



# FLEXIBUS

# SCRUTINY REPORT

## EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

# March 2024





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# SUMMARY

# 1 SUMMARY

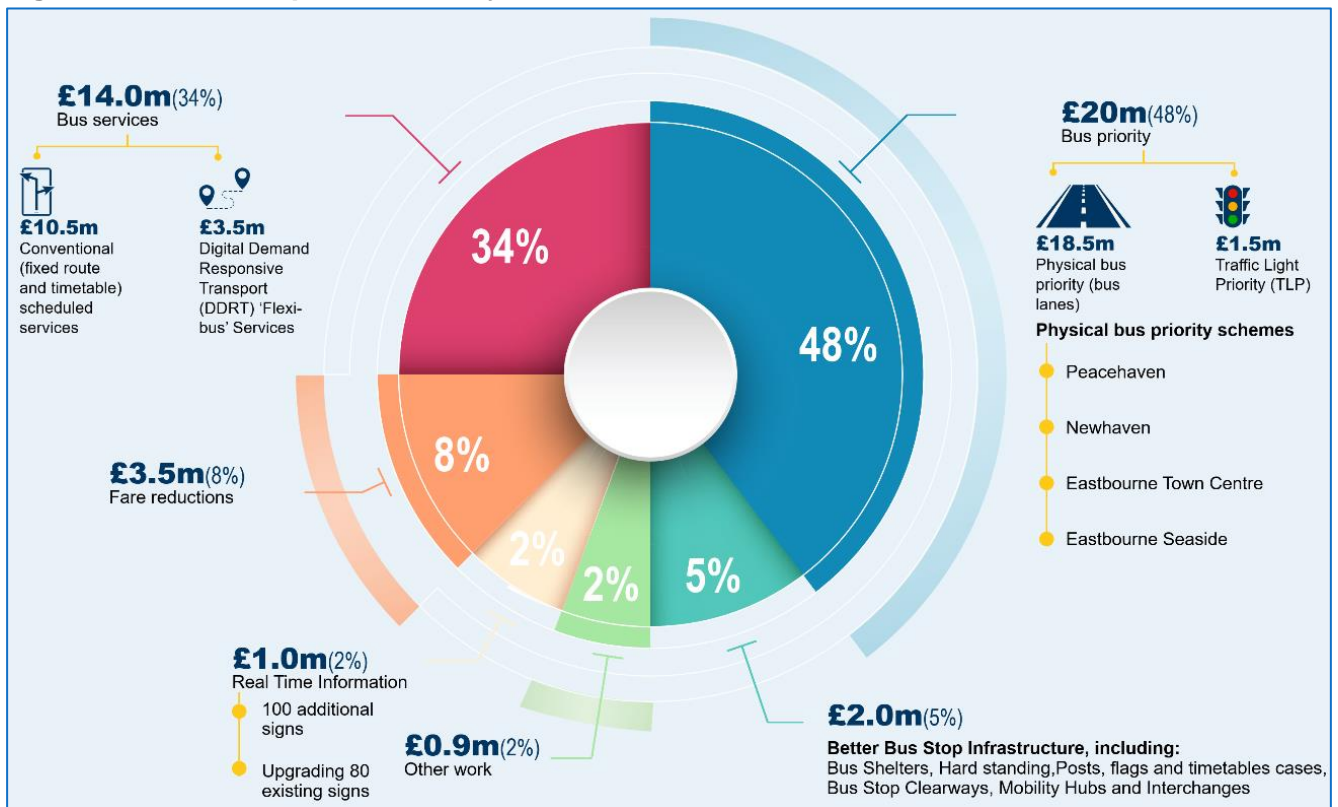
## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

East Sussex County Council received a grant from the DfT to implement the [East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) (BSIP) of £41.4m. £2.5m of this was allocated to delivering Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) services in East Sussex. The funding initially covered 2 years (fiscal years 23/24 and 24/25) and was extended in August 24 to cover operation in 25/26.

## 1.2 BSIP1 SPEND OVERVIEW

**Figure 1-1** provides an overview of how the £41.4m BSIP1 funding is being spent. It should be noted that the bus service improvements (both conventional and flexible) continue to be funded through the BSIP1 funds to 31 March 2026.

**Figure 1-1 - BSIP 1 Spend Summary**



Following this significant investment in improving bus services and the supporting infrastructure alongside fare reductions we have seen passenger numbers grow from their low point during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019. On some routes and for some passenger groups, passenger numbers are now higher than they were before the pandemic.

The National Bus Strategy, [Bus Back Better](#), makes it clear that DDRT is likely to be an important component of bus service provision in rural areas and it is also considered that it is likely to play an even more crucial role in the future as technology that support DDRT service provision develops. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) launched the DDRT (branded Flexibus) services on 9 May 2023.



### 1.3 SERVICE PROVISION

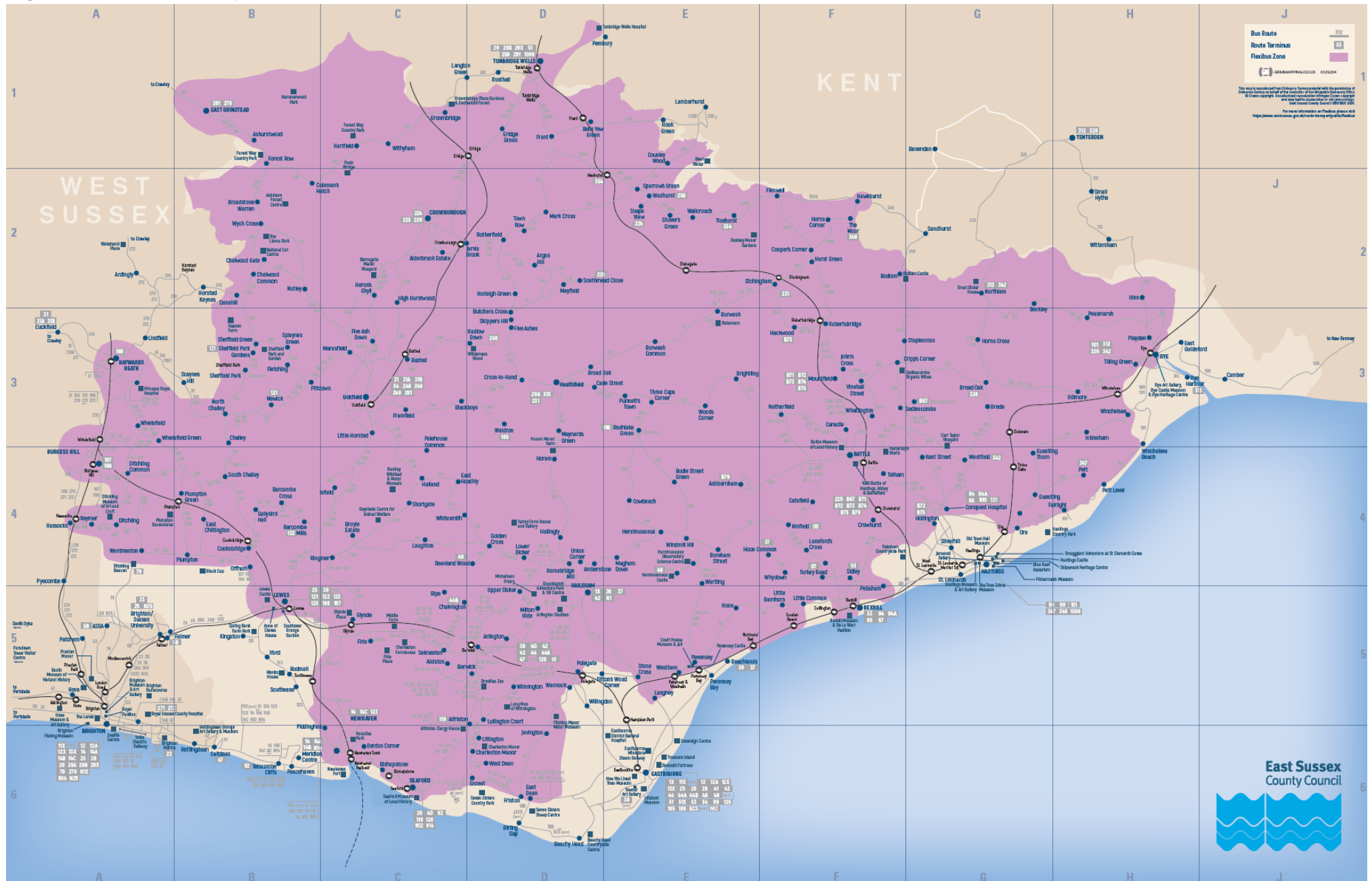
Flexibus **covers over 90% of East Sussex**. Flexibus also provides coverage on areas outside of East Sussex including Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells providing connection to services in these towns and with rail services (including the Brighton mainline services).

Most hospitals in East Sussex (Eastbourne District General is not currently served) are served by Flexibus services and two outside of East Sussex are also covered (Haywards Heath and Tunbridge Wells).

The Flexibus service provides connections to the wider public transport network including links to most of the rail stations in East Sussex (excluding stations in Eastbourne and Hastings) as well as stations in Hassocks, Burgess Hill, Wivesfield, Haywards Heath and Tunbridge Wells.

See Figure 1-2 for the map of service coverage. The Flexibus service map is available online as a pdf: [Flexibus Map](#) or as an interactive (pan and zoom) at the following web address [www.cartogold.co.uk/EastSussex/map.html?Flexibus](http://www.cartogold.co.uk/EastSussex/map.html?Flexibus)

Figure 1-2 - Flexibus Map



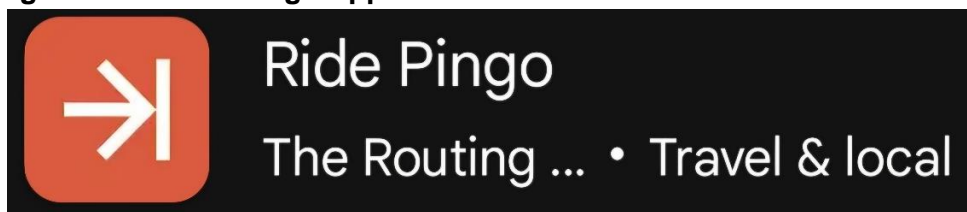
### 1.3.1 OPERATING HOURS

Flexibus services operate 7am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday (excl Bank Holidays).

### 1.3.2 BOOKING

Flexibus services can be booked through an app for Android or iOS users (Ride Pingo) or through a call centre on 01273 078 203 which is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Figure 1-3 – Ride Pingo App



## 1.4 SUPPLIERS

The Flexibus services are delivered through multiple suppliers as detailed below.

- **Digital Platform:** The Routing Company
  - Customer app - Ride Pingo
  - Driver app - Drive Pingo
  - Management system - Online
- **Drivers:** supplied through two operators
  - Community Transport Lewes Areas (CTLA),
  - East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership (ESRTP)
- **Vehicles:** London Hire (leased)
  - 8 core vehicles (Mercedes Sprinters) with 3 backup vehicles
- **Call Centre:** WeMOVE
- **Operational Support / Management of the Service:** WeMOVE



# IMPROVEMENTS

## 2 KEY IMPROVEMENTS

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### 2.1 CUSTOMER APP DEVELOPMENT

We have worked with the digital platform provider to make improvements to all that they supply with a focus on regular and substantial improvements to the customer app, particularly the user interface.

### 2.2 AGGREGATION AND OPTIMISATION

We are working closely with the digital platform provider to improve their algorithms to facilitate and deliver improved aggregation (more passengers per trip) and improve vehicle utilisation (reducing vehicle downtime and mileage).

### 2.3 VEHICLES OPERATING OVER MULTIPLE ZONES

When we launched the service in May the digital platform required at least one vehicle to operate in each zone and that the vehicle was constrained to that one zone e.g. it could not operate in other zones even if there was little or no demand in the zone they were set to operate in).

In late October, The Routing Company launched functionality that would allow vehicles to operate in any or over all zones. This has had a significant impact on the Flexibus service provision with the ability to utilise vehicles more effectively.

### 2.4 SUPPLY MEETING DEMAND

The ability of vehicles to operate over multiple zones has allowed us to reduce the vehicle supply (by around 25%) while still maintaining effective and adequate service provision in all zones while continuing to see steady growth in passenger numbers. It has resulted in significantly higher rates of vehicle use than prior to the implementation of this functionality and significantly reduced the cost per passenger trip.

### 2.5 ZONE MERGING

In early December 2023, we implemented zone merging. 6 zones were merged into 3 zones (3 sets of 2 zone mergers) which has resulted in more attractive trip destinations for people living in these zones.

This has had a significant impact on the utilisation of vehicles with vehicles now being able to fulfil demand anywhere within the service area provision.

