

Adult Social Care Travel Assistance Policy Consultation Report

February 2024



Approach to consultation

Overall objective

To ask for feedback from service users, carers and residents on our draft Policy

Approach

Online questionnaire, paper questionnaire sent to 3,028 service users and carers and five drop-in sessions across the borough

Information accompanying the standard and easy read questionnaires

Draft Policy (standard and easy read versions), details of two case studies and description of the consultation (on the Council website)

Consultation period

15 November 2023 to 9 January 2024

Number of participants

450 questionnaire responses (405x standard questionnaire and 45x easy read questionnaire) and 16 interactions at our drop-in sessions

Further information

- **The views of service users, carers and those who do or do not benefit from travel assistance are broadly similar** with no significant difference in views. Therefore, this summary report focuses on the topline findings
- **Data has been rounded** so some aggregates/totals may be +/-1% than 100%
- **Verbatim responses have been summarised into key themes** to provide an understanding of the key themes raised

Key findings

93%

State that it is **important** there are a wide variety of travel assistance options available to service users

73%

Agree a Travel Broker should support a service user, their carer/representative and professionals involved to identify the most appropriate and cost-effective travel assistance option

53%

Of carers are **confident** that the Council's approach, as detailed in the Policy, will support their friend or family member to be more independent

Key findings

69%

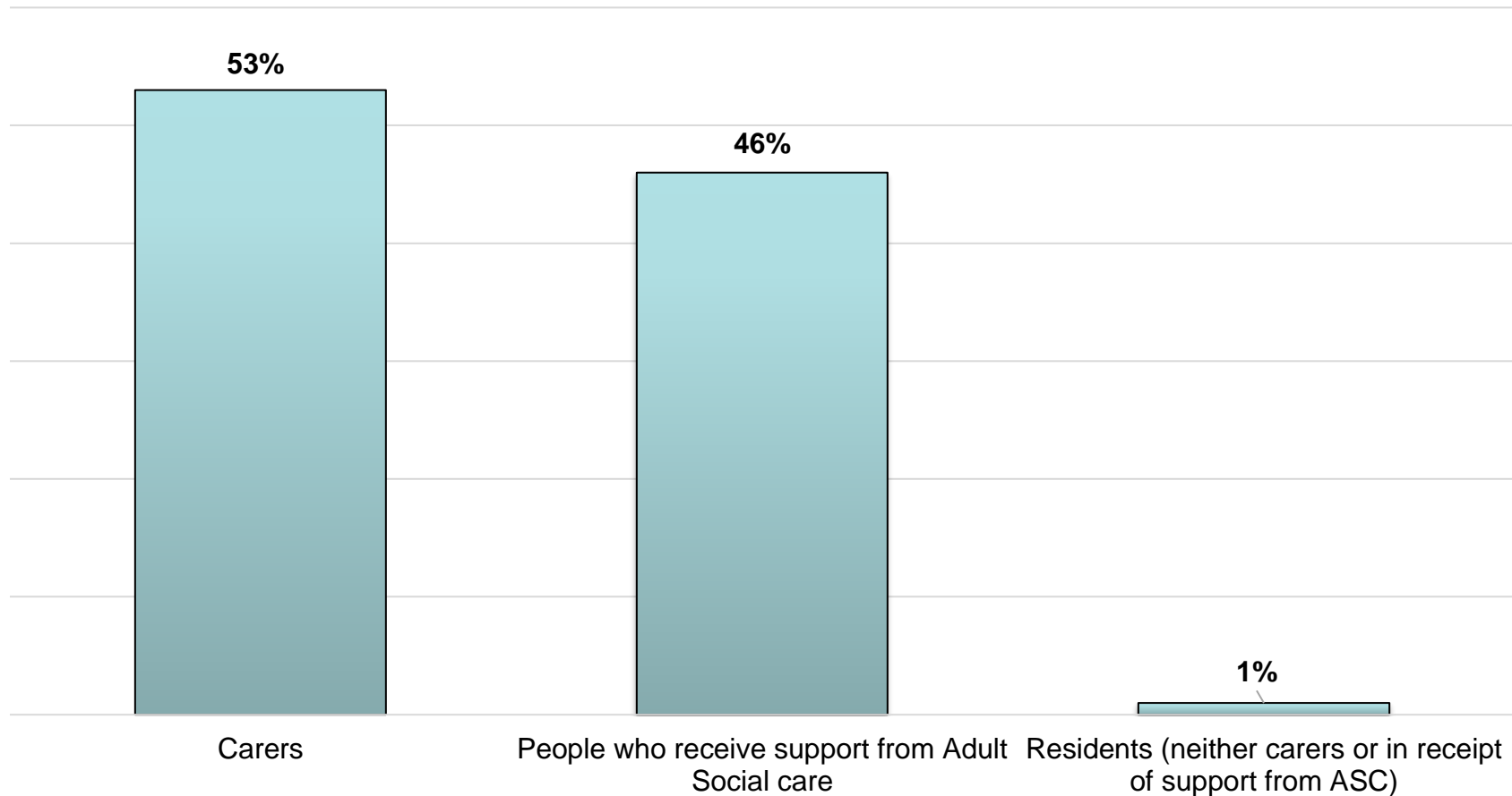
Responded **'a great deal'** or **'to some extent'** when asked whether the draft Policy clearly lays out the Council's approach to travel assistance for Adult Social Care service users either

