



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Engagement Service Briefing Paper

19<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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# **Results of the Post-Primary Transfer Survey and the Post-Primary Transfer – Young People’s Survey**

## Background

In May 2020, the Committee for Education commissioned the Assembly's Engagement, Communications and Education Service teams to develop and promote a survey, to collect the views of parents/guardians, teachers and other interested parties on the subject of post-primary transfer tests. The Committee was particularly interested in assessing if and/or how the COVID-19 lockdown period had impacted on young people's preparedness for the 2020-21 tests.

Launched on 20 July and remaining open until 7 September 2020, the survey was promoted via the Assembly's social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter) and was also emailed directly to key stakeholder groups, who were asked to distribute the survey to their members and contacts.

The Committee for Education was also keen to hear the views of young people, and in August 2020, a separate 'Young People's' survey was developed. Given the age profile and the difficulties involved in contacting young people directly, the survey was made available upon request to those who had previously completed the 'Post-Primary Transfer Survey'. A link to the 'Young People's Survey' was also emailed to key stakeholder groups, who were again asked to distribute it to their members and contacts. The 'Young People's Survey' closed on 7 September with 753 completed surveys.

In total 8,517 completed surveys were received. Detailed reports of the responses from parents/guardians, teachers, other interested parties and from young people can be found at **Annexes A, B, C and D respectively**.

## Respondent Profile:

### Post-Primary Transfer Test Survey

#### General

- 72% (6150) of respondents were parents/guardians, 22% (1858) were teachers and 6% (509) were other interested parties.

#### Parents

- 82% of the parents/guardians who responded had children between the ages of 8-10yrs. 48% had children between the ages of 11-16yrs (NB: responses included those from parents with multiple children). 49% had a child/children who had previously completed the transfer test.
- 73% of the parents/guardians who responded had a child entering Primary 7 in September 2020. Before the COVID-19 crisis, 74.5% of respondents were planning for their child to take part in the transfer tests in 2020.

#### Teachers

- 78% of those who responded were primary school teachers (51% teaching primary 6 or primary 7), 11% were post-primary teachers (non-selective) and 8% were post-primary teachers (selective).

### **Other Interested Parties**

- Others interested parties included relatives, educational staff and academics, as well as representatives from organisations with an interest in education and youth issues.

## **Post-Primary Transfer Test – Young Peoples’ Survey**

### **Young people**

- 76% of respondents were children going into P7 in September 2020.
- Before the COVID-19 crisis 91% of the young people who responded said that they were planning to sit the transfer tests, 4% said they were not and 5% said they were unsure.
- The young people who answered yes to the previous question were then asked if they still intended to take the transfer tests in 2020. 88% stated that they were intending to take the tests.
- Those who said no or were unsure were asked if they had changed their mind about taking the tests. 21% said they were going to take the tests, with 79% stating that they were still not going to take the tests.

## **Key Findings**

- Responding to how they felt about children taking the post-primary transfer test following the COVID-19 lockdown period, 61% of parents/guardians, 64% of teachers and 67% of other interested parties stated they were very or extremely concerned. 25% of parents/guardians, 21% of teachers and 19% of other interested parties were not concerned or only slightly concerned.
- 55% of young people stated they were slightly concerned or not concerned at all, with 31% stating that they were very or extremely concerned.
- When asked what their preferred approach for post-primary transfer would be for this coming academic year, the highest scoring answer for parents/guardians and teachers was to not run the tests and instead to permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, with a score of 4.21 and 4.33 respectively.<sup>1</sup>
- Parents/guardians second highest scoring answer was to use an alternative system to assess a child’s academic ability, with a score of 4.16. The second highest scoring answer for teachers was to end the use of tests as a means of academic selection, with a score of 4.17.

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents were asked to rank their preference from 1 to 6, with the results providing a score for each option.

- The highest score from the other interested parties was to end the use of tests as a means of academic selection, with a score of 4.3. The second highest score was to not run the tests this year and to instead permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, with a score of 4.29.
- The option with the lowest score from all respondents, was to delay the tests until January 2021, with scores of 3.7 for parents, 3.63 for teachers and 3.65 for other interested parties.
- It must be noted that, excluding the 'other' category, the variation between the results of the scores is small.
- When asked a similar question, 45% of young people said that they wanted the test to run as planned in autumn 2020. 25% felt that schools should use a different way to assess academic ability, e.g. based on scores in primary school. 14% felt the test should be delayed until January 2021 and 12% felt that the tests should not run at all, and that post-primary schools should be permitted to make their own decisions on pupil intake.
- Respondents were given a list of the Department of Education recommended admissions criteria for over-subscribed post-primary schools. They were asked, in the absence of transfer tests, how they would rate the admissions criteria.
- 11% of parents, 16% of teachers and 24% of other interested parties felt the proportion of Free School Meal applicants received was a good or very good criteria with 67%, 57% and 48% respectively, feeling this was a poor or very poor criteria
- 45% of parents, 50% of teachers and 43% of other interested parties felt that applicants from a feeder/named primary school was a good or very good criteria with 26%, 19% and 21% respectively, feeling this was a poor or very poor criteria
- 33% of parents, 41% of teachers and 39% of other interested parties felt that applicants residing in a named Parish (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria with 35%, 27%, 26% respectively, feeling this was a poor or very poor criteria
- 48% of parents, 52% of teachers and 55% of other interested parties felt that applicants residing in a geographically defined/catchment area (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria, with 22%, 20% and 16% respectively, feeling this was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 50% of parents, 55% of teachers and 66% of other interested parties felt that applicants for whom the school is the nearest suitable school was a good or very good criteria, with 24%, 19% and 13% respectively, feeling this was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 57% of parents, 67% of teachers and 71% of other interested parties felt that applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school was a good or very good criteria, with 22%, 10% and 12% respectively, feeling this was a poor or very poor criteria



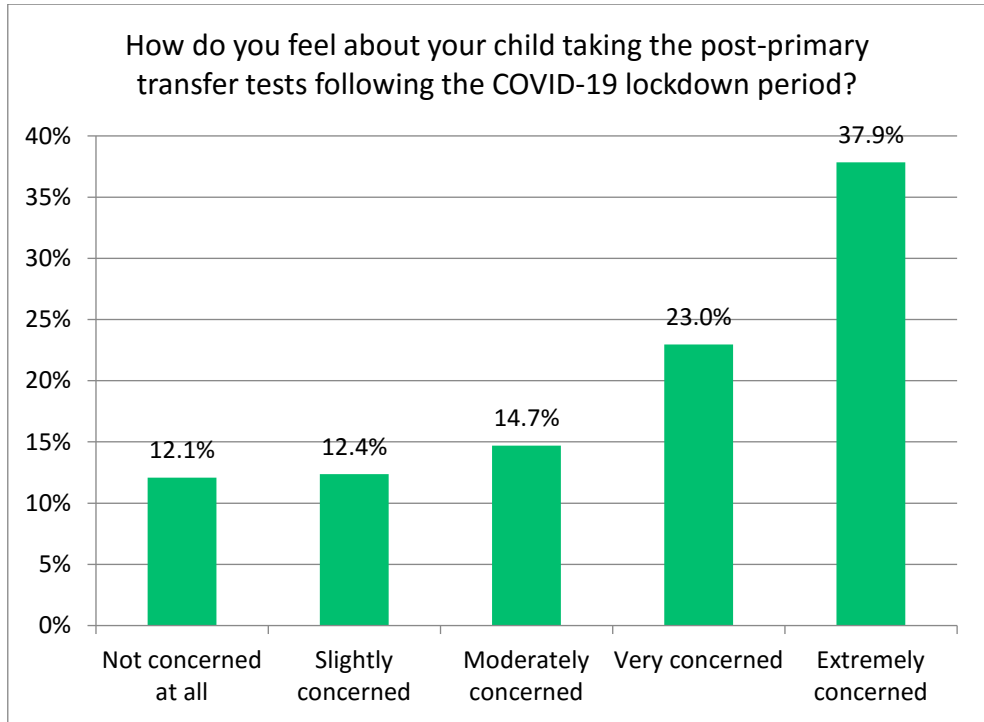
### Results of Post-Primary Transfer Survey: Parents/Guardians