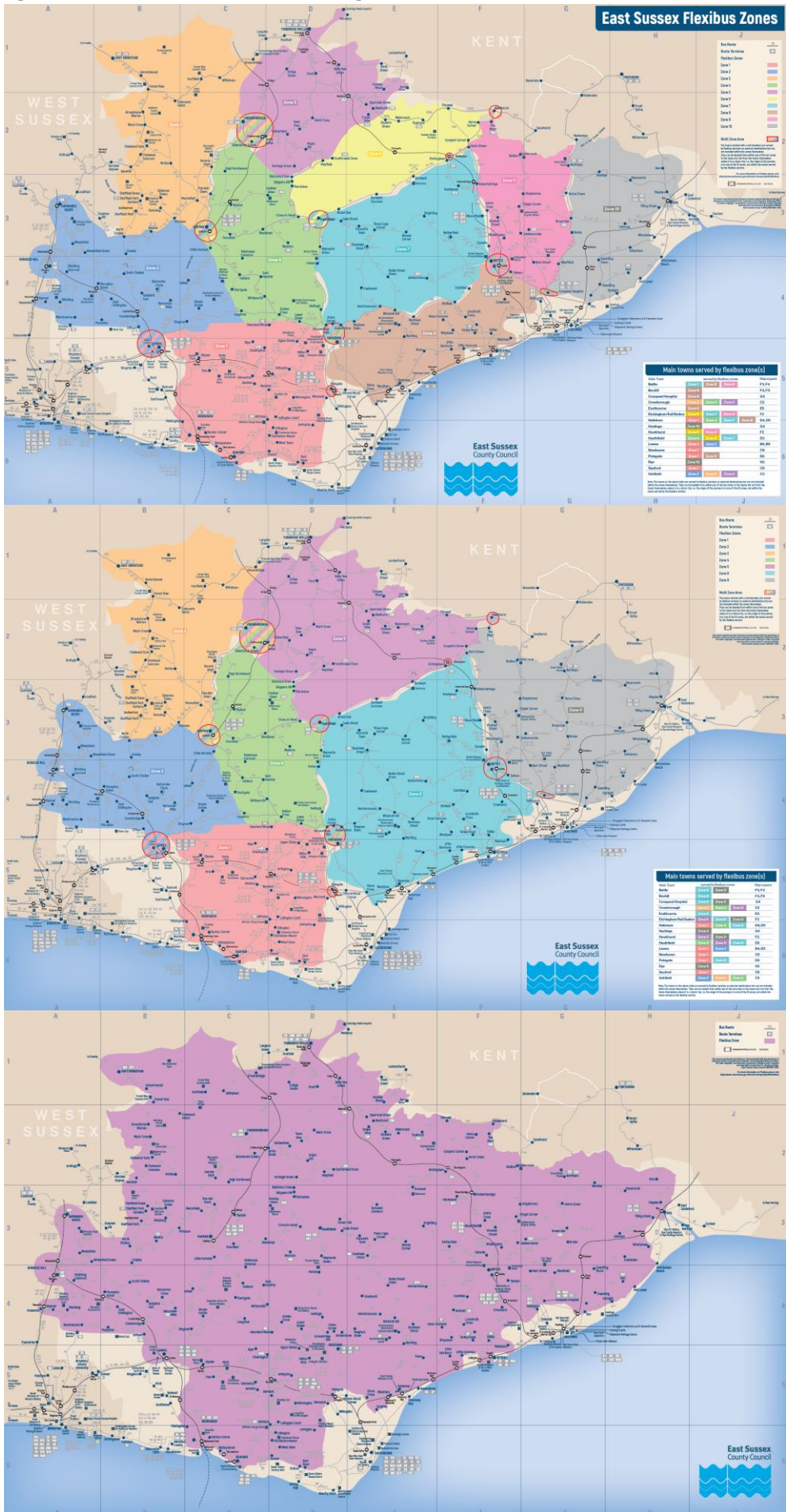
### 2.6 SINGLE ZONE OPERATION

After initial zone mergers that took the number of zones from 10 to 7, we followed this up by merging all the remaining 6 zones into 1 zone in early August 2024. Trip lengths were managed by placing a maximum distance (crow flies) of 14 miles. We developed a trip checker tool (<https://Flexibus.sussex.podaris.com/>) to allow customers to see where they could travel to from certain locations within the zone by placing a point on the map or by providing an address. **Figure 2-1** illustrates how the Flexibus zones have change from its' inception in May 23 with the original 10 zones to a single zone operation in August 2024 (currently operational).

This was very well received by customers, particularly those who were living close to the border of a zone and were frustrated that they couldn't travel across that arbitrary border.



**Figure 2-1 – Flexibus Zone Changes**





# MONITORING & EVALUATION

## 3 MONITORING & EVALUATION

### 3.1 RURAL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS WITH DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT

Significant improvements to accessibility for rural areas have been brought about through the Flexibus DDRT service provision. The service brings 95% of rural residents within 30 minutes travel time of key destinations (main towns), 12 hours a day, 6 days a week.

### 3.2 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: OUR BUS NETWORK

East Sussex's bus network combines traditional fixed route scheduled services with demand responsive services, between them reaching across the whole county.

**Figure 3-1** is a map of the network showing scheduled services, which include dense urban bus networks, town networks and longer-distance inter-urban services connecting the major towns with the smaller towns and villages. East Sussex includes large rural areas where our innovative digital demand responsive service, Flexibus, provides flexible public transport for residents and visitors.

**Figure 3-1 - Bus Network Map**



Our ongoing monitoring and evaluation work is assessing the impact and benefits of the investment in Flexibus. This will allow us to calculate the cost per passenger trip of operating the service, and the return on that investment.

### 3.3 KEY OUTCOMES

#### 3.3.1 IMPROVED ACCESS TO SERVICES

One of the most important outcomes is the ability of residents living in rural areas to access services with 76% of residents within 30 minutes of the nearest town (this would be 9% without the Flexibus service) and 87% of residents of rural residents now within 30 minutes of the nearest GP surgery (this would be 44% without the Flexibus service).



Figure 3-2 – Improved Accessibility to Towns

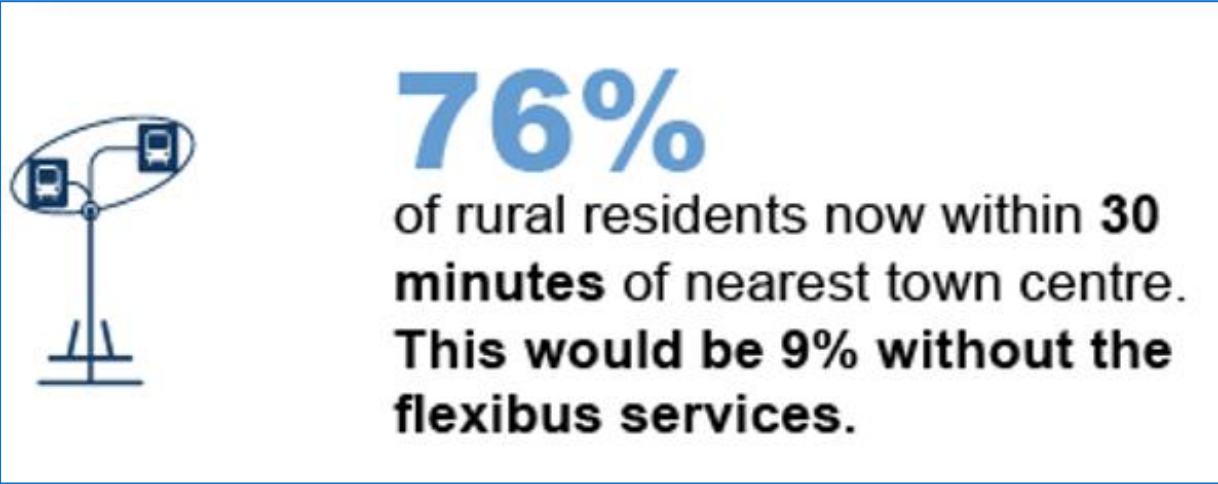
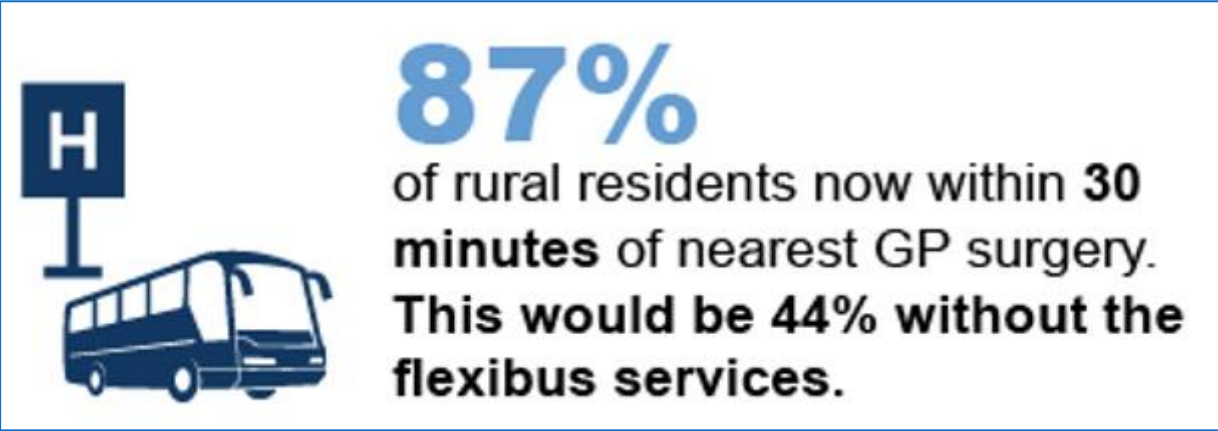


Figure 3-3 – Improved Accessibility to GP Surgeries



**3.3.2 VALUE FOR MONEY**

In-depth evaluation of the social and economic impacts bus services improvements was carried out to establish the value for money of investments in bus service improvements. Following the DfT’s [Transport Analysis Guidance](#) (TAG) it was found that the overall Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) was 3.87 for all of the BSIP bus services jointly (conventional and flexible) which is considered to be high value for money. The conventional bus service enhancements on their own had a BCR value of 4.33 (which is considered to be very high value for money) and the flexible bus service on their own had a BCR of 3.02 (high value for money). The BCR results are illustrated in **Figure 3-4** to **Figure 3-6**.