76%

Agree that we should implement this Travel Assistance Policy

Who responded to the consultation

More than half of respondents were carers, followed by people who receive support from Adult Social Care. Of the total number of responses, one was from a representative of an organisation.



Responses from people who receive support from Adult Social Care

11 people
with
sensory
impairments

51 people
with mental
health
problems

14 people
with
learning
disabilities*

17 people
with brain
injuries

6 Autistic
people

100 people
with
physical
disabilities

*In addition, 45 adults with learning disabilities responded to the easy read questionnaire

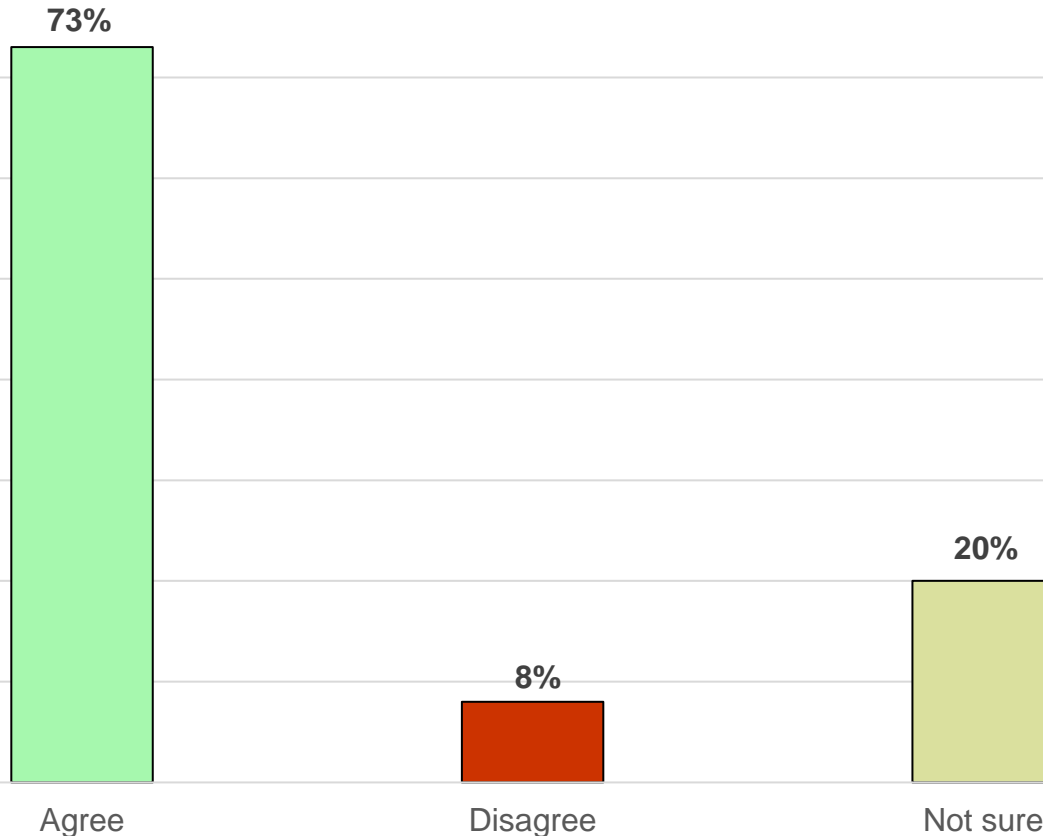
Q4: Are you responding as?