The following report details the quantitative and qualitative responses of 6150 parents/guardians who completed the post-primary transfer test survey.

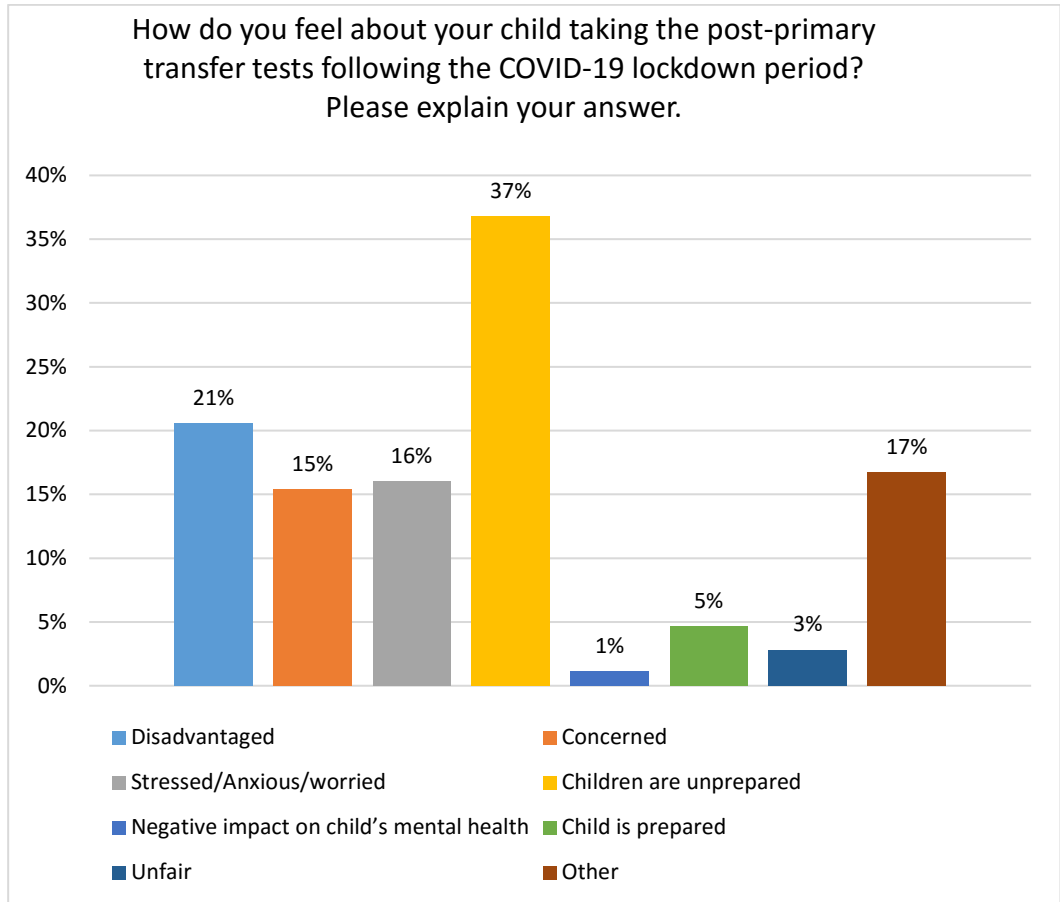
Due to the volume of qualitative results, the Assembly Engagement Team engaged the Assembly's Research and Library Service (RaLSe) to help identify the initial key themes emerging from the open-ended responses. Each comment was categorised into a theme/s which reflected its content. The results were then collated and presented in a graphical format. Please note that some responses may have covered a number of areas, and have therefore been categorised, into multiple themes.

Comments that were less frequently mentioned, or did not refer to the question, have been classified as 'other'.

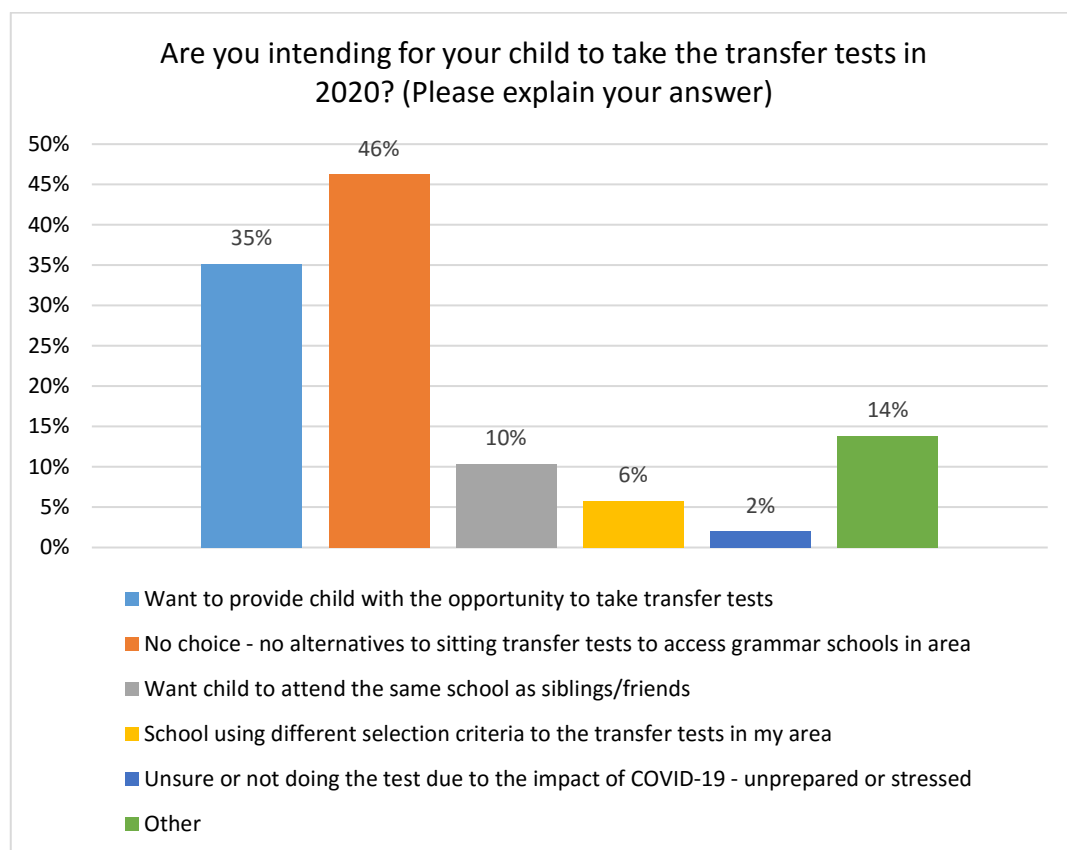
- 82% of the parents/guardians who responded have children between the ages of 8-10yrs, 49% between the ages of 11-16yrs and 38% under 7yrs (responses include those from parents with multiple children in different age groups).
- 49% of parents/guardians have a child/children who had previously completed the transfer test.
- 73% of parents/guardians have a child entering P7 in August 2020.
- Before the onset of COVID-19, 74.5% of parents/guardians were planning for their child to take part in the transfer tests in 2020. 21% were not, with an additional 4.5% specifying 'other' (this included those who selected the unsure option, and/ or have a child/children due to complete the transfer test in the future).
- Parents/guardians were asked how they felt about their child taking the post-primary transfer tests following the COVID-19 lockdown period. The results were as follows:



- They were then asked to explain their answer:

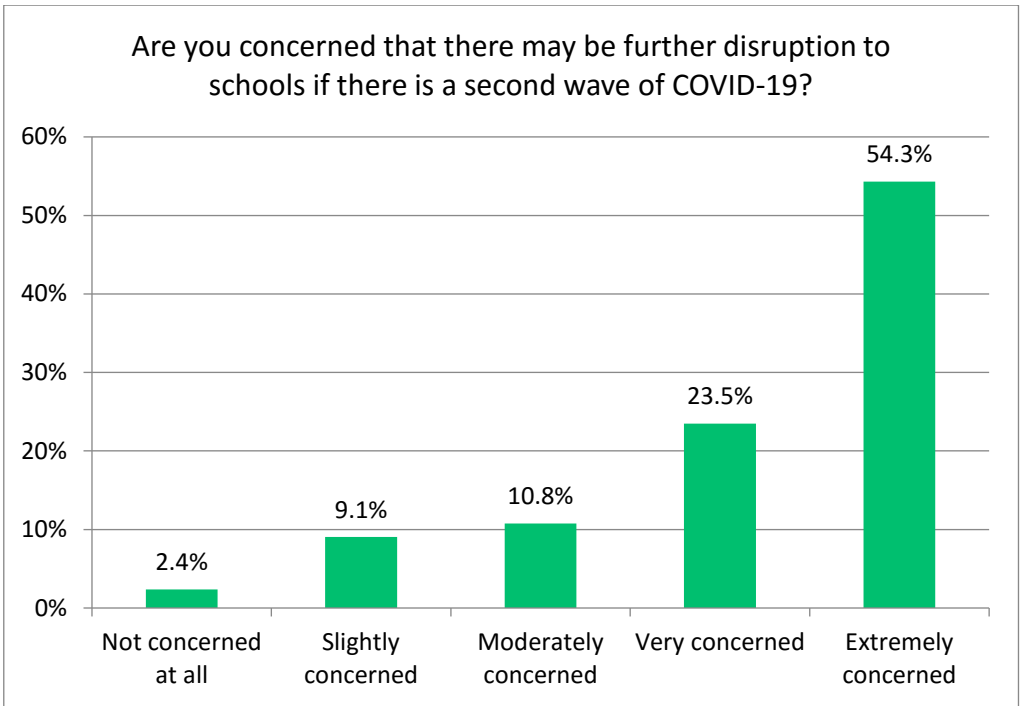
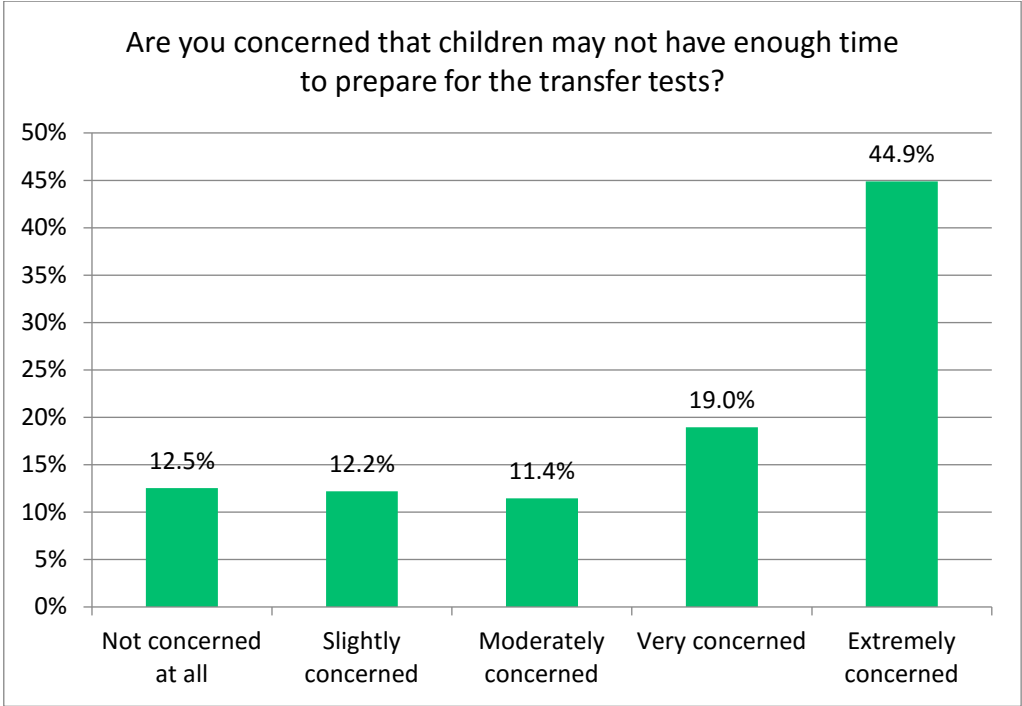


