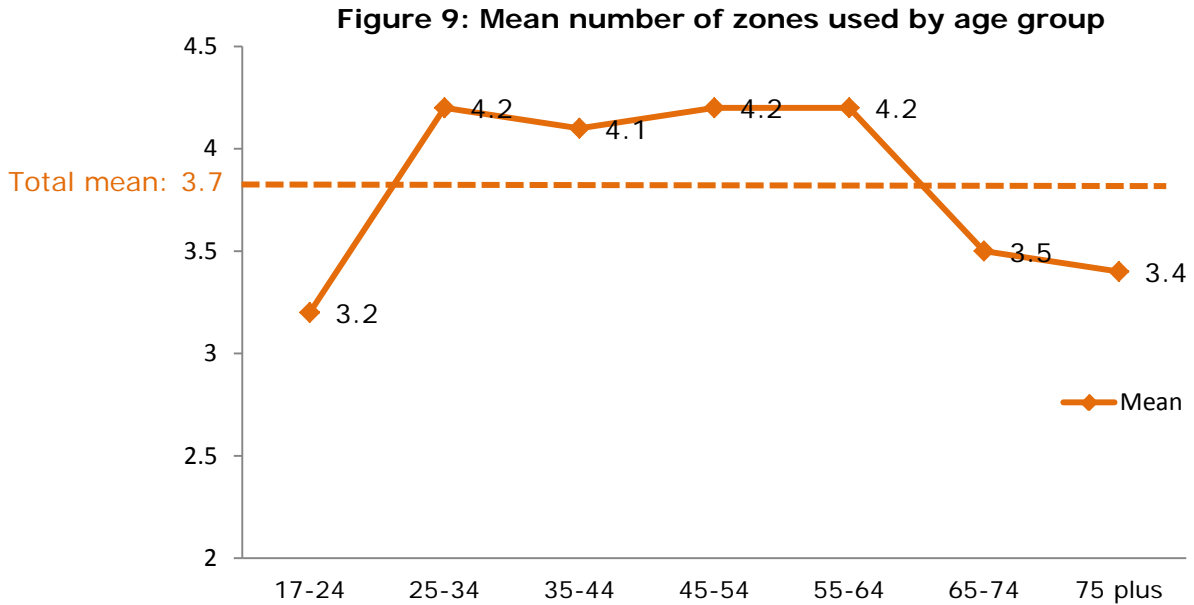Low statistical significance

Zone 2 is the most frequented area across all age groups and regardless of disability status. Of the respondents that regard themselves as disabled or having an age related condition which affects their ability to walk, a significantly higher proportion of them are using zone 1, Priestpopple and Battlehill at 88%. Whilst this group are also significantly less likely to be visiting Market St & Market Place (54%), Tesco/Aldi/Next (30%), Wentworth (17%) and the Railway Station and retail-park (8%), more than half do visit Market St & Market Place and just under a third of the disabled population travel as far as zone 4.

Visitors to and from Hexham who are using the bus are on average visiting 3.7 of the 9 zones. The breakdown of mean scores by age is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean score of number of zones visited

	Total	17-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years plus
Mean score of number of zones visited	3.7	3.2	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	3.5	3.4