Base: 228 respondents (who answered 'a person who receives support from Adult Social Care' in Q2).

*Number rather than percentage used (respondents could choose multiple options)

Involving Travel Brokers

Most respondents agree that a travel broker should be involved in the process as is proposed within the policy.



53% easy read questionnaire respondents agreed (24 out of 45)

Q7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that a Travel Broker should support a service user, their carer/representative and professionals involved to identify the most appropriate and cost-effective travel assistance option?

Base: 401 respondents & data has been rounded so some aggregates/totals may be +/-1% than 100%

Why respondents disagree with a travel broker being involved (key themes)

- **Uncertainty about Travel Brokers:** Concerns and confusion about the role of travel brokers, questioning their necessity and potential impact on the assessment process. Some see them as an unnecessary addition to an already complex system
- **Cost and accessibility:** Discussions around the identification of carers as a cost-effective solution, with a preference for making services universally available without assessments. Some suggest simplifying the process through forms, redirecting resources to benefit disabled individuals directly
- **Communication challenges:** Critiques of poor communication within adult care, emphasising the need for improvement before introducing additional complexities. Concerns about difficulties in contacting different departments and the lack of coordination
- **Lack of understanding of individual needs:** The importance of recognizing diverse needs, with a belief that service users and carers are better equipped to understand and define their requirements. Some express scepticism about assessors and travel brokers understanding individual needs
- **Concerns about the brokerage process:** Criticism of the proposed separate brokerage process for transport, questioning its efficiency, potential delays, and the additional burden on families and professionals. Doubts about the need for a distinct process for transport needs
- **Distrust in Brokers' intentions:** Scepticism about the motivations of travel brokers, perceiving them as business-oriented rather than prioritising the well-being of service users

Travel Assistance Principles

All respondents were asked, 'How **important** do you think it is to ensure our approach is consistent with the following principles?' with the majority responding that the four principles *are* important.

96%

Responded that it is **important** we **promote the wellbeing of the service user and their carer(s)**

Base: 395 respondents

90%

Responded that it is **important** we **promote a healthy and sustainable approach to travel Assistance**

Base: 390 respondents

85%

Responded that it is **important** we **promote the most independent approach to travel assistance**

Base: 390 respondents

77%

Responded that it is **important** we **utilise the most cost-effective travel options (including the use of public transport)**