Figure 3-4 – Value for Money (VfM) of Flexibus Service

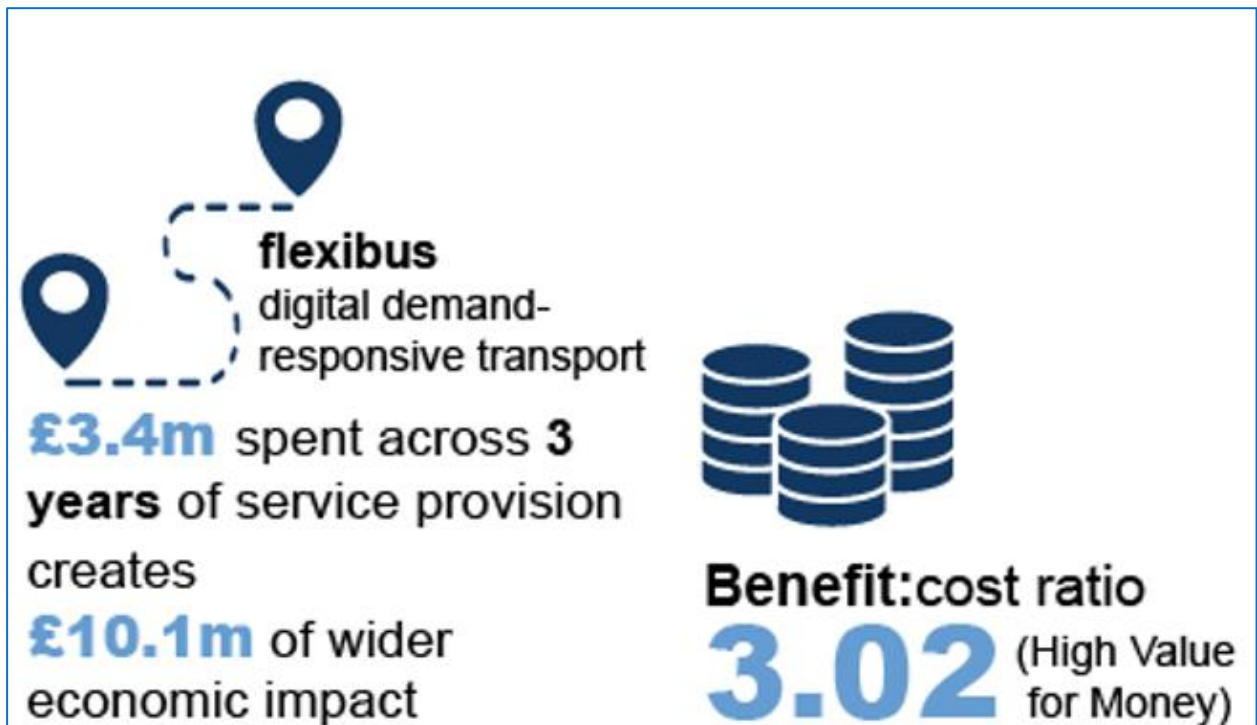
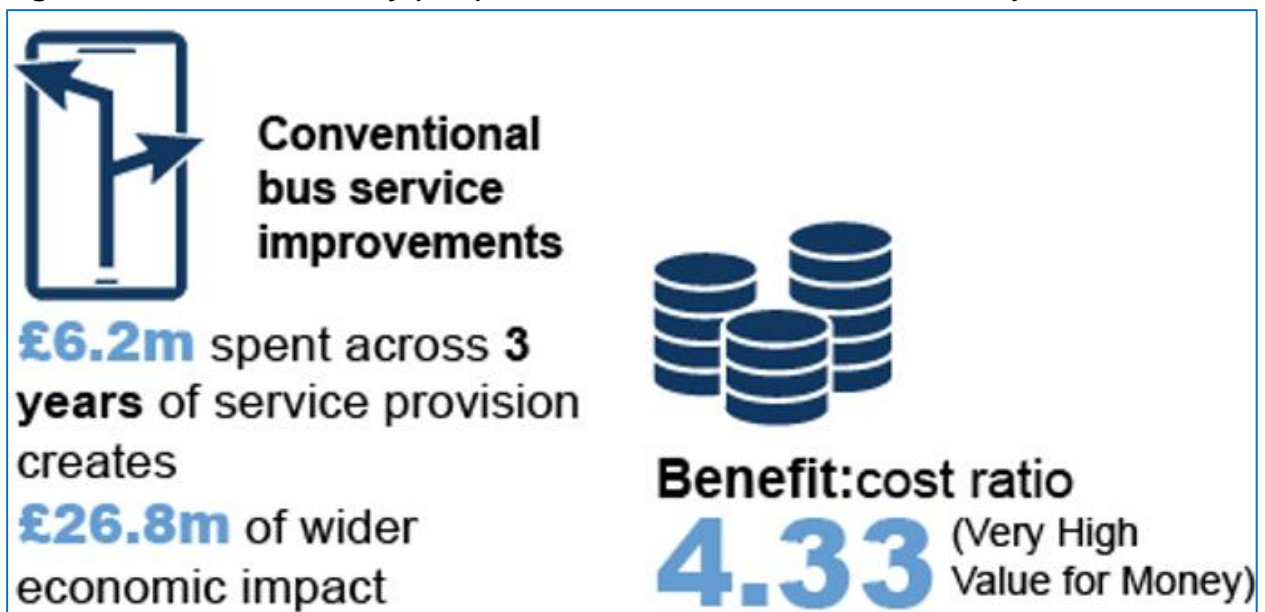
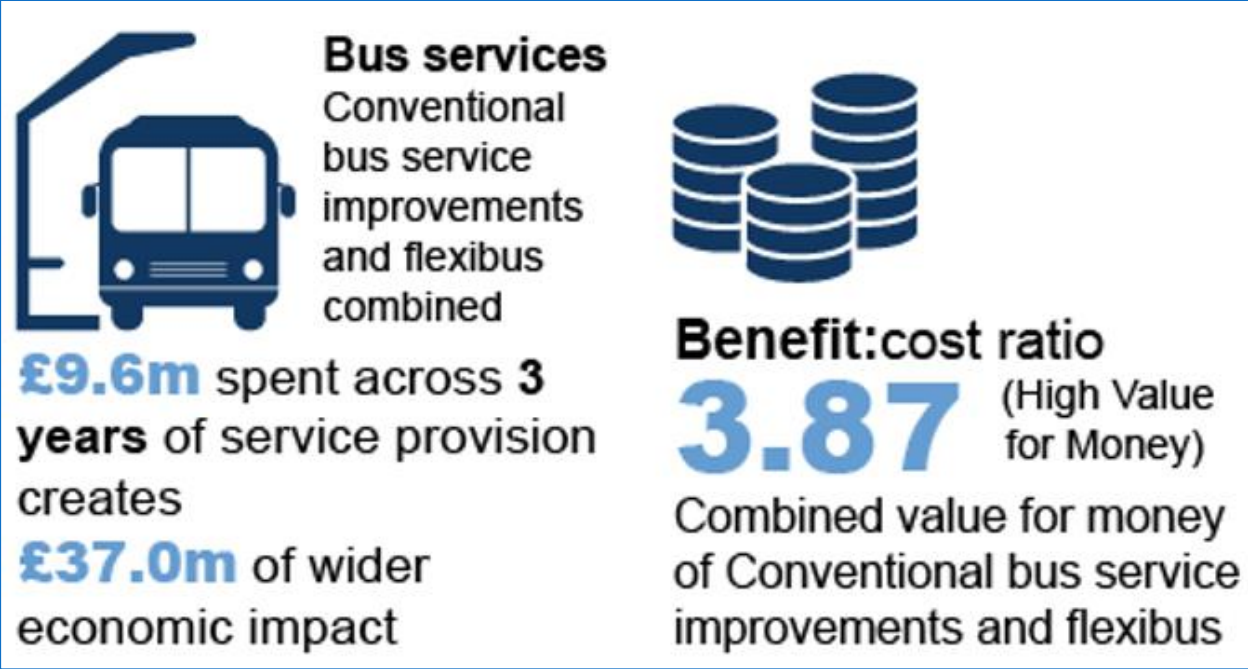


Figure 3-5 – Value for Money (VfM) of Conventional BSIP Bus Service Improvements



**Figure 3-6 – Value for Money (VfM) of Conventional and Flexible BSIP Bus Service Improvements**



**3.4 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: BUS, RAIL AND COACH INTEGRATION**

As well as being able to connect buses with each other for onward travel, there is also high importance that the bus network has integration with other modes of transport, especially rail stations.

**Figure 3-7** shows the area from where residents can reach a station within 30 minutes travel time by either scheduled bus or Flexibus. In comparison **Figure 3-8** illustrates how access to train stations would look without the DDRT services.

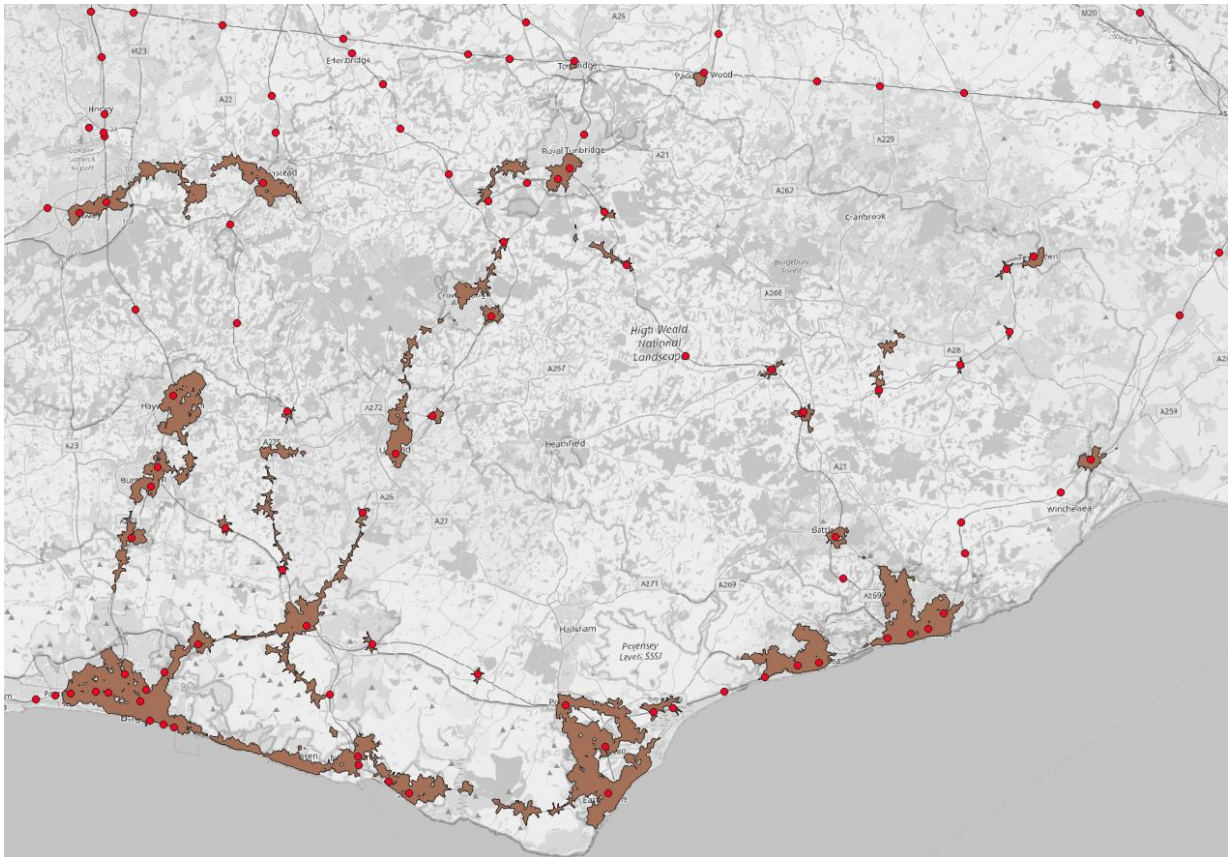
**Figure 3-7 – Conventional and flexible bus services rail integration - within a 30-minute bus journey of a train station**



Considering just scheduled services and **excluding Flexibus**, 69% of urban residents and **16% of rural residents** are within a 30-minute bus journey of a station, shown in Figure 3-8.

**Figure 3-8 - Conventional bus and rail integration - within a 30-minute bus journey of a train station**





### 3.5 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PLACES

Our Bus Connectivity Assessment, which sits below our BSIP2 document and informs our ongoing network development work, seeks to answer the question of what our bus service provision means for people getting to key destinations (work, education, healthcare, leisure opportunities), and what proportion of the population can reach key destinations by bus within 30 minutes.

We have assessed the journey opportunities which our bus network provides to residents and visitors, in terms of access to the following key destination types, providing access to:

- business
- healthcare
- work
- education
- retail
- leisure opportunities
- other modes of transport

We have assessed what proportion of East Sussex residents can travel to these destinations within 30 minutes by bus in the morning peak hour, or on a direct bus route at any time of the day. We have also compared average times to travel to these different destination types by bus.

We have completed this analysis looking only at fixed route services and looking at both fixed-route and Flexibus demand-responsive services. The introduction of Flexibus DDRT services, covering most rural areas of the county, has led to significant improvements in access for rural residents. Considering only fixed-route bus services, rural residents have noticeable poorer bus access to most destination types, reflecting the network, with many rural areas not served at all or only by infrequent buses, making a 30-minute trip difficult or impossible. With Flexibus, however,

rural access matches and in some cases exceeds the access available on fixed-route services in urban areas.

**Table 3-1 – Bus Connectivity Summary**

Access to		RURAL Population within 30 mins by bus (%) (fixed route only)	RURAL Population within 30 mins by bus (%) (fixed route and Flexibus DDRT)	URBAN Population within 30 mins by bus (%)
<b>Business</b>	Business Parks and Industrial Areas	43%	<b>88%</b>	89%
<b>Healthcare</b>	Dentists	27%	<b>84%</b>	83%
	Hospitals	3%	<b>64%</b>	33%
	Pharmacies	29%	<b>85%</b>	87%
	GPs	44%	<b>87%</b>	87%
<b>Work</b>	Town Centres and Cities	9%	<b>76%</b>	64%
	Offices	5%	<b>68%</b>	61%
	Banks	10%	<b>76%</b>	68%
<b>Education</b>	Primary Schools	47%	<b>87%</b>	89%
	Secondary Schools	12%	<b>67%</b>	49%
	Further Education	3%	<b>50%</b>	27%
	Universities	0%	<b>0%</b>	11%
<b>Retail</b>	Shopping	19%	<b>84%</b>	86%
<b>Leisure opportunities</b>	Restaurants	61%	<b>92%</b>	92%
	Cinemas	3%	<b>42%</b>	38%
	Play Spaces	56%	<b>92%</b>	93%
	Playing fields	54%	<b>90%</b>	88%
	Parks	22%	<b>83%</b>	83%
<b>Other modes of transport</b>	Ports and Ferries *	0%	<b>0%</b>	6%
	Airports **	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%
	Bus Stations	4%	<b>64%</b>	14%
	Interchanges	16%	<b>75%</b>	68%

\* Access to ports and ferries relates to the Newhaven port

\*\* Access to Gatwick Airport is not possible from East Sussex within 30 minutes by bus, nor by any direct bus route

## 3.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND MONITORING

There has been continual monitoring and evaluation of the service, both in terms of service provision and in financial performance. We have, wherever possible, taken steps to improve the service, reduce costs and increase revenue. **Table 3-2** illustrates the breakdown in costs of operating the service.

**Table 3-2: Overview of costs to operate the Flexibus service**

Costs	Year
Driver	62%
Vehicle	13%
Fuel	12%
Misc Costs	3%
<b>(Sub Total) Vehicle Operation Costs</b>	<b>90%</b>
Digital Platform	4%
<b>Call Centre &amp; Service Management</b>	<b>6%</b>

The financial overview table is supported by a detailed Flexibus cost tracking spreadsheet where all elements of costs and revenue are regularly tracked and reviewed.





# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

## 4 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

The East Sussex Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) services have been promoted through a variety of channels, including:

- Social media
- Leaflet distribution
- Print advertising
- Posters
- Promotional videos
- Press releases and media coverage
- Community outreach: The council has likely engaged with community groups and organizations to raise awareness of the new services.

The significant effort and resources dedicated to promoting the East Sussex DDRT services demonstrate the council's commitment to improving public transportation options for residents and the commitment to make the service a success. Further details and information on some of the marketing and communication activities that have been undertaken to date can be found below.

### 4.2 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



- Over **4.5 million impressions** across 11 Flexibus social media ad campaigns since launch in May 2023
- **Most viewed campaign so far:** Flexibus £1 Christmas offer
  - 1.4 million impressions
  - Reached 10k passenger milestone during this campaign
- **Most new riders generated:** Free ride coupon campaign
  - Broke 500 weekly riders target during this campaign



## 4.3 LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION

50k leaflets distributed

 A leaflet page for Flexibus. On the left, there is a table of fares. In the center, there is a map of East Sussex showing Flexibus zones. On the right, there is a Flexibus van and promotional text.
 

FlexiBus fares			
(Usual time restrictions apply)			
Concessionary Pass Holders	Free		
Under 5s	Free		
	Single	Return	Day Pass
Adult <sup>1</sup>	£2	£4	£5
Child (5-18)	£2	£3	£3.20
			Day Pass
Young Person (19-29)			£3.75

<sup>1</sup> From 1 November 2023 the cost of the single and return adult fares will be:

	Single	Return
Adult	£2.50	£4.50

**How to pay**  
You can pay when booking, by debit or credit card, within the Ride Pingo app or over the phone.  
Payment can also be made on the bus by cash.