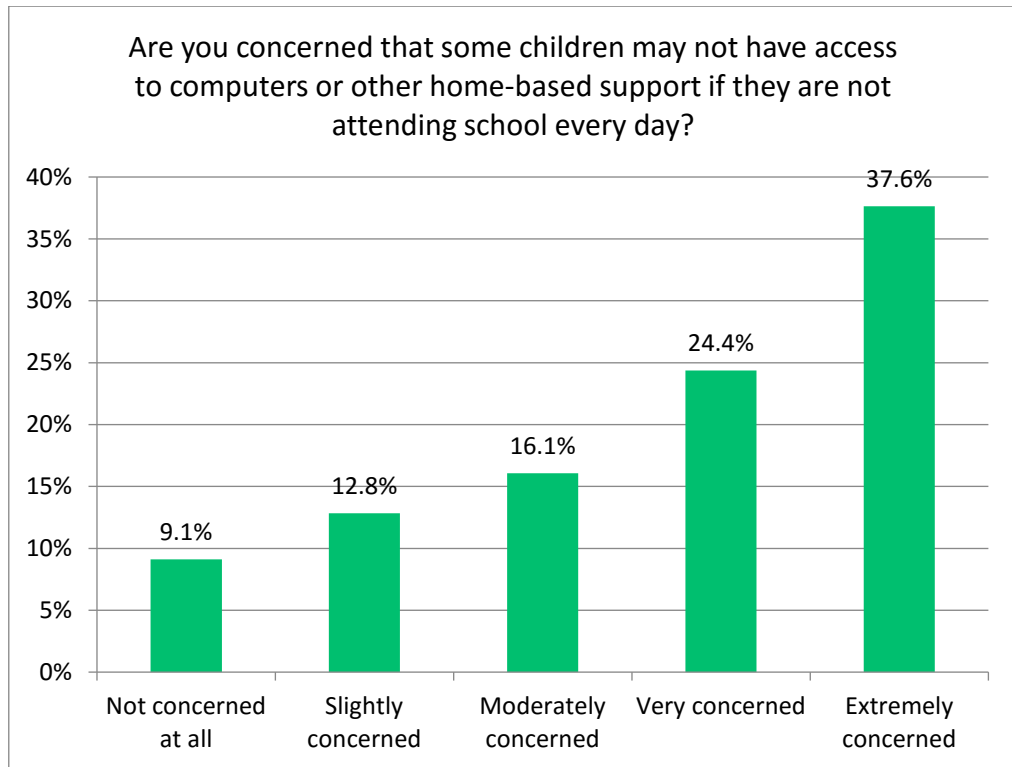
- 37% of comments referred to parents/guardians feeling that their children were unprepared, followed by 21% of comments from those who felt that their children had been disadvantaged due to the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Parents/guardians were then asked if they were now intending for their child to take the transfer tests in 2020. 85% responded that they were intending for their child to take the test.
- They were then asked to explain their answer:



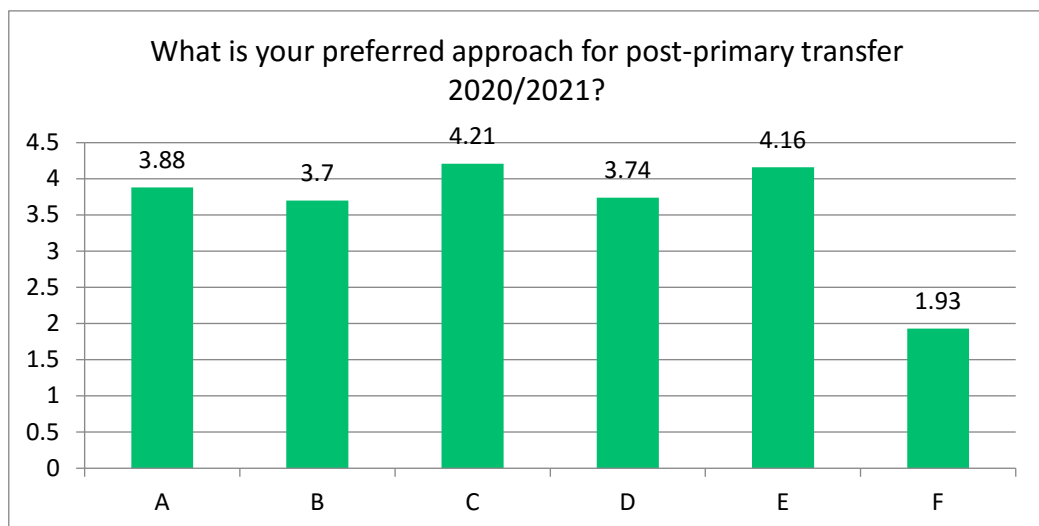
- 46% of comments related to parents feeling that they did not have a choice/other alternatives, followed by 35% of comments from those who wanted to give their child the opportunity to take the tests. (35%).
- Parents/guardians were then asked a series of questions on whether or not they felt lockdown, possible future school disruption, access to computers and other home-based support had or could impact on their child's preparedness for the test. The results are as follows:







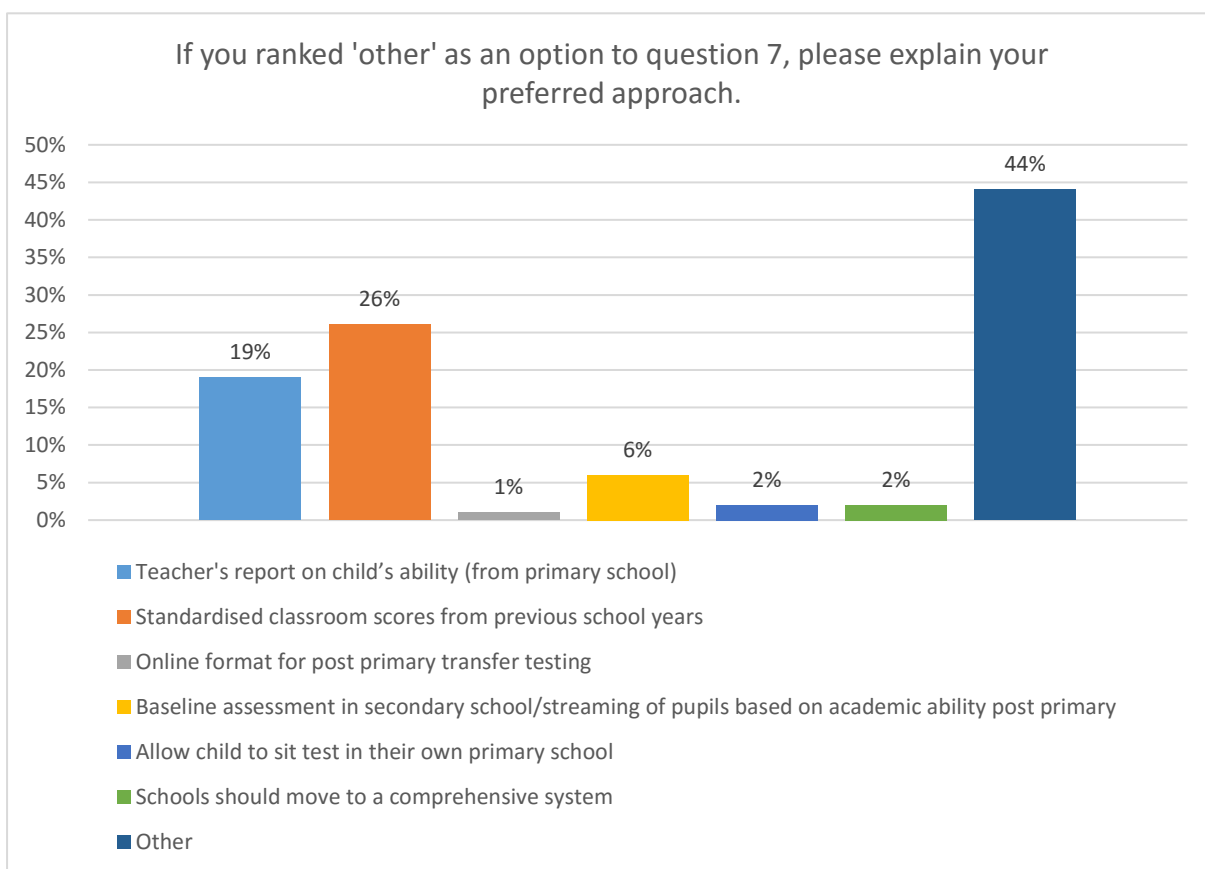
- Parents/guardians were then asked what their preferred approach for post-primary transfer would be for this coming academic year. They were asked to rank their preference from 1 to 6, with the results providing a score for each option in order of rank.