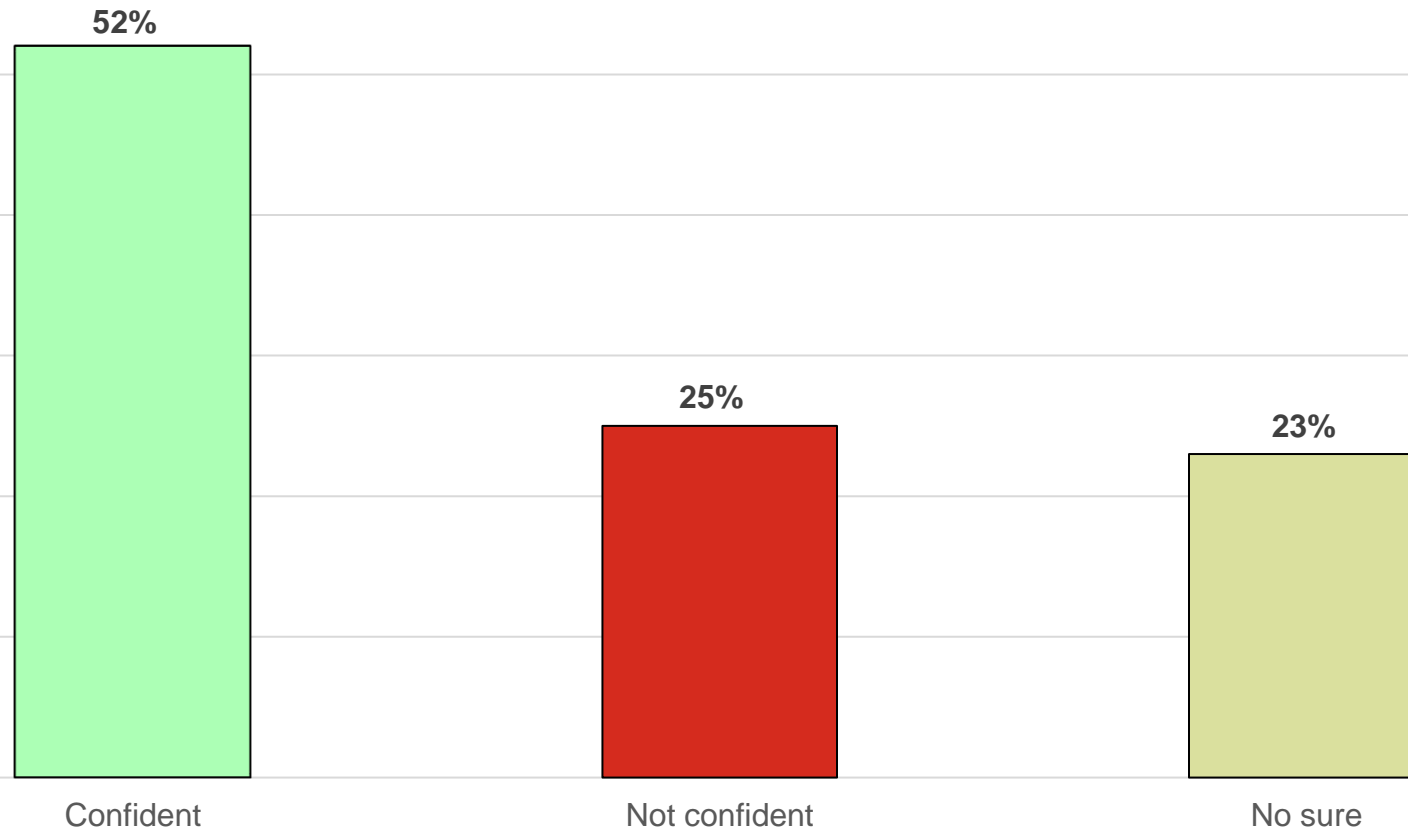
Base: 389 respondents



Q8: How important do you think it is to ensure our approach is consistent with the following principles?

Carer confidence in the Council's approach

The majority of carers who responded are confident the approach *would* support their friend or family member to be more independent.