By expressing the data in a chart, as shown in Figure 9, it is visible that the extreme age groups are visiting three zones within Hexham and the four groups spanning ages 25 to 64 years are visiting four zones on average.
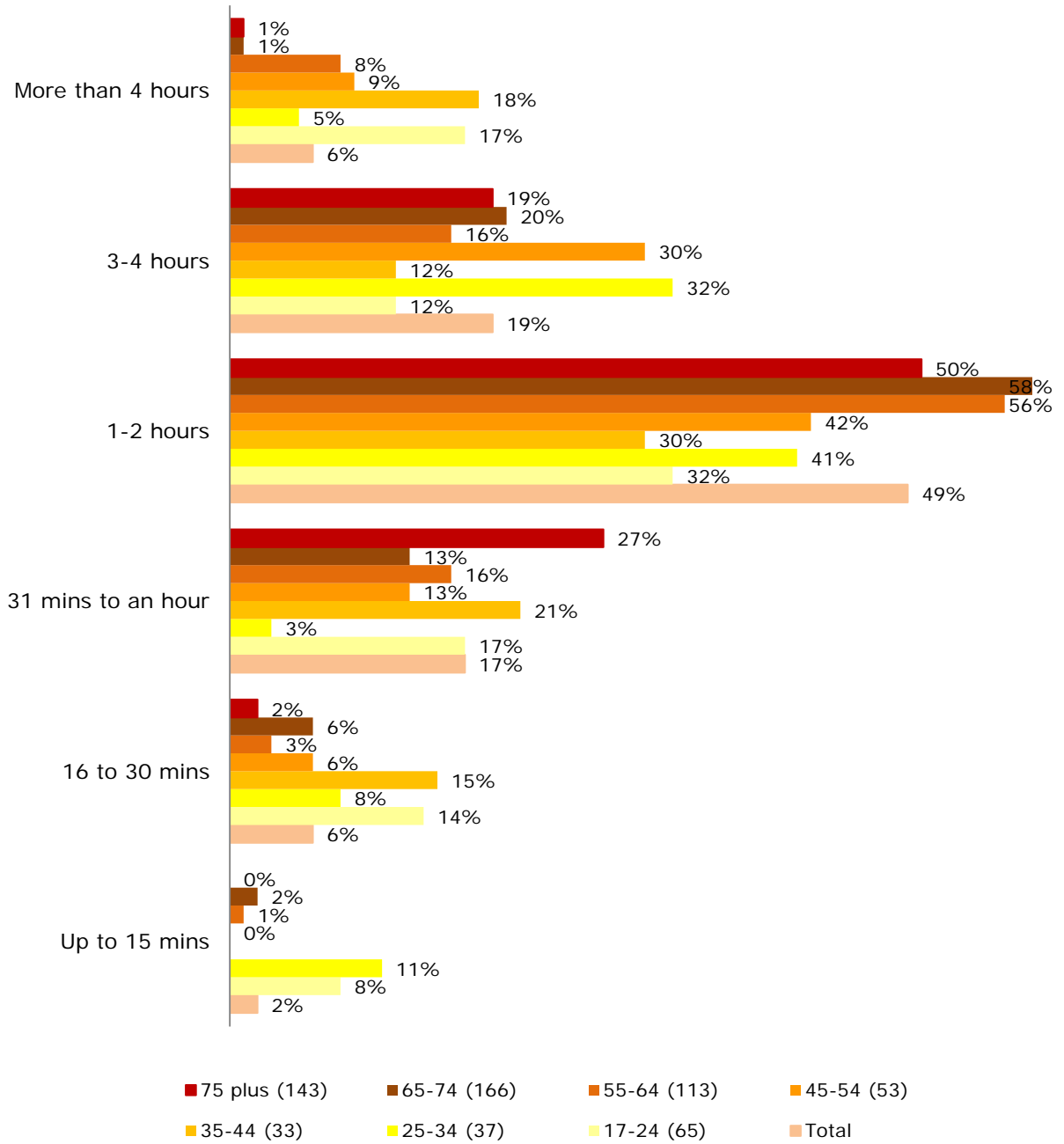
Figure 9: Mean number of zones used by age group

Total mean: 3.7

	17-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 plus
Mean	3.2	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	3.5	3.4

Q5. And on those occasions, which of the following areas do you visit when in Hexham?

Base: All those using shops and services in the centre of the town 601

The survey concluded by asking how long respondents who use the shops and services in the centre of the town spend in Hexham when they visit by bus. The most common answer is between 1 to 2 hours (49%). The results by age group are shown in Figure 10. Mean length of time spent in Hexham was similar across all age groups, with the youngest and oldest participants likely to spend marginally less time in Hexham than those aged 25 to 74 years. Additionally, those who stated they were disabled or had an aged related condition which affects their ability to work spent a similar amount of time in Hexham (73% spent upwards of an hour) to those who do not have a disability (75% spent upwards of an hour).

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Figure 10: Duration

More than 4 hours
- 1%
- 1%
- 8%
- 9%
- 18%
- 5%
- 17%
- 6%

3-4 hours
- 19%
- 20%
- 16%
- 30%
- 12%
- 32%
- 12%
- 19%

1-2 hours
- 50%
- 58%
- 56%
- 42%
- 30%
- 41%
- 32%
- 49%

31 mins to an hour
- 27%
- 13%
- 16%
- 13%
- 21%
- 3%
- 17%
- 17%

16 to 30 mins
- 2%
- 6%
- 3%
- 6%
- 15%
- 8%
- 14%
- 6%

Up to 15 mins
- 0%
- 2%
- 1%
- 0%
- 11%
- 8%
- 2%

Legend:
- 75 plus (143)
- 65-74 (166)
- 55-64 (113)
- 45-54 (53)
- 35-44 (33)
- 25-34 (37)
- 17-24 (65)
- Total

Q6. When travelling to and from Hexham by bus, on average how long do you spend in Hexham town centre using shops and services?
Base: All those using shops and services in the centre of the town 601, see legend

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6. Conclusions

17% of the sample use the bus daily, but the largest proportion of respondents are using the buses two to three times a week (36%). Those that live in Hexham are significantly more likely to be using buses on a daily basis (24%). The youngest group of 17 to 24 year olds and females are significantly more likely to be using the bus services on a daily basis.