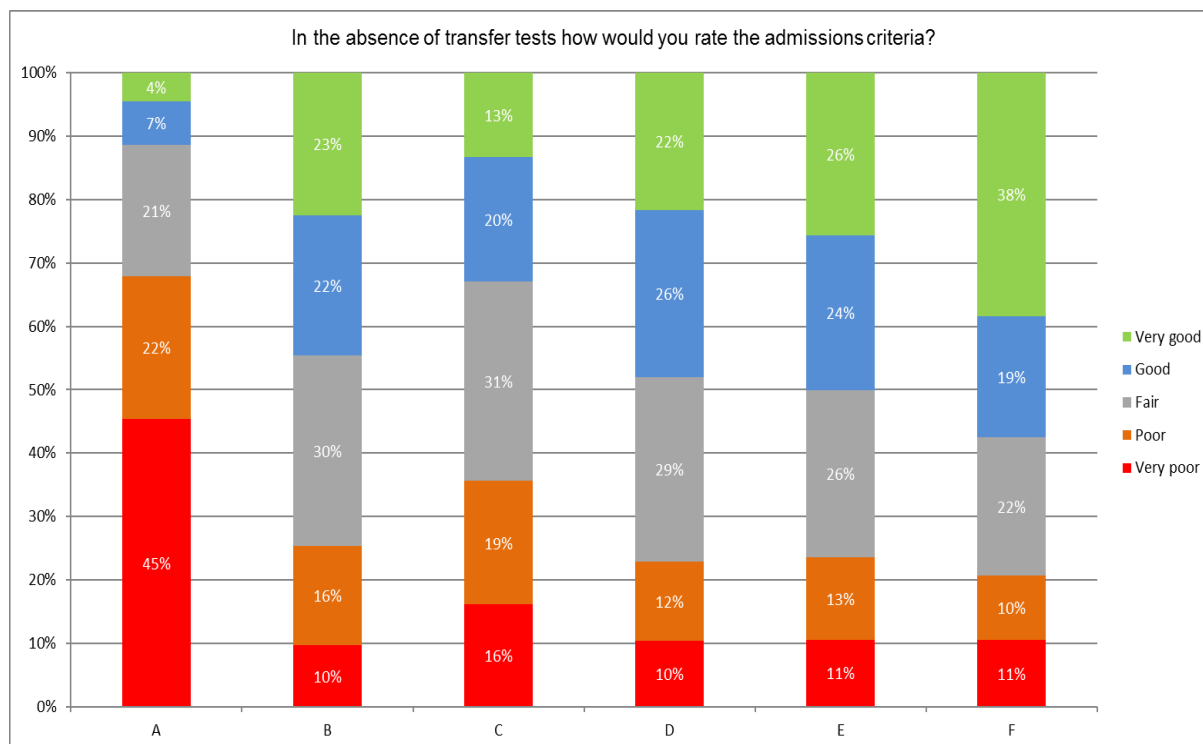
- A - Run the tests on the scheduled dates in November/December 2020
- B - Delay the tests until January 2021, even if this means some children may not be placed in a post-primary school at the start of the school year, in September 2021
- C - Do not run the tests and instead permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, for example the Department of Education recommended criteria, for this year only
- D - End the use of tests as a means of academic selection
- E - Use an alternative system to assess a child's academic ability
- F - Other

- The highest scoring answer was to not run the tests, and instead permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, with a score of 4.21. The second highest scoring answer was to use an alternative system to assess a child's academic ability, with a score of 4.16. The lowest scoring answer was to delay the tests until January 2021, with a score of 3.7. It should be noted that, excluding the 'other' option, the variation between the scoring in this category was minimal.

Parents/guardians were then asked to explain their preferred approach if they had ranked 'other' as an option.



- 26% of comments referred to standardised classroom scores as a preferred approach, with 19% noting support for a teacher's report on their child's ability.
- Respondents were then given a list of the Department of Education recommended admissions criteria for over-subscribed post-primary schools. They were then