Q9: How confident are you that the Council's approach, as detailed in the Policy, will support your friend or family member to be more independent

Base: 211 respondents (carers) & data has been rounded so some aggregates/totals may be +/-1% than 100%

When respondents were asked to explain why they feel confident or not the Policy will support independence, the responses reflected a diverse range of perspectives, showcasing the multifaceted nature of challenges faced by those requiring travel assistance and their carers. The key themes were as follows:

- **Accessibility challenges and need for tailored support:** Difficulties faced by individuals with severe disabilities / emphasising the importance of tailored and accessible support, considering individual circumstances and needs
- **Confidence in Council's approach:** Varying levels of confidence expressed in the Council's ability to provide adequate support and address individual needs
- **Independence and well-being:** Emphasis on the positive impact of suitable travel assistance on the well-being and independence of service users and carers
- **Concerns about complexity:** Concerns about the complexity of the proposed system, potential care charges, and the burden on carers in arranging transport
- **Communication and information:** Stressing importance of good communication and information dissemination during assessments to ensure informed decisions
- **Inequality in support:** Concerns about the potential unequal distribution of support, especially in cases where certain services or activities are not included in assistance programs
- **Role of carers:** References to the role of carers and the potential burden placed on them, advocating for options that don't impose additional responsibilities without choice
- **Distrust and critique:** Distrust in the Council's approach in some cases, citing past experiences or concerns about delays and prioritisation of financial considerations over individual needs



Base: 88 respondents (carers) who answered this question (open-ended question)

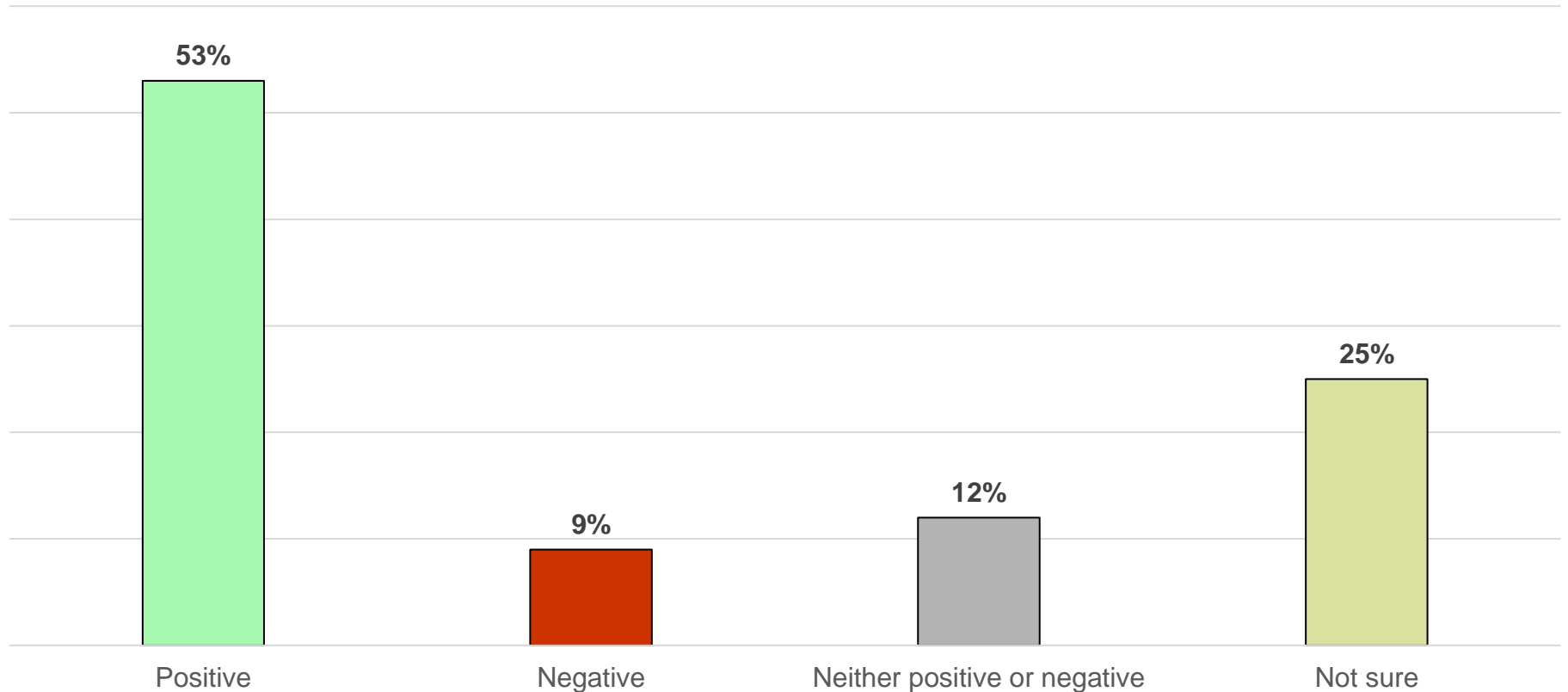
The 50 respondents who stated that they do not feel confident or are not sure the policy will support independence (Q9) provided reasons for their responses. The key themes being:

- **Accessibility challenges for specific needs** - Highlighting the needs of those with greater needs / emphasising the need for one-to-one assistants and specific, tailored support for those unable to use public transport
- **Concerns about independence and support** - Concerns about the difficulty of achieving independence / scepticism about the feasibility of supporting disabled individuals to travel independently / doubts about the availability of trained staff for such support
- **Issues with Council communication and support** - Criticisms of the lack of effective communication and support from the Council, citing instances where travel assistance was not brought up during annual reviews / concerns about the Council's responsiveness and its focus on politics and statistics rather than hands-on assistance
- **Complexity and confusion in policy implementation** - Concerns about the complexity of proposed changes, including the role of travel brokers, unclear procedures, and doubts about the efficiency of the separate brokerage process for transport needs
- **Financial implications and trust issues** - Concerns about the prioritisation of costs over individual needs / concerns about funding allocation / distrust in the Council's approach / some suggest a lack of clarity on who bears the cost and emphasise the need for trust in the assessment process



Impact of approach (Carers)

Most respondents think the approach will have a positive impact on their ability to carry out a caring role.



Q10: How much of a positive or negative impact do you think our approach, as detailed in the Policy, could potentially have on your ability to carry out your caring role effectively?

Base: 210 respondents (carers) & data has been rounded so some aggregates/totals may be +/-1% than 100%