**FlexiBus zones**

Travel from and to any location within a zone. The service in each zone also serves a number of 'outpost' destinations that are just outside of the zone. Please refer to the website for this information.

Flexibus operates exclusively for places not served by a regular bus service. Zones may change slightly over time. Please refer to the website for up to date information on the zones.

Call 01273 078203 or download the app and start planning your journey.

Scan the QR code for detailed zone maps or visit [eastsussex.gov.uk/flexibus/zones](http://eastsussex.gov.uk/flexibus/zones)

 A leaflet page for Flexibus. On the left, there is a smartphone showing the Flexibus app. On the right, there are instructions on how to book a ride with the app or by phone, along with quick facts and more information.
 

**What is FlexiBus?**

FlexiBus is a flexible and low cost on-demand public transport service for places in East Sussex without a regular bus service.

Use FlexiBus to travel to your nearest town, train station, hospital or another key destination.

Simply download the app or call to find out what's possible and book your ride.

**Book your ride with the app**

- Download the app from [ridepingo.com](http://ridepingo.com). Booking on the app allows you to track your ride.
- Create your account. Set up your account by entering your mobile number, email address and name.
- Book your ride. Type in your pick up location and destination.

**Book your ride by phone**

**Phone FlexiBus on 01273 078203**

- 8.30am to 7.30pm.
- Monday to Saturday (excluding bank holidays).
- Bookings can be made up to a week in advance.

**Quick facts**

- Flexibus operates exclusively for places not served by a regular bus service. You can't book a Flexibus journey to travel along an existing public transport route.
- Travel to or from a location within a zone, or to and from defined locations (such as train stations, hospitals and town centres) outside of the zone.
- Flexibus services are generally not suitable for regular trips such as school trips or commuting to work.
- Flexibus is a rideshare service so other passengers are likely to be picked up or dropped off during your journey.
- All Flexibuses are accessible with a rear lift and dedicated wheelchair spaces on board.
- Flexibus is a registered bus service and all drivers have an enhanced DBS check.

**More information**

Still not sure where you can go or have a question or query about the service?

- For more details or to get this information in a different format or language call 01273 078203 or email us at [Flexibus@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Flexibus@eastsussex.gov.uk)
- Visit the website: [eastsussex.gov.uk/ESCC/FlexiBus](http://eastsussex.gov.uk/ESCC/FlexiBus)

to homes, libraries and community spaces in Flexibus zones

## 4.4 PRINT ADVERTISING

- Print ads throughout the year in **twelve local publications**
- Location specific ads in magazines for **Conquest Hospital** and **Princess Royal Hospital**, listing what zones serve them
- Ad and 500-word editorial the East Sussex WI Handbook, (right) combined with a concessionary bus pass ad to indicate it can be used on Flexibus.

## 4.5 POSTERS

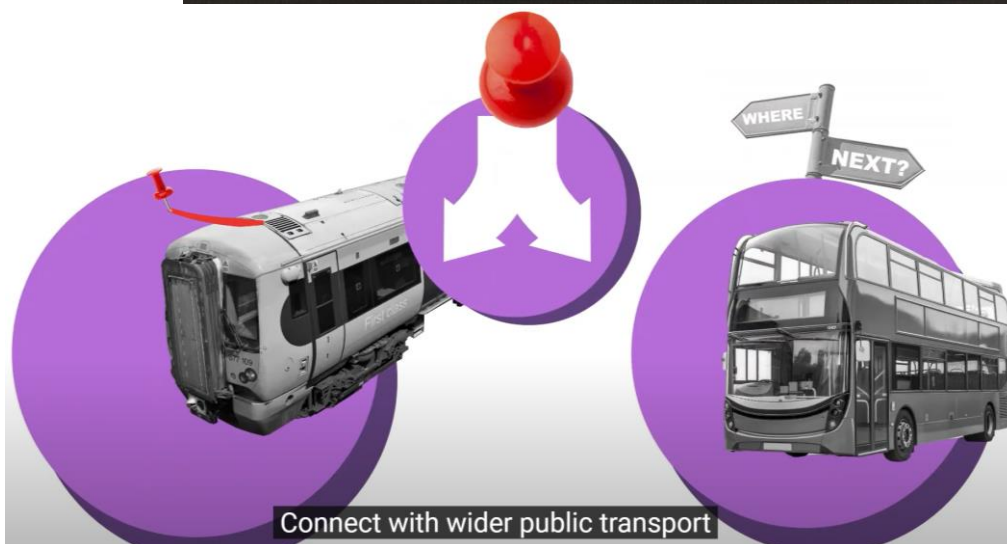
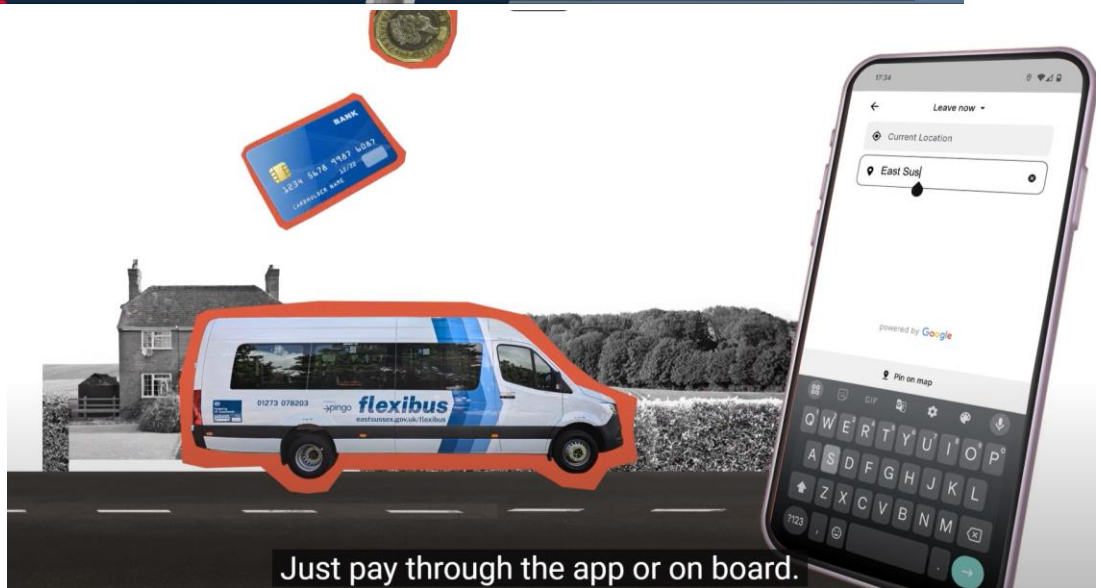
Posters distributed to libraries and community spaces in Flexibus zones.





## 4.6 ANIMATION

An [animation](#) has been created to provide a simple and easily understood overview of the Flexibus service, from service provision through to booking. This animation will be pushed out and promoted on social media channels including Facebook and Snapchat. The animation has also been developed into bite sized chunks to allow it to be used over numerous channels. The animation can be viewed at this link: <https://youtu.be/XUj1L4fLXWE>



## 4.7 PHOTOGRAPHY



The brief for this photoshoot was to create a bank of images that show Flexibus in a dynamic and straightforward way, and could be used in a variety of designs, starting with the launch campaign - as well as future promotions and advertising.





## 4.8 FLEXIBUS PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS

Two videos have been produced and used in the promotion of Flexibus during the first year.

The first focussed on endorsement from the Lead Member for Transport, Councillor Claire Dowling, speaking about what Flexibus is and where it could take you. The second was a more customer-based video showing people booking and using the service.



Both have been used in social media ad campaigns and have had a combined total of over **178k ThruPlays** (plays of at least 15 seconds)

**Councillor Dowling video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpUKyiBwJaA>

**Flexibus promotional video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDWUpnXMLXU>

## 4.9 PRAISE FROM SOCIAL MEDIA



The screenshot shows a sponsored Facebook post from East Sussex County Council. The post text reads: "There's a new way to get around East Sussex on your terms! FlexiBus provides a flexible, on-demand transport service for the price of a standard bus. Download the Ride Pingo app now or call 01273 078203 to book a ride that fits your schedule." Below the text is a hashtag #MoreBusLessFuss and a photo of a white FlexiBus van with blue accents. At the bottom of the post, there is a link to eastsussex.gov.uk, the text "No bus route? No problem! Book a FlexiBus now", and a "Learn more" button. The Facebook interface shows "Like", "Comment", and "Share" options.

Used several times in Zone 5.

**It is a life-changer!!**

We used this service on Wednesday.  
Fantastic service.

**Well done to all involved!**

This service is brilliant picked up and dropped off at our address, £2 any trip highly recommend, used it to get to Lewes when the train was cancelled on Tuesday. **Highly**

**Recommend** 🗳️

My young adults booked and used it today, absolutely brilliant we have not had a bus along our road in years. Saved me having to get the car out for them. 👍👍

Did section of the 1066 walk from Pevensey to Herstmonceux today and used the new @EastSussexCC #Flexibus service. **Brill!**

Pick you up where and when you want, drop you where you want.

Can book return 30 minutes before.

Cheerful drivers, new buses. **Public transport reinvented!** 👍



## 4.10 PRAISE FROM THE RIDER SURVEY

In April 2024 we requested feedback on the service via a survey sent to users who have registered on the RidePingo app.

It has been a life saver for me as I suddenly found I am unable to drive for health reasons. Apart from using service to get to shops I use it to get to and from my grandchildren 3 times a week.  
All the drivers are so friendly and helpful it has been a wonderful service, thank you.

I think this is a fantastic service, which is allowing me to make journeys I wouldn't otherwise be able

I was a visitor to Lewes and had come to visit Charleston in Firle and the church nearby also connected to the Charleston artists. I have chronic fatigue and the Flexibus made the whole trip possible. I

Your service is a wonderful blessing for the elderly, infirm & isolated people. Hitherto, I was unable to travel any distance unaccompanied due to my poor sight. Now I enjoy a freedom which I was unable to access for the past 25 years. I am deeply

I think it is an excellent idea and will make many of us less isolated, especially in the winter.

It's a fantastic service, and the drivers are extremely helpful and courteous.

I feel that is giving a crucial lifeline to many people, old, young and disadvantaged in rural areas that have either no or very limited access to public transport

Has changed my family's life as we live in the countryside with no nearby bus routes, and Flexibus allows my non-driving nan, who's late husband used to do the driving about, to visit us often!

## 4.11 ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

Using the positive feedback we have collected since the launch of the service; we have created a user-advocacy based campaign to celebrate the one-year anniversary.

**Public transport reinvented!**  
Flexibus is a total gamechanger!

**flexibus** Powered by **pingo** Funded by UK Government

MOBILE BUS LESS FARES

East Sussex Council

This advertisement features a woman in a red sweater looking at her smartphone. In the background, there is a building with a 'ze' logo. A Flexibus van is shown in a circular inset. The background is light green with a white circular graphic element.

**Flexibus is a lifeline**  
for those of us in rural communities

**flexibus** Powered by **pingo** Funded by UK Government

MOBILE BUS LESS FARES

East Sussex Council

This advertisement features a man in a red sweater looking at his smartphone. In the background, there is a rural landscape. A Flexibus van is shown in a circular inset. The background is light green with a white circular graphic element.

**I love that you can track**  
where Flexibus is when you book

**flexibus** Powered by **pingo** Funded by UK Government

MOBILE BUS LESS FARES

East Sussex Council

This advertisement features a man in a red shirt looking at his smartphone. In the background, there is a stone monument. A Flexibus van is shown in a circular inset. The background is light green with a white circular graphic element.

**Excellent service!**  
I recommend Flexibus to anyone!

**flexibus** Powered by **pingo** Funded by UK Government

MOBILE BUS LESS FARES

East Sussex Council

This advertisement features a woman in a red sweater talking on a red phone. In the background, there is a stone castle. A Flexibus van is shown in a circular inset. The background is light green with a white circular graphic element.

**Flexibus feels personal!**  
and also makes me feel safe

**flexibus** Powered by **pingo** Funded by UK Government

MOBILE BUS LESS FARES

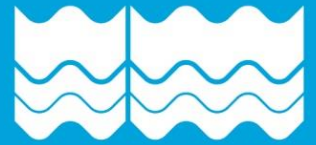
East Sussex Council

This advertisement features a woman in a red blazer talking on a phone. In the background, there is a modern building entrance. A Flexibus van is shown in a circular inset. The background is light green with a white circular graphic element.



New designs for information boards in train stations (left) and print publications





# FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

## 5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

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### 5.1 EXTENDING THE SERVICE BEYOND MARCH 2026

During 2025 we will consider how best to use funding streams to maintain the Flexibus service beyond the existing BSIP funding period of the service (which is 31 March 2026). Local Authorities are expected to be notified of longer term BSIP funding (likely to be 3 years plus of revenue funding) after the spring 2025 budget. With longer term BSIP funding it is expected that DDRT services can be sustained in East Sussex while this funding exists and is likely to be part of funded bus services in the county for many years ahead if BSIP funding continues.

### 5.2 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

We will continue to look to enhance the service, looking specifically to improve aggregation of trips and vehicle utilisation efficiency improvements.

### 5.3 VEHICLES

New vehicles began operating in August 2024. We will explore opportunities to transition to zero emission vehicles at the earliest opportunity and look at smaller more agile vehicles may be more suitable for the service provision.