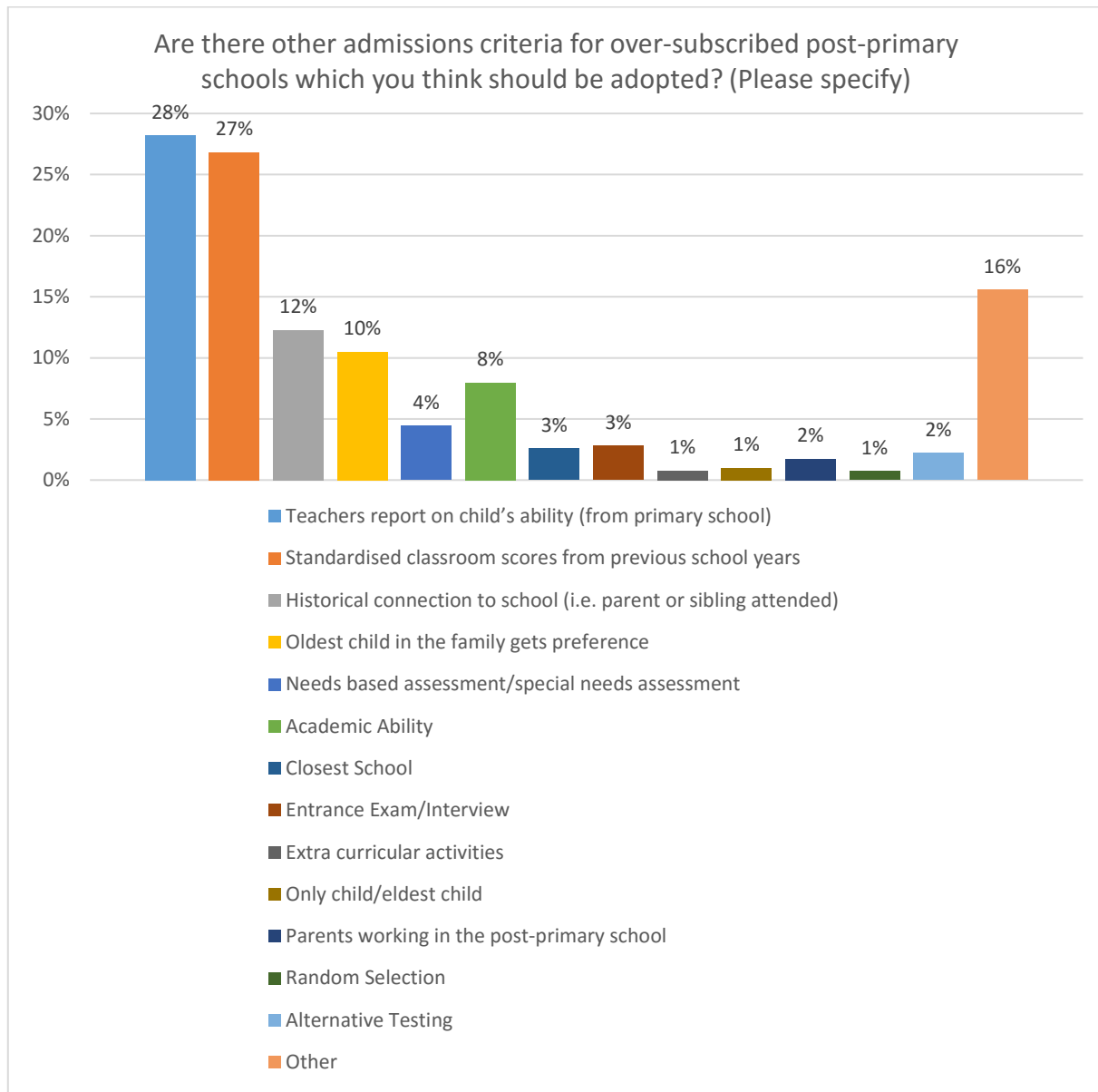


asked, in the absence of transfer tests, how they would rate the admissions criteria. The results were as follows.

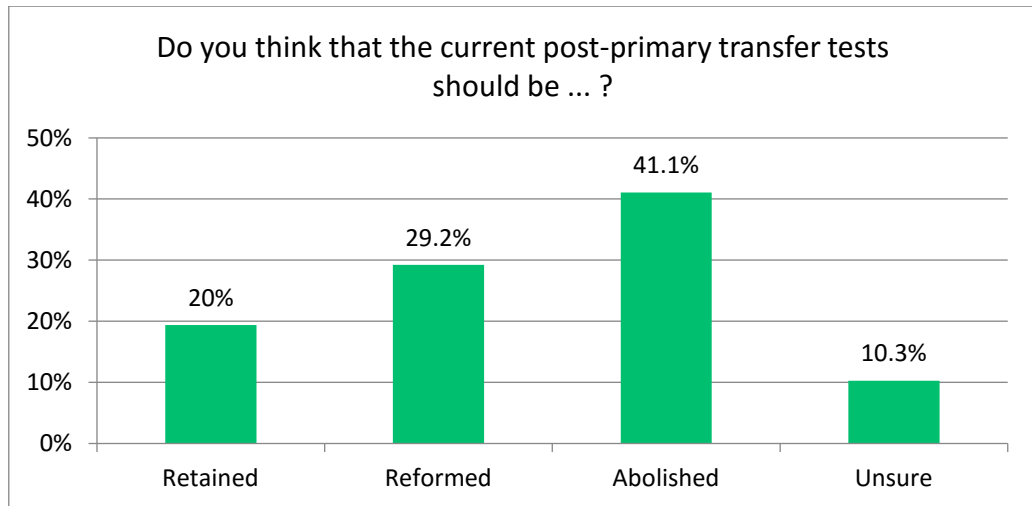
- A- Proportion of Free School Meal applicants received
- B- Applicants from a feeder/named primary school
- C- Applicants residing in a named Parish (with nearest suitable school)
- D- Applicants residing in a geographically defined/catchment area (with nearest suitable school)
- E- Applicants for whom the school is the nearest suitable school
- F- Applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school

- 11% felt the proportion of Free School Meal applicants received, was a good or very good criteria, with 67% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 45% felt applicants from a feeder/named primary school was a good or very good criteria, with 26% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 33% felt applicants residing in a named Parish (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria, with 35% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 48% felt applicants residing in a geographically defined/catchment area (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria, with 22% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 50% felt applicants for whom the school is the nearest suitable school was a good or very good criteria, with 24% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 57% felt applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school was a good or very good criteria, with 22% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.

- They were then asked if they felt there were other admissions criteria that should be adopted. The comments were as followed:

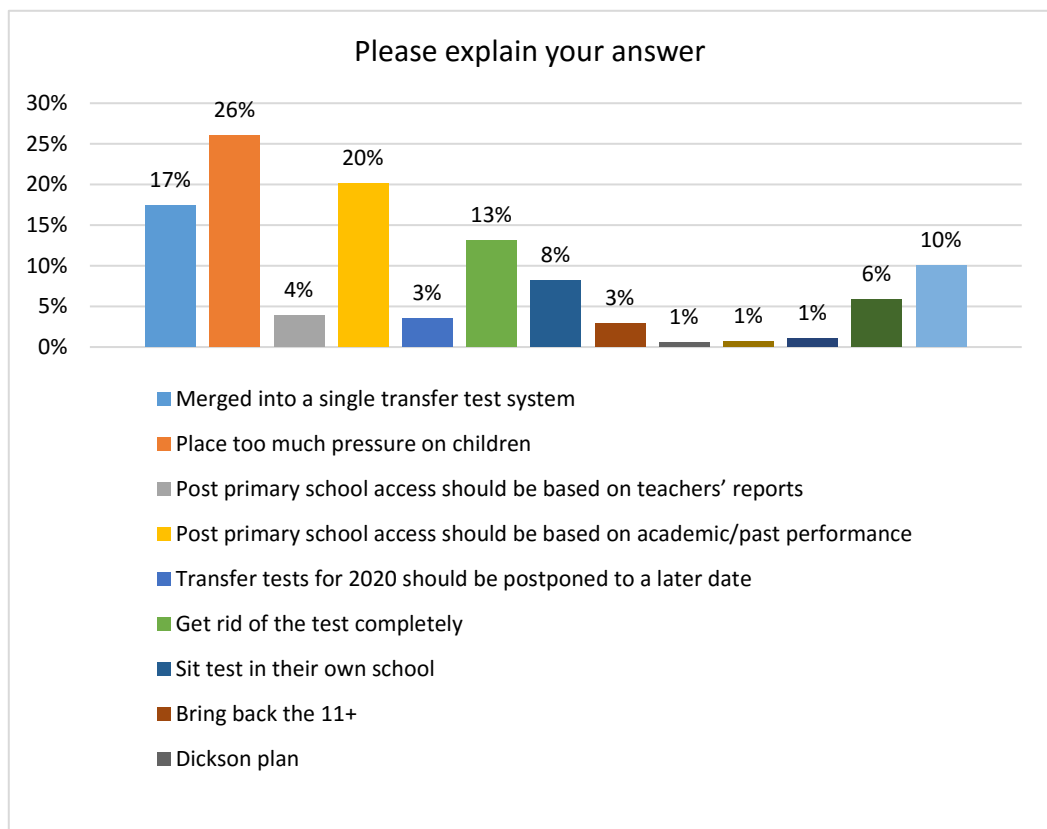


- 28% of comments in this section suggested that a teacher's report on the child's ability would be a good alternative criteria to adopt. While 27% of those who responded, suggested the use of standardised classroom scores from previous school years.
- Parents/guardians were then asked about the future of the transfer tests.