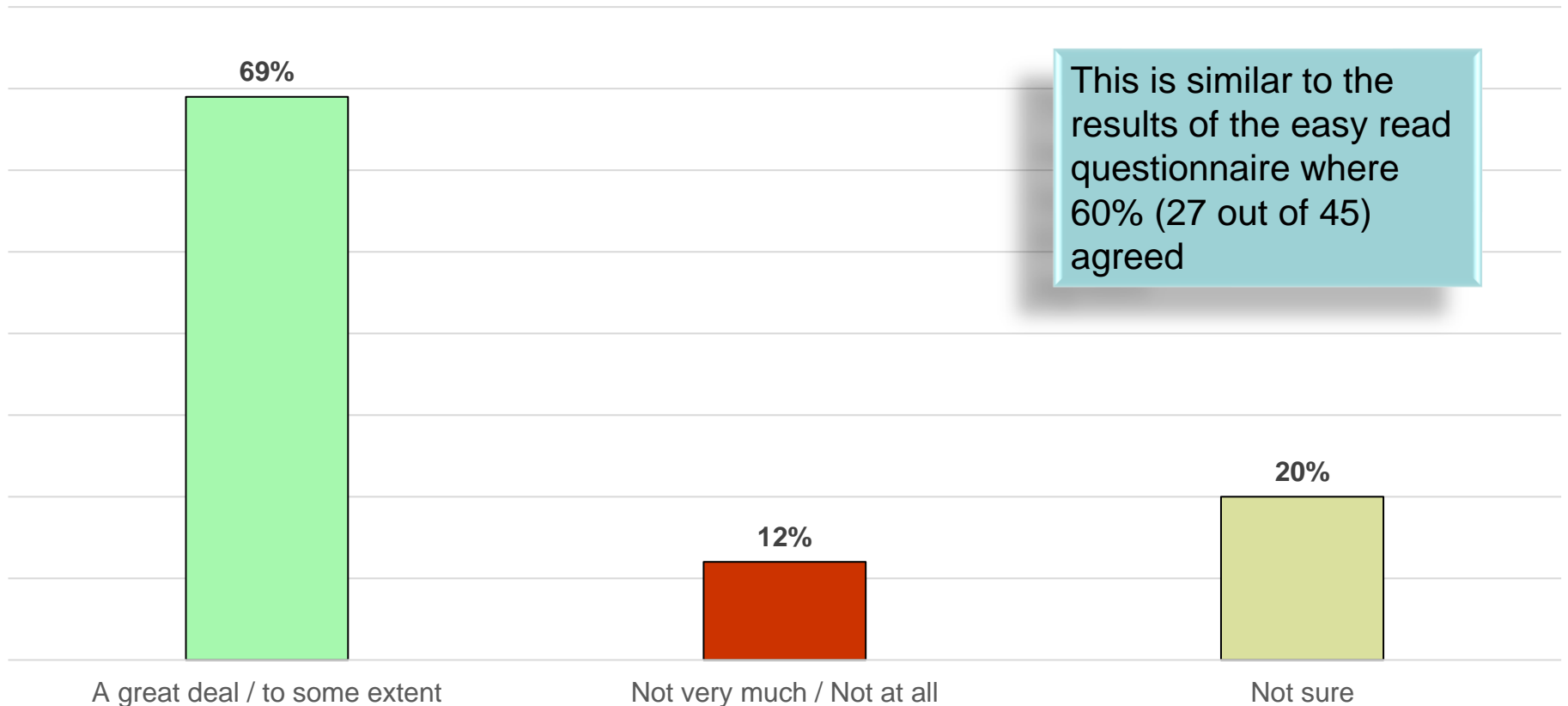
Emerging Themes

There were a number of questions in which a significant proportion of respondents stated that they are 'not sure'. Between around a fifth and a quarter of participants provided this response to questions such as those relating to the role of travel brokers, confidence in the proposed approach supporting independence and if the Policy will have a positive or negative impact on carers being able to carry out their role effectively. We looked at the responses these individuals gave when asked the reasons for their responses to these questions. There were some emerging themes:

- **Lack of information and communication** - Concerns about inadequate information dissemination and communication between assessors, carers, and service users / desire for proper and comprehensive information on available options
- **Accessibility and Independence** - Challenges related to the physical disabilities of the person being cared for, limiting travel options / worries about the lack of consideration for family members' independence versus vulnerabilities
- **Service speed and efficiency** - Frustration with the slow and complicated processes within the Council / calls for a quick and easy referral service / concerns about the complexity of managing direct payments and travel arrangements
- **Financial concerns** - Worries about budget constraints affecting the provision of travel assistance / expectation that financial or practical help should be offered, especially for carers
- **Role and understanding of Travel Brokers** - Confusion and lack of understanding about the role of travel brokers and their impact on individuals / concerns about the potential imposition of travel broker decisions without a person-centered approach

A clear approach to travel assistance

All respondents were asked this question, and the majority agree that the policy sets out a clear approach to travel assistance.