### 5.4 ADDITIONAL VEHICLE PROVISION

We will pilot the use of private hire taxis as additions to the existing 'core' Flexibus fleet.

### 5.5 FUTURE BSIP PLANS (FROM 2025 ONWARDS)

We will continue to improve our Flexibus service and develop it in line with demand. We will increase resources when needed so that it can play a larger role in the overall public transport network, carrying more passengers and reducing the subsidy required per passenger trip.

We will consider replacing fixed-route services with the Flexibus service, where it is more economically advantageous to do so and while also maintaining or improving access for passengers to key destinations.

We see Flexibus as a fundamental part of the future public transport network, providing access for rural residents to employment, education and leisure opportunities – as well as supporting the visitor economy.

Over time it is possible that changes in car ownership and land use patterns may lead to increased demand for public transport in rural areas that may permit more conventional scheduled services that could be delivered as part of a semi flexible / semi fixed hybrid service provision.

As improvements in technology, including the potential introduction of AI and machine learning, DDRT services are likely to play a key role in future public transport provision in East Sussex.

## 5.6 TARGETS

We have set targets for passenger growth that we believe are realistic but also a challenging. We have set the following passenger growth targets.

15% increase in the number of passenger trips from 650 (Feb 2025)  
to 750 by the end of 2025  
and a 20% increase to 780 weekly passenger trips by the end of March 2026

Figure 5-1 –Target Passenger trips per week by end March 2026

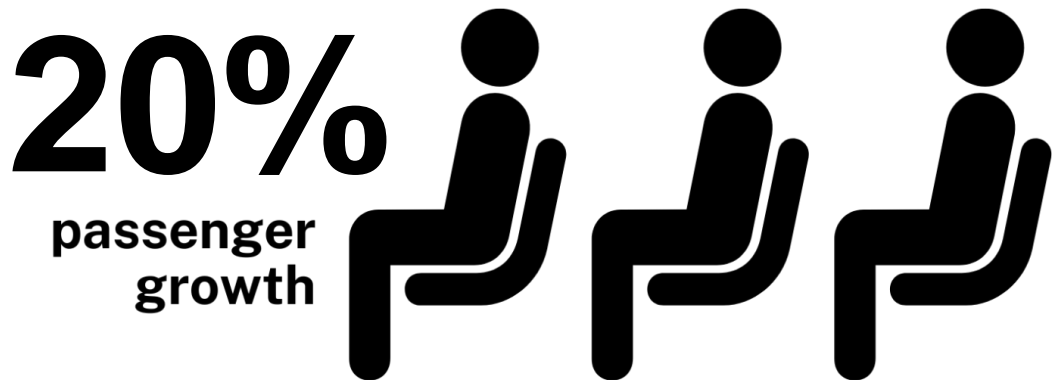
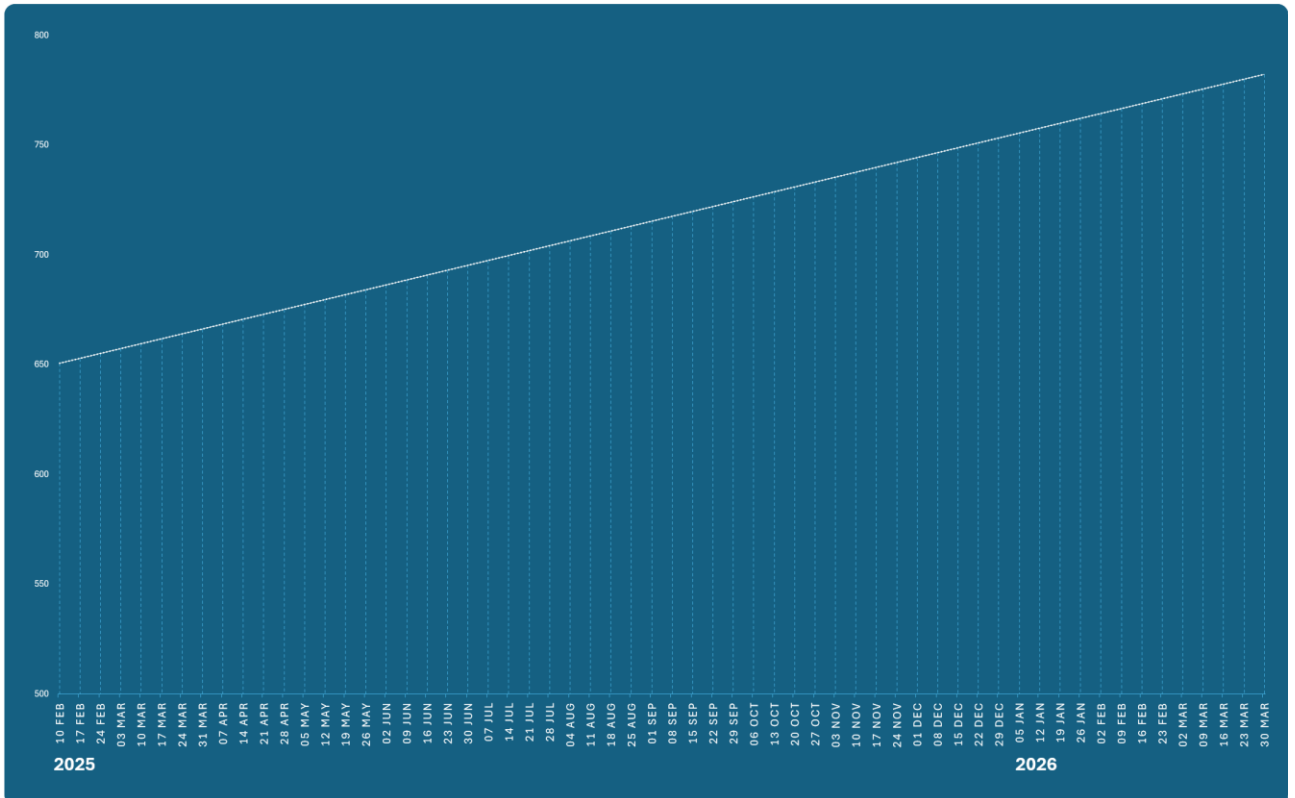


Figure 5-2 –Target Passenger growth in trips per week (Feb 25 to end of March 2026)





# DATA

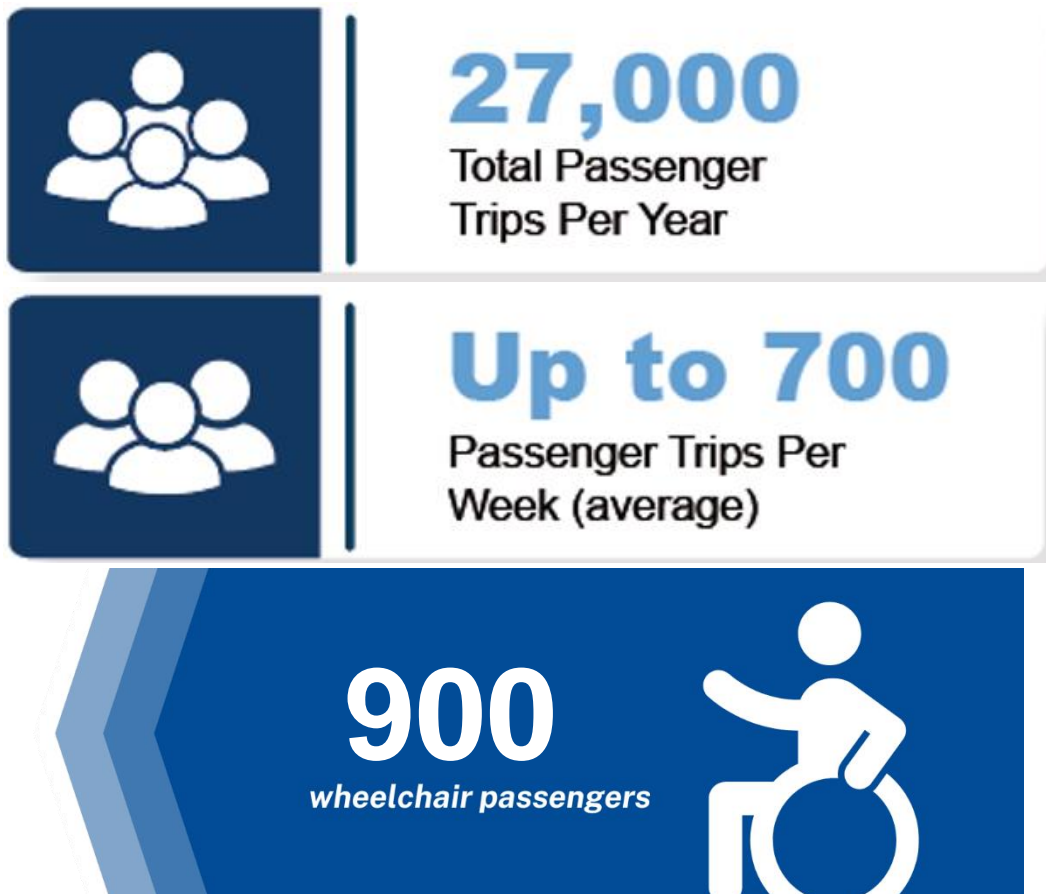
## 6 DATA

In depth Flexibus data is provided in this chapter. The data illustrates:

- Strong passenger growth -see **Figure 6-1**
- A high level of passenger satisfaction – see **Figure 6-9** and **Figure 6-10**
- Over 80% of bookings are made through the app – see **Figure 6-6**
- Almost 80% of bookings are made in advance / only 20% are made ‘on-demand’ – see **Figure 6-7**

There have been over 42,000 passenger trips completed to date (February 18) with annual passenger trips now at over 28,500 (from Feb 12, 2024, to Feb 2025) and rising each month and is expected to break 30,000 in April this year and is forecast to exceed 35,000 by the end of 2025. Of the 42,000 trips over 8,700 have been shared and over 875 have been wheelchair users. A summary of the Flexibus service data can be found in Figure 3-1 to Figure 3-11 below (data shown is to February 2025 unless otherwise stated).

**Figure 6-1 – Flexibus Passenger Data**





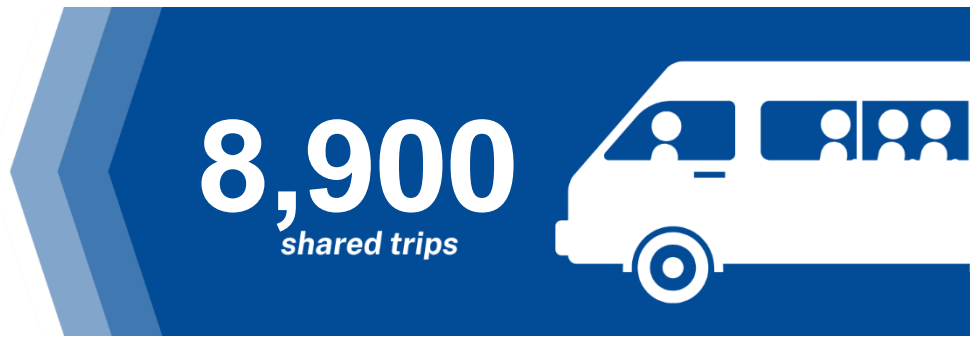


Figure 6-2 –Passenger trips per week

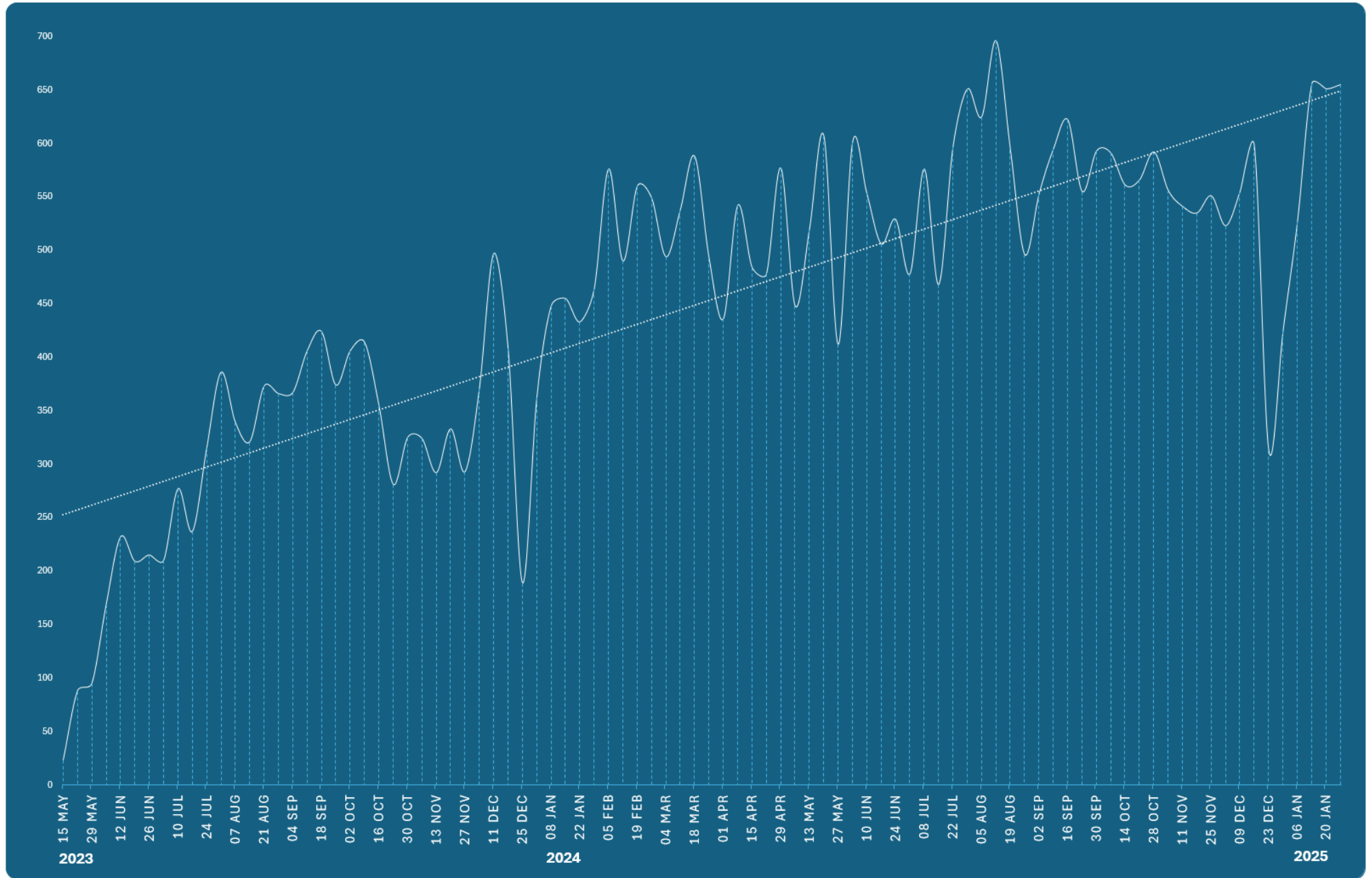


Figure 6-3 – Customer sign ups per week

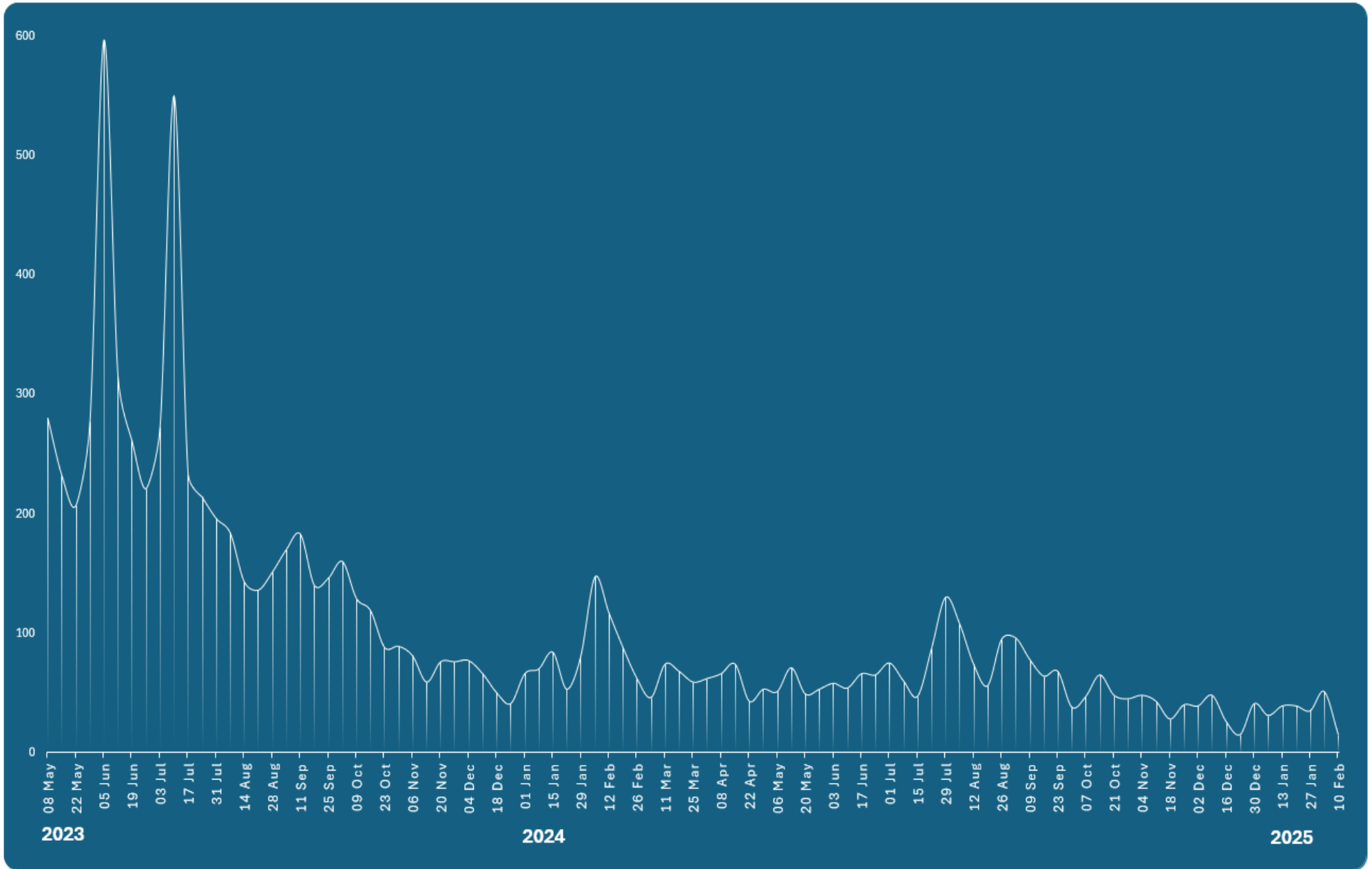


Figure 6-4 –Vehicle loadings (passengers)

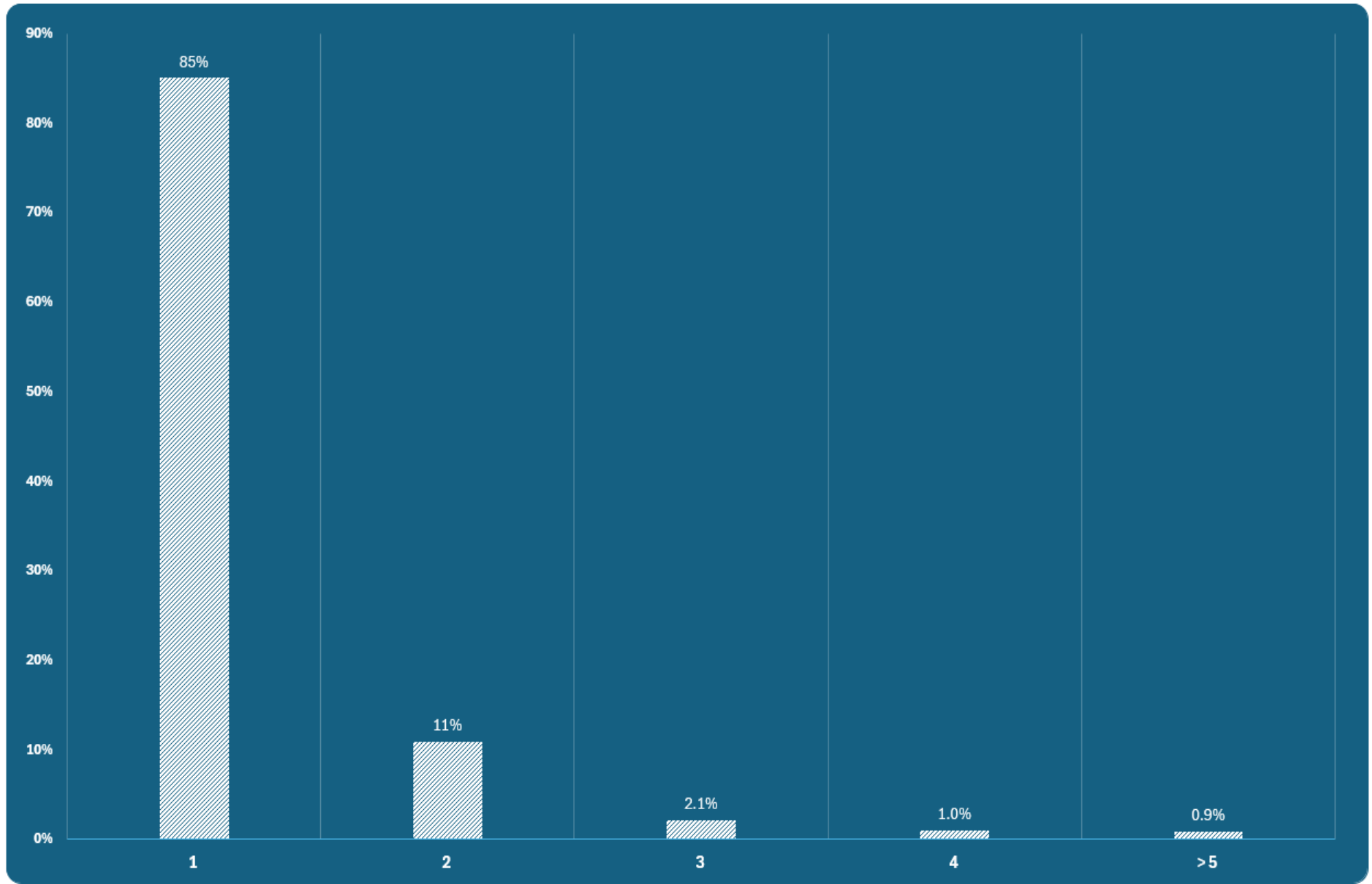


Figure 6-5 –Average Passenger Vehicle Loadings Per Week

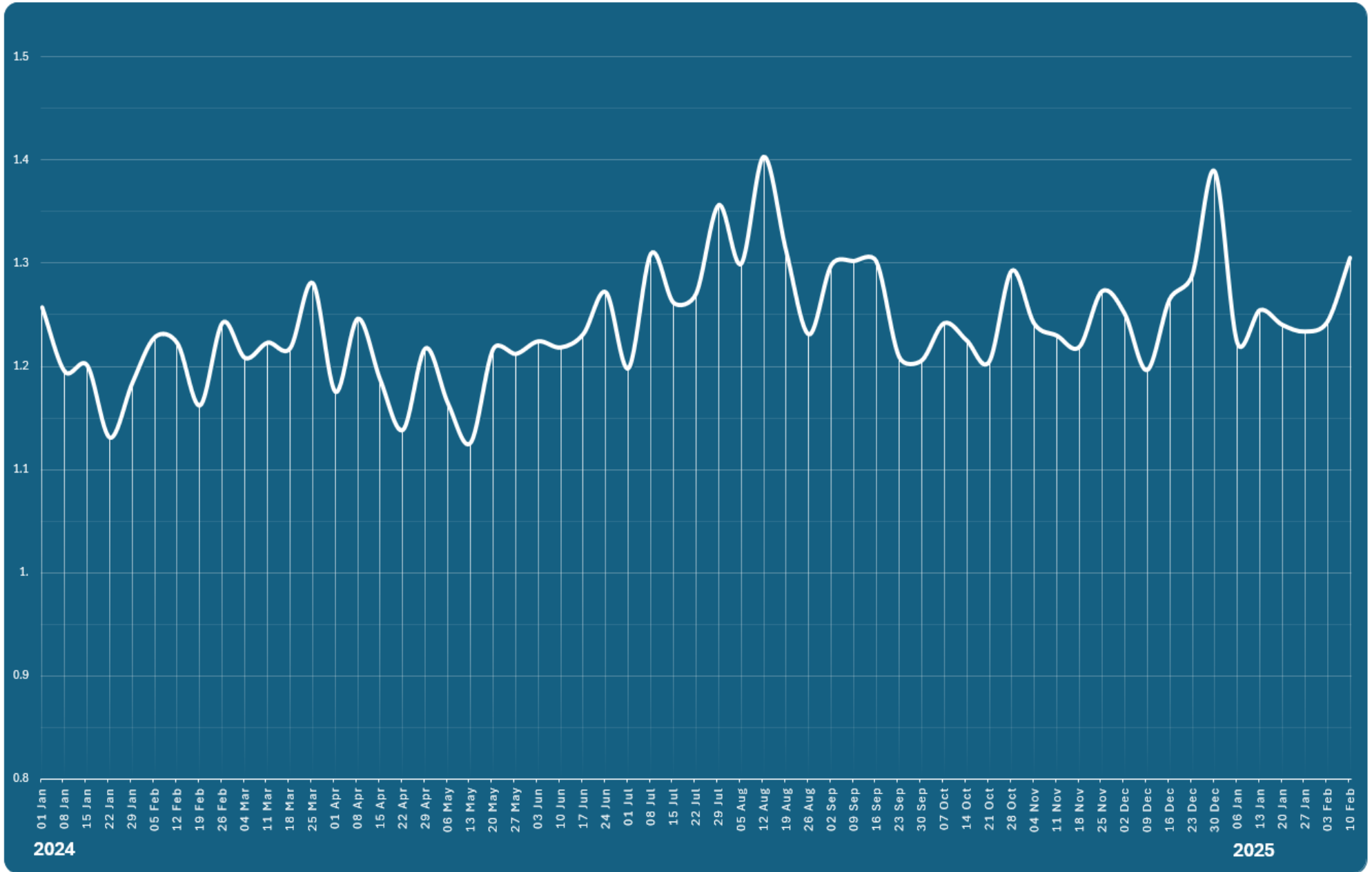


Figure 6-6 –Booking Data – App/Call Centre (last 3 months data)

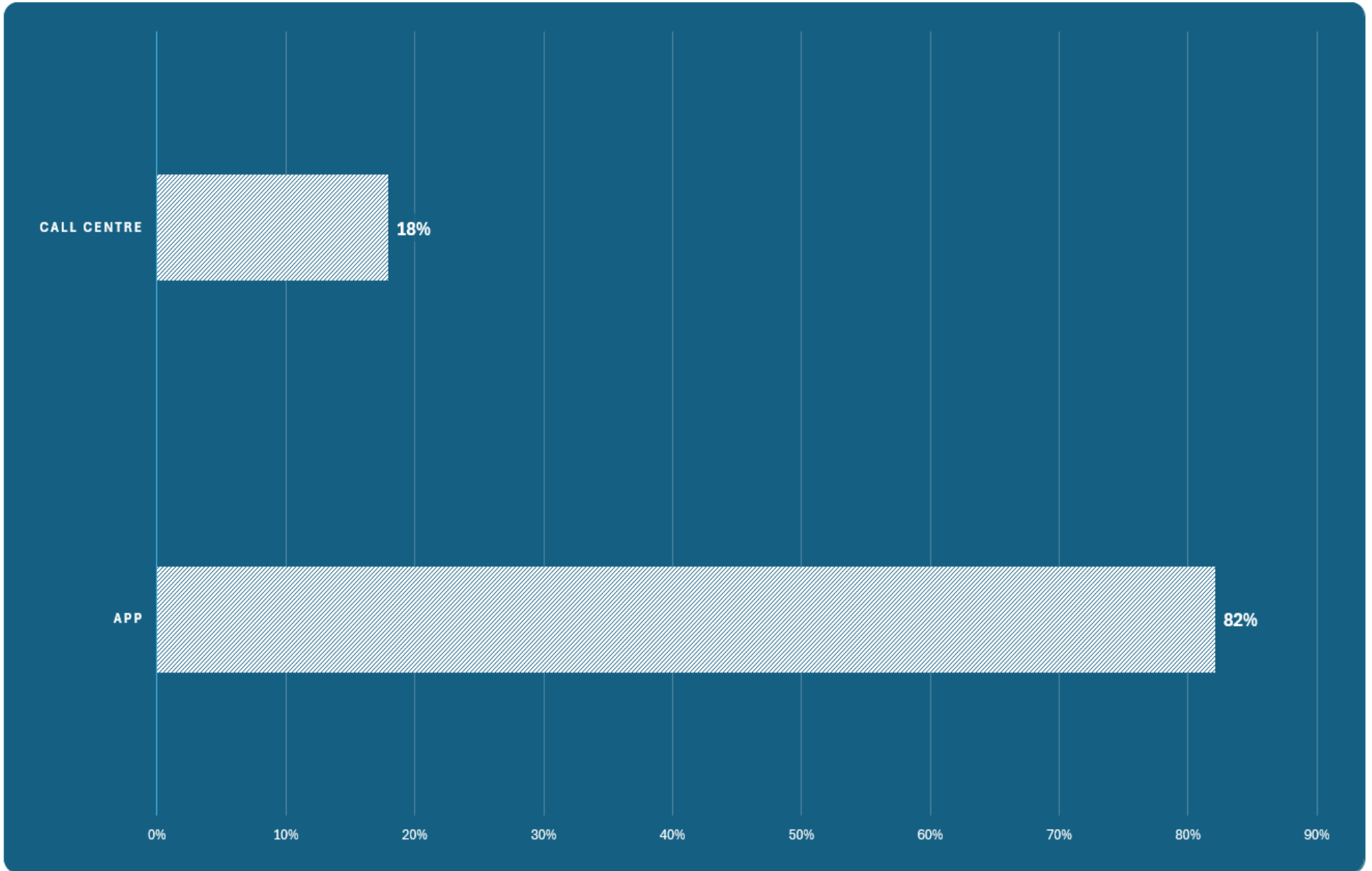


Figure 6-7 –Booking Data – Pre-Booked / On Demand (last 3 months data)

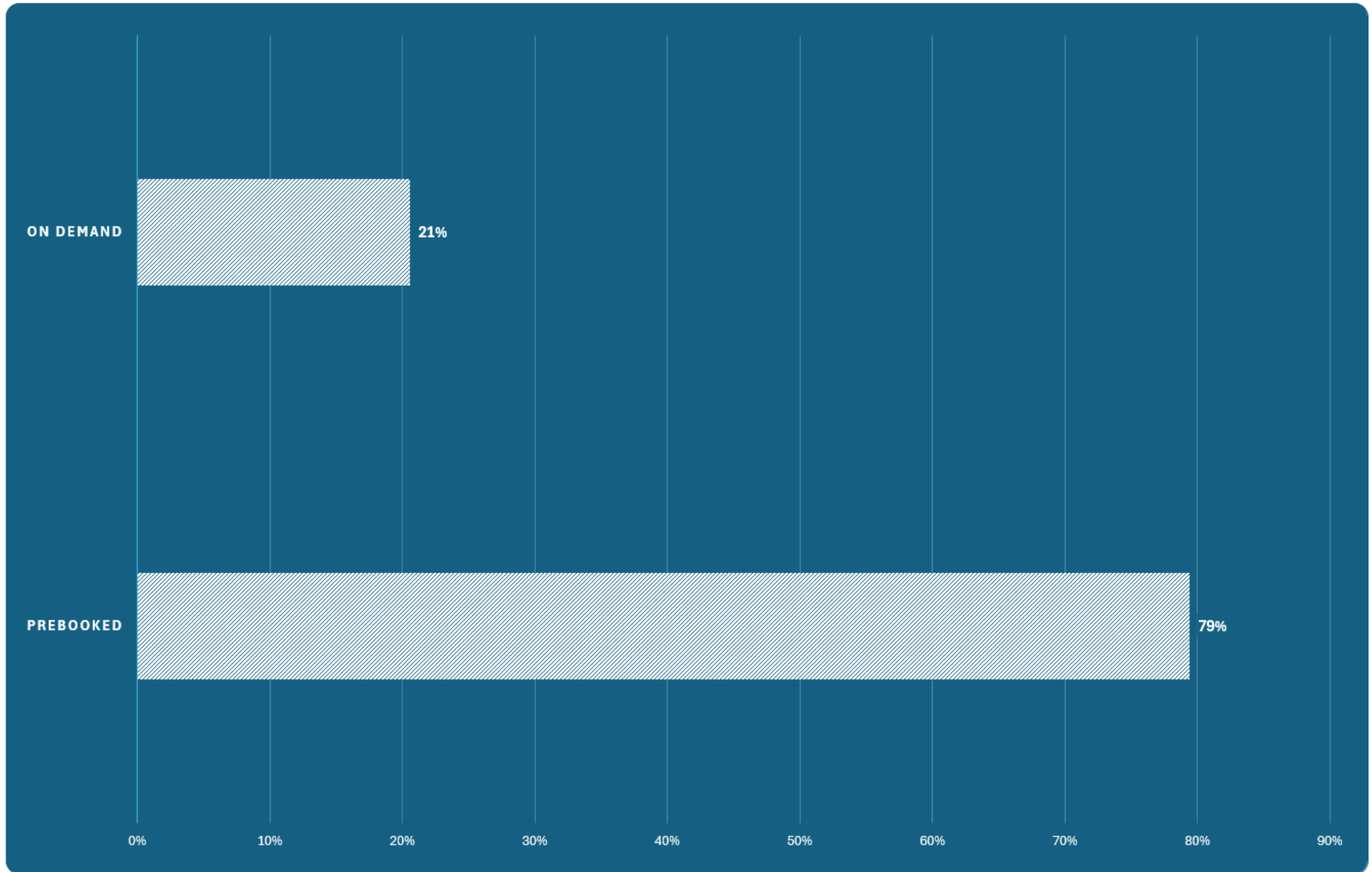
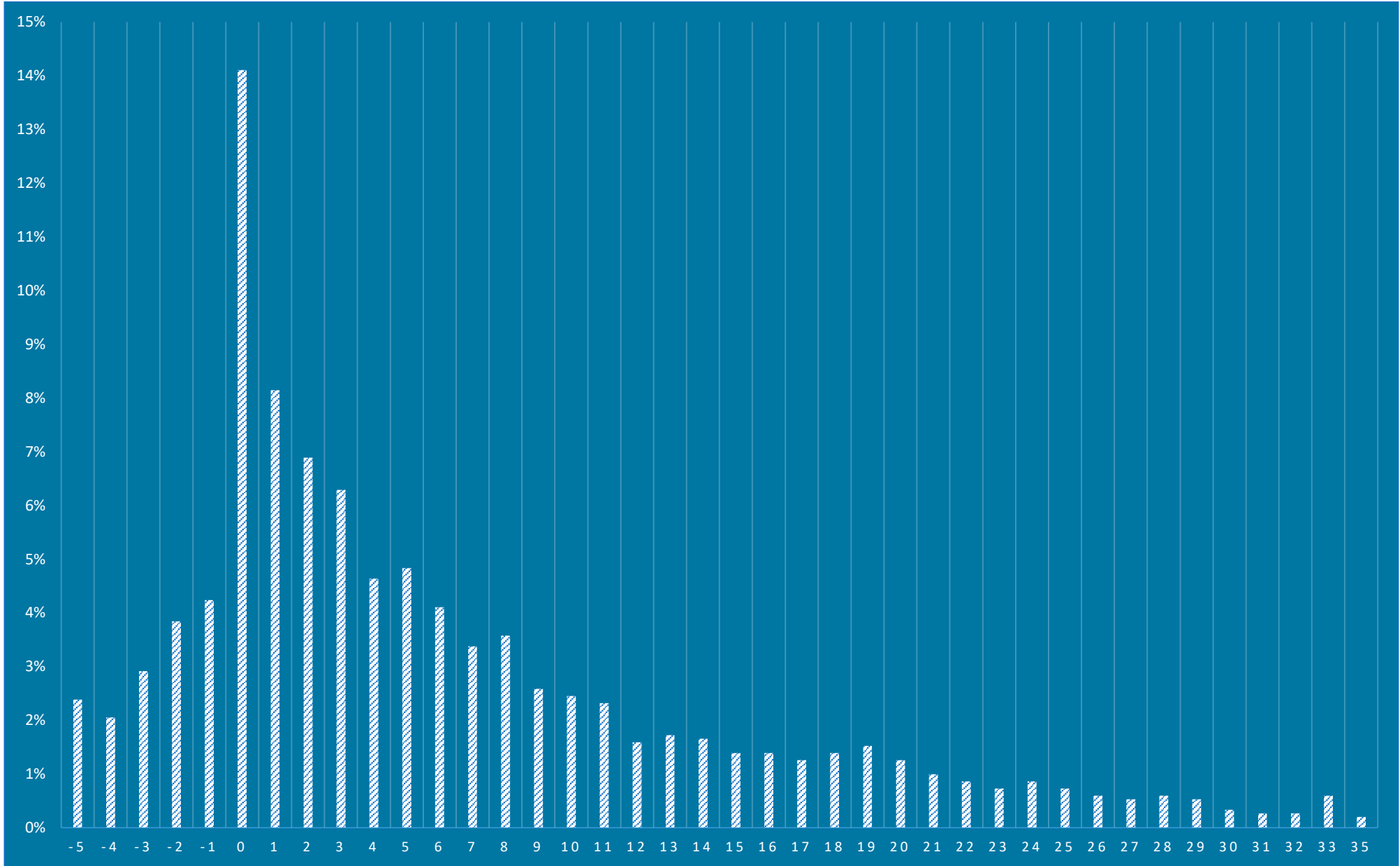


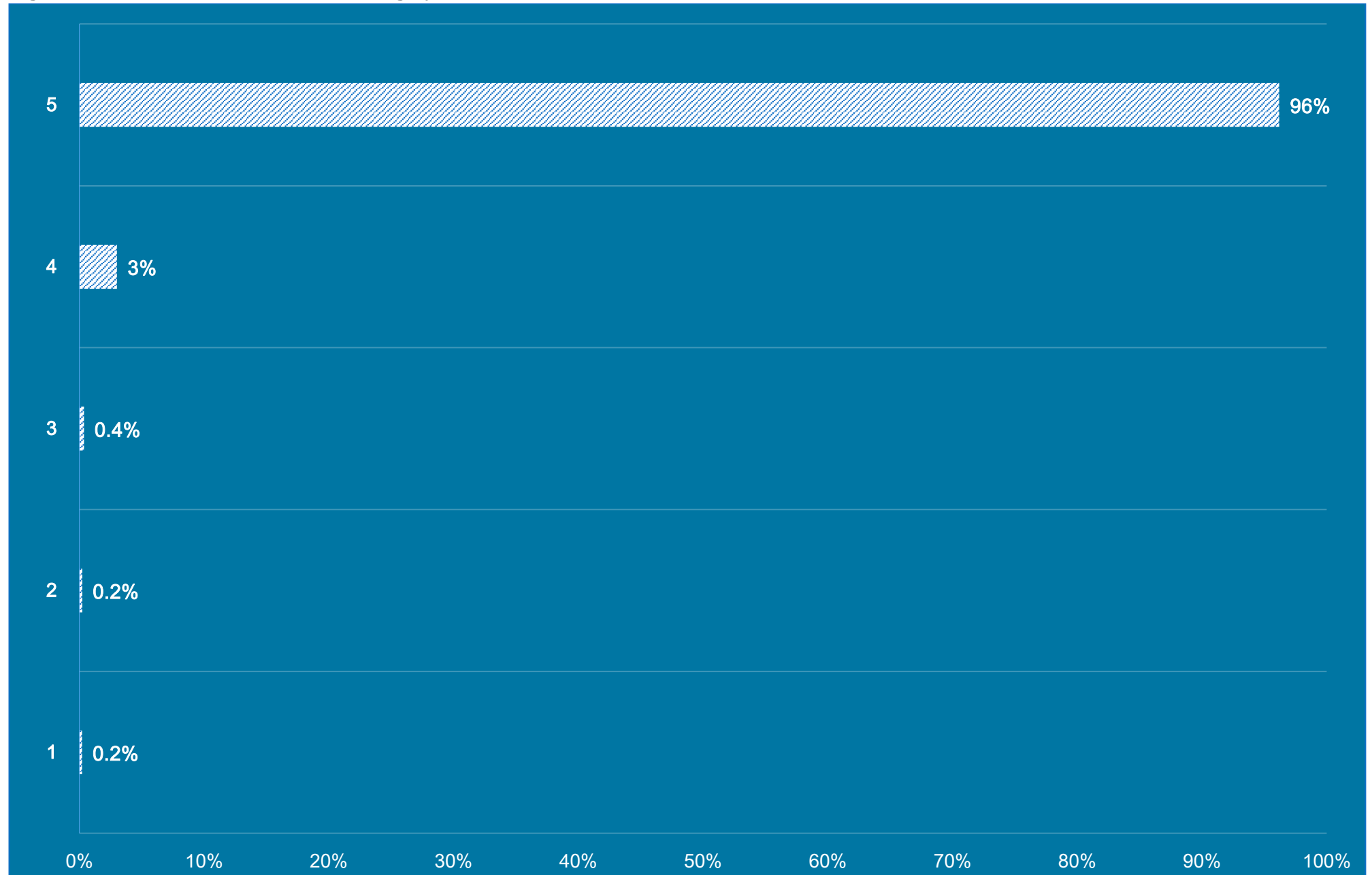


Figure 6-8 – Punctuality Data



Note: Customers receive update notifications through the app letting them know when their vehicles will be arriving and updating them if there is a delay to their booking.

Figure 6-9 – Customer Satisfaction Rating by Score



**Figure 6-10 – Customer Satisfaction Rating – Weekly Averages**

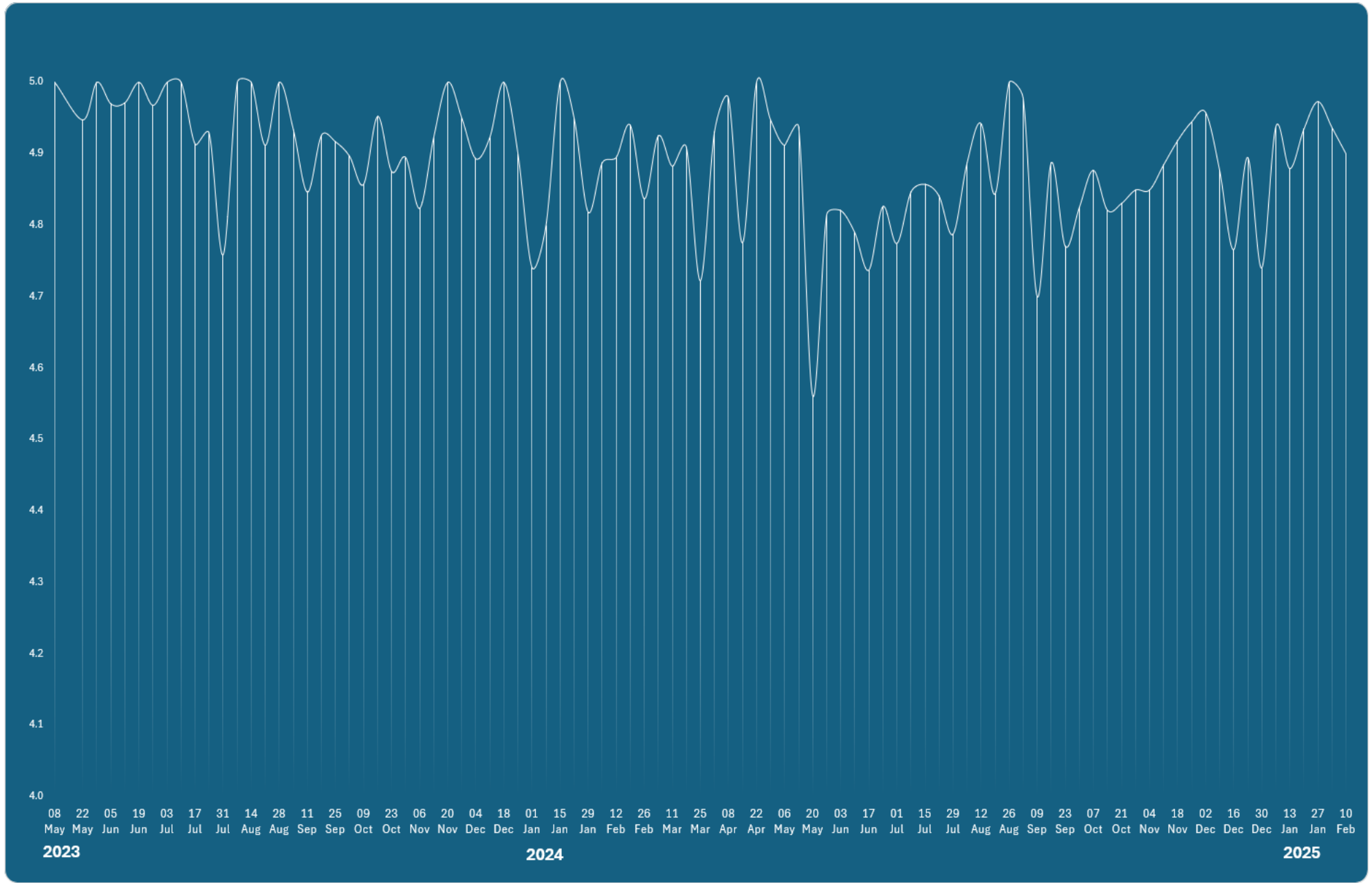
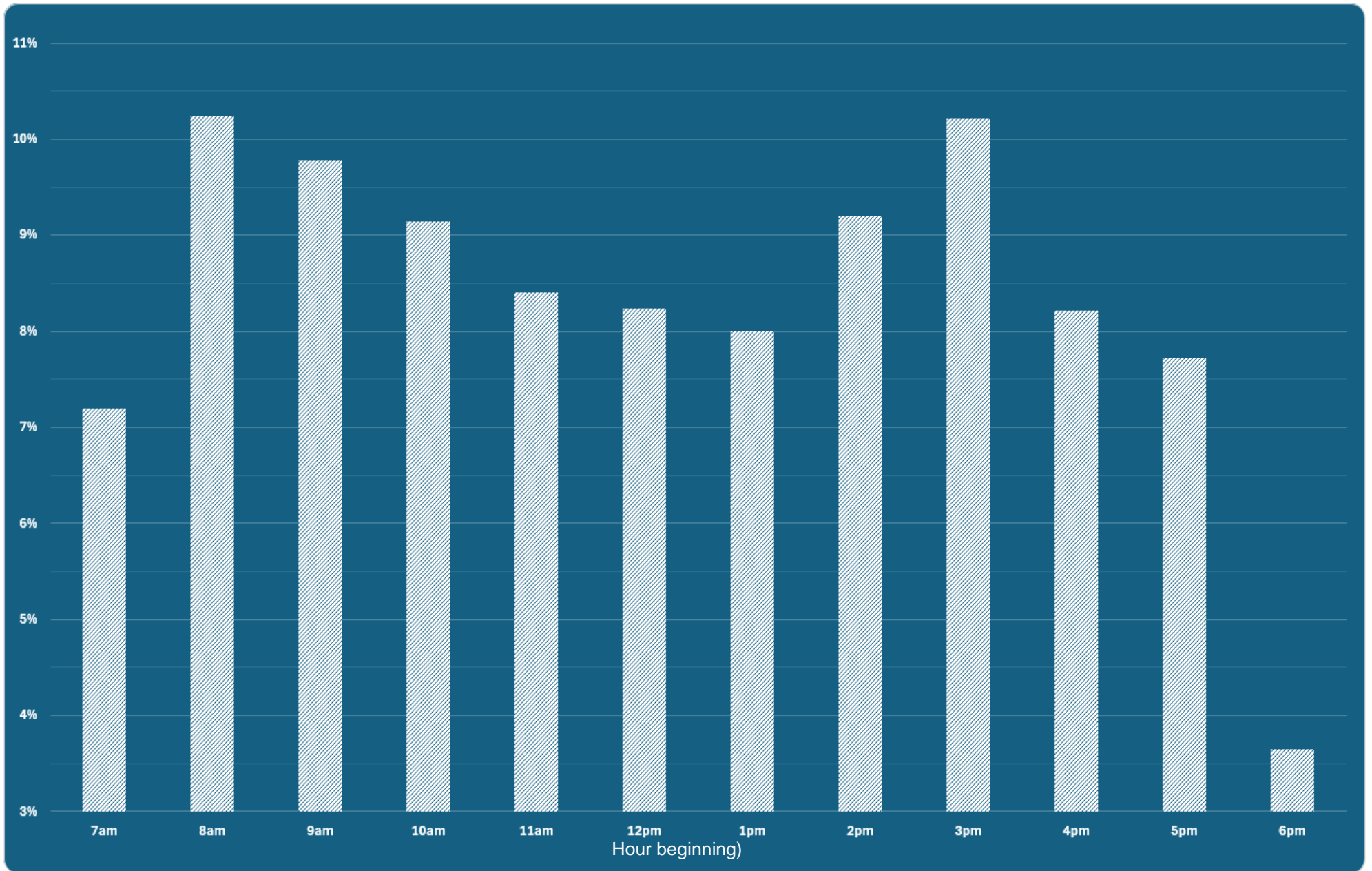


Figure 6-11 – Trip by Time



**Figure 6-12 – Trips by Day of Week**

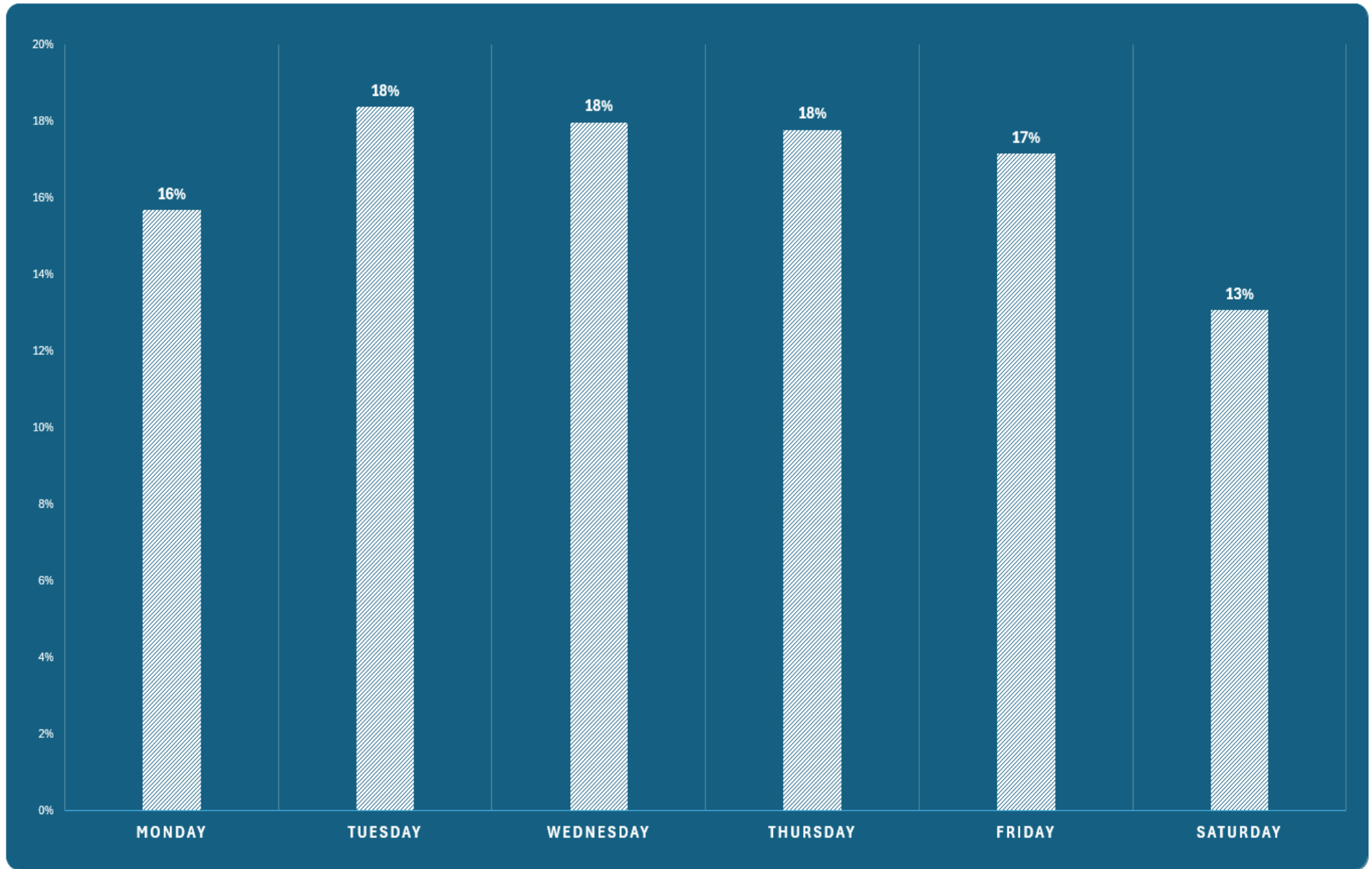




Figure 6-13 – Trip Mileage