The following data has been rounded to one significant figure.

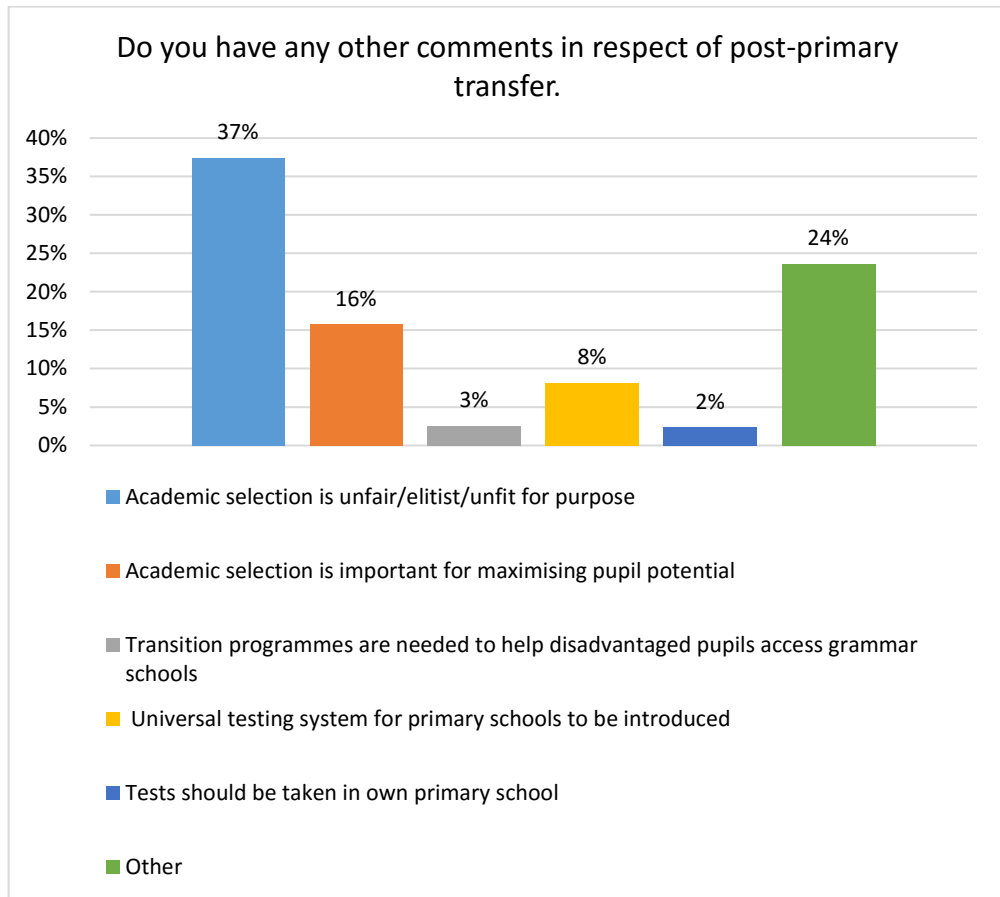
- 20% felt it should be retained, 29% felt it should be reformed, 41% felt it should be abolished and 10% were unsure.
- Parents/guardians were then asked to explain their answer.



- 26% of comments noted that the current system placed too much pressure on children, with 20% of comments noting that post-primary school access should be based on (see comment above) academic/past performance.



- 24% of the children’s comments underlined that they still wanted to take the transfer test to access a grammar/ post-primary school. 20% of comments related to children feeling that the tests were unfair.
- Parents/ guardians were then asked if they had any other comments in respect of post-primary transfer.



- 37% of comments related to parents/guardians feeling academic selection is unfair/elitist/unfit for purpose, with 16% of comments relating to academic selection being important for maximising pupil potential.
- 1546 parents/guardians stated they would like to be involved in discussing this topic further with the Assembly’s Education Committee.
- 1921 parents/guardians requested the link to the young persons' survey.



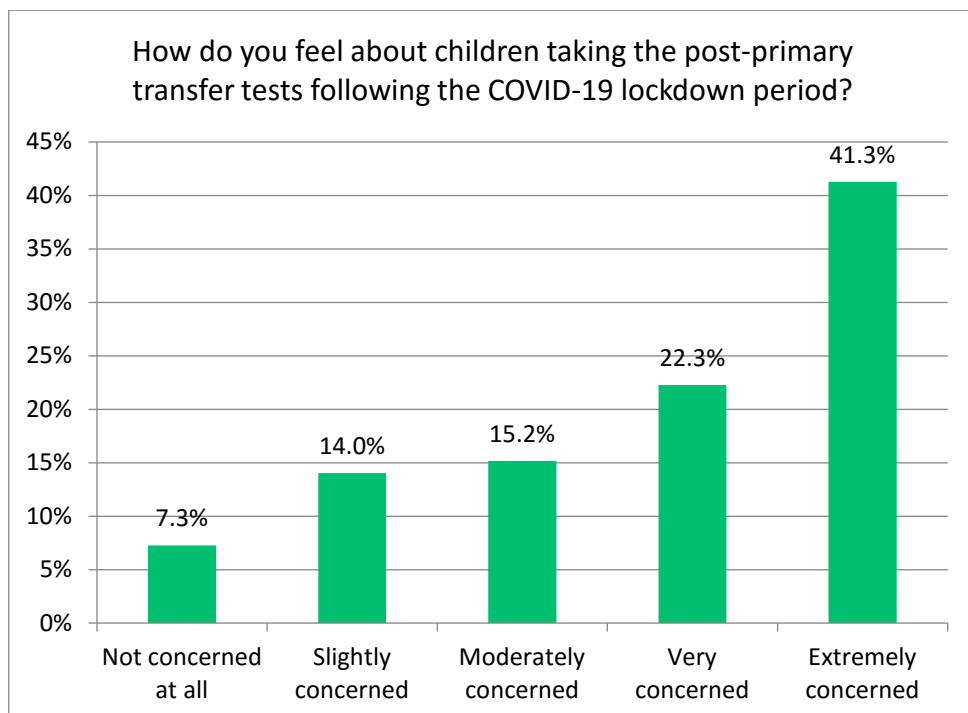
### Results of Post-Primary Transfer Survey: Teachers

The following report details the quantitative and qualitative responses of 1858 teachers who completed the post-primary transfer test survey.

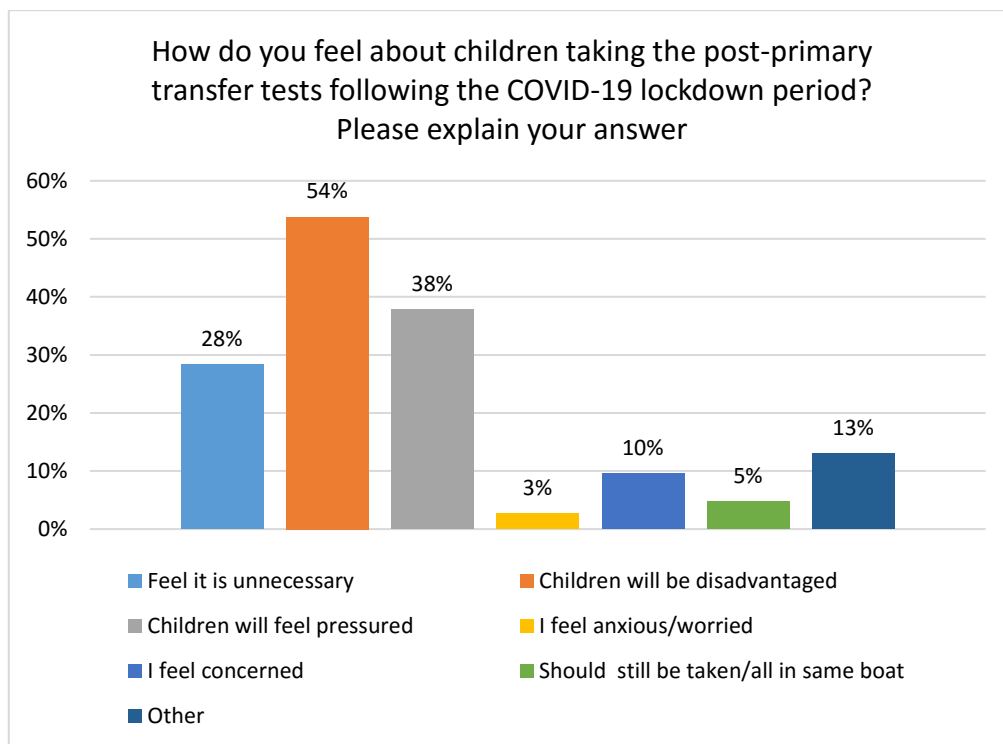
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Comments that were less frequently mentioned, or did not refer to the question, have been classified as 'other'.

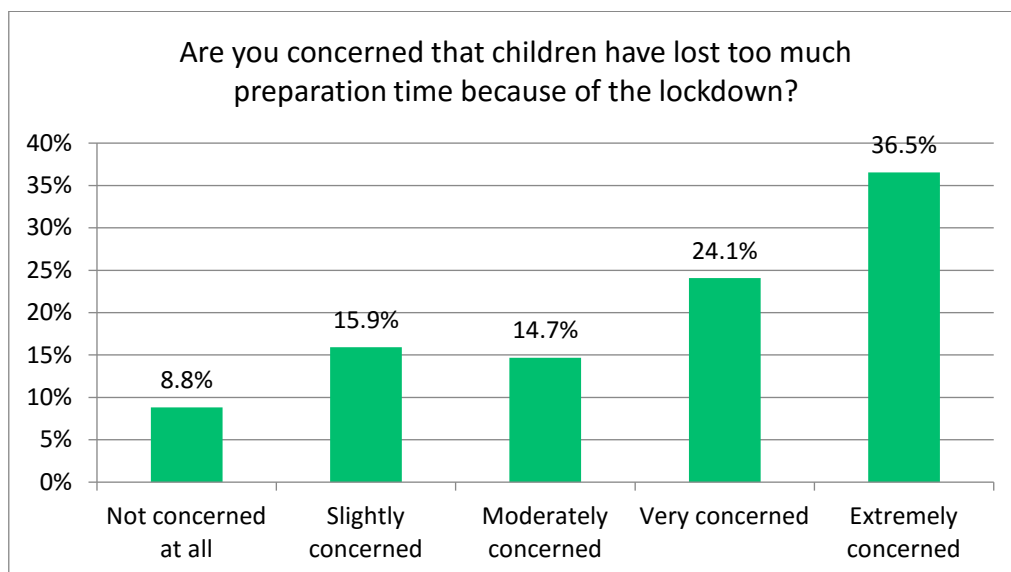
- 78% of those who responded were Primary School teachers (of which 51% identified as Primary 6 or 7 teachers), 11% identified as teachers in Post-Primary (non-selective) schools and a further 8% identified as teachers in Post-Primary (selective) schools.
- Teachers were asked how they felt about children taking the post-primary transfer tests following the COVID-19 lockdown period. The results were as follows:

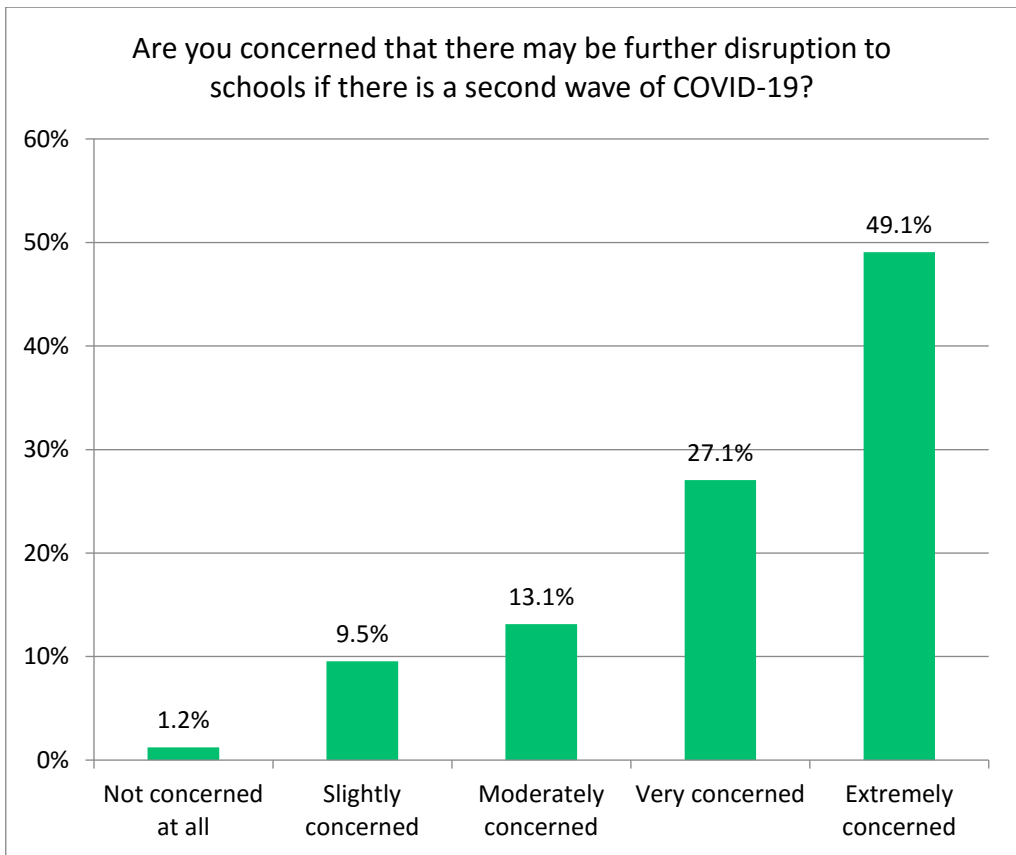