Shopping is cited as the key motivator for travelling into Hexham by bus (48%). However, when travelling by bus to and from Hexham a total of 92% use shops and services in the centre of the town. Those with a disability or aged related condition that affects their ability to walk were significantly more likely to cite shopping as their primary reason for travelling into Hexham by bus (60%), although when prompted 98% said they use shops and services when in Hexham.

Zones 1 (Priestpopple and Battlehill) and 2 (Fore Street, Back Street & Beaumont Street) are the most well-frequented shopping areas, with those who identified as disabled significantly more likely to state that they shop in zone 1. However it is clear that many of those with a disability or aged related condition do still venture further than the immediate bus station area, with more than half (54%) visiting zone 3 (Market Street and Market Place), just under a third (30%) visiting zone 4 (Tesco/Aldi/Next) 17% visiting zone 5 (Wentworth – Waitrose/Leisure Centre). Furthermore, the average length of time spent in Hexham is similar across disabled and non-disabled groups.

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7. Appendices

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____ (show ID card), from an independent market research company, Public Knowledge. We are conducting a short survey on behalf of Northumberland County Council. It will only take a few minutes of your time.

All information received is strictly confidential, and will be carried out in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct. Would you be willing to be surveyed today?

ASK ALL
S1. Do you use buses to or from Hexham? SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No – **Thanks and Close**

ASK ALL – INTERVIEWER, IF INTERVIEWING IN THE BUS STATION DO NOT ASK
S2. When using buses to and from Hexham do you ever use Hexham bus station? SINGLE CODE

1. Yes

2. No

ASK ALL
D1. GENDER – INTERVIEWER CODE

1. Female
2. Male

ASK ALL
D2. Can you please tell me which of the following age bands applies to you? SINGLE CODE

1. 16 or under – **Thanks and Close**
2. 17–24 years
3. 25-34 years
4. 35-44 years
5. 45-54 years
6. 55-64 years
7. 65-74 years
8. 75 years and above

ASK ALL
D3a. What is your postcode? *We ask this to undertake geographical analysis only.*

INTERVIEWER, IF RESPONDENT WILL NOT GIVE FULL POSTCODE TRY FOR PARTIAL POSTCODE

ASK ALL
D3b. Where do you live? *Interviewer please read out* SINGLE CODE

- Hexham
- Elsewhere in Tynedale
- Elsewhere in Northumberland
- Tyne and Wear
- Cumbria
- Durham
- Other – please specify

ASK ALL
D4. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or age related condition which affects your ability to walk? SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

ASK ALL
Q1. On average, how often do you travel by bus to or from Hexham? SINGLE CODE

1. Daily
2. Every weekday
3. Only on a weekend
4. Two or three times a week
5. Once a week
6. Once every couple of weeks
7. Once a month
8. Less than once a month

ASK ALL
Q2. What is your most common bus journey via Hexham?

Departure point:

Arrival point:

SINGLECODE

- Work
- Education
- Shopping
- Appointment
- Visit to family/friends
- Leisure e.g. walking, visiting attraction
- To connect to another transport service
- Other – please specify

ASK ALL
Q4. When travelling by bus to and from Hexham do you use shops and services in the centre of the town? SINGLE CODE

1. Yes – Go to Q5
2. No – Go to D5

ASK IF 'Yes' AT Q4
INTERVIEWER SHOW RESPONDENT MAP
Q5. And on those occasions, which of the following areas do you visit when in Hexham? *Please select all that apply* MULTICODE

1. Zone 1
2. Zone 2
3. Zone 3
4. Zone 4
5. Zone 5

6. Zone 6
7. Zone 7
8. Zone 8
9. Zone 9

ASK IF 'Yes' AT Q4
Q6. When travelling to and from Hexham by bus, on average how long do you spend in Hexham town centre using shops and services?

1. Up to 15 mins
2. 16 to 30 mins
3. 31 mins to an hour
4. 1-2 hours
5. 3-4 hours
6. More than 4 hours

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ASK ALL
D5. Which of the following best describes your employment status? *Please select one only*

1. Employed full-time
2. Employed part-time
3. Self-employed
4. Unemployed – looking for work
5. Unemployed – not looking for work
6. Full-time carer
7. Full-time homemaker
8. Retired
9. Student
10. Disabled or too ill to work
11. Prefer not to say

Thank you very much for your time: that is the end of the survey. Please can I take some details for verification and quality checking purposes?

Name

Address

Telephone number

Email address

Northumberland County Council have requested that we supply them with postcodes of respondents alongside data responses. This would be to undertake geographical analysis only. None of your other personal details will be supplied without permission (interviewer please make clear that names and full addresses will not be passed on). Are you happy for us to supply your postcode?

❑ Yes- supply postcode
❑ No- do not supply postcode

Interviewer Name

Date of Interview

Interviewer name

Interview date