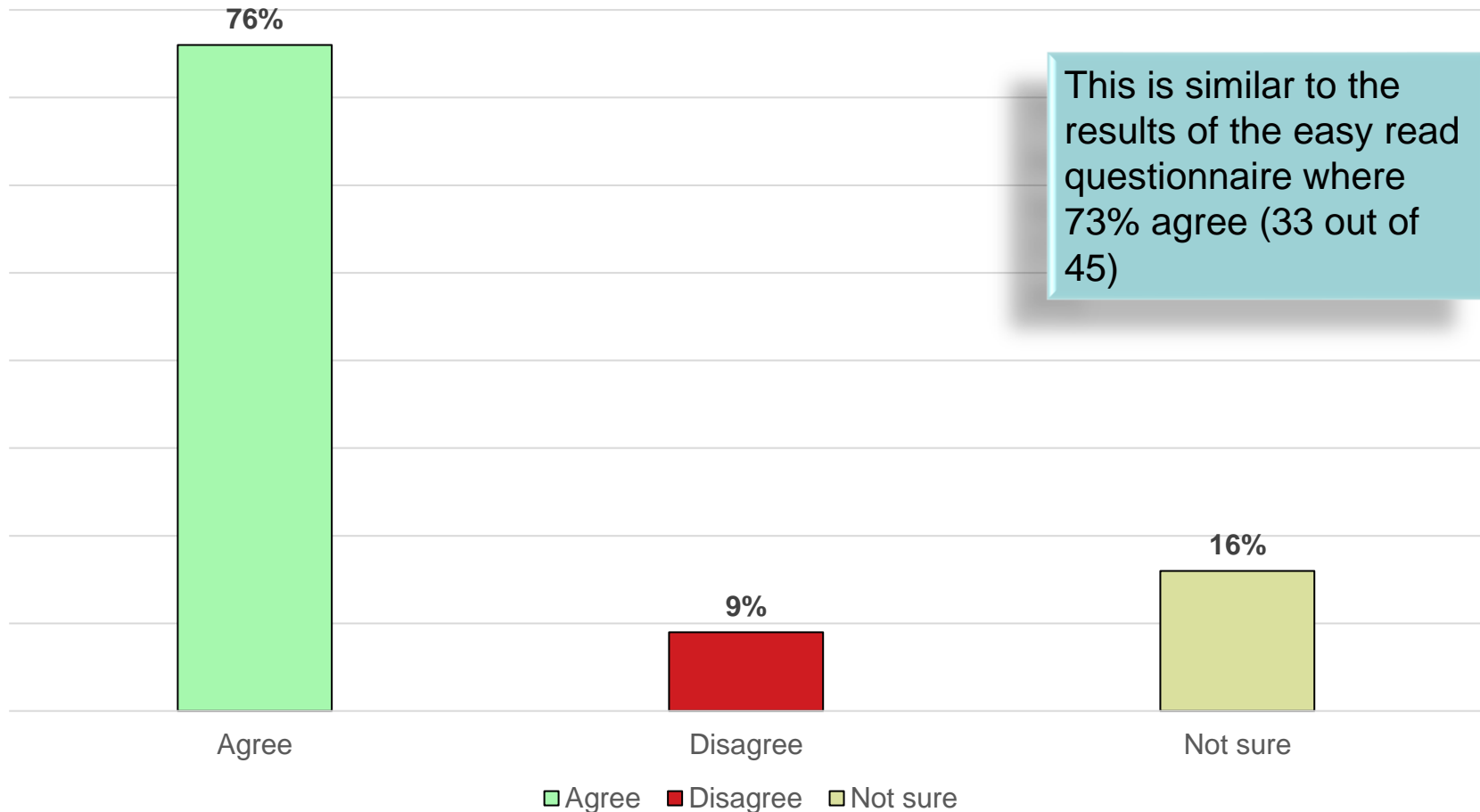


Q11: To what extent do you think the draft Policy clearly lays out the Council's approach to travel assistance for Adult Social Care service users?

Base: 402 respondents & data has been rounded so some aggregates/totals may be +/-1% than 100%

Policy implementation

All respondents were asked this question, and the majority agree that the Council should implement the policy.



Q12: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree we should implement this Travel Assistance Policy?

Base: 402 respondents & data has been rounded so some aggregates/totals may be +/-1% than 100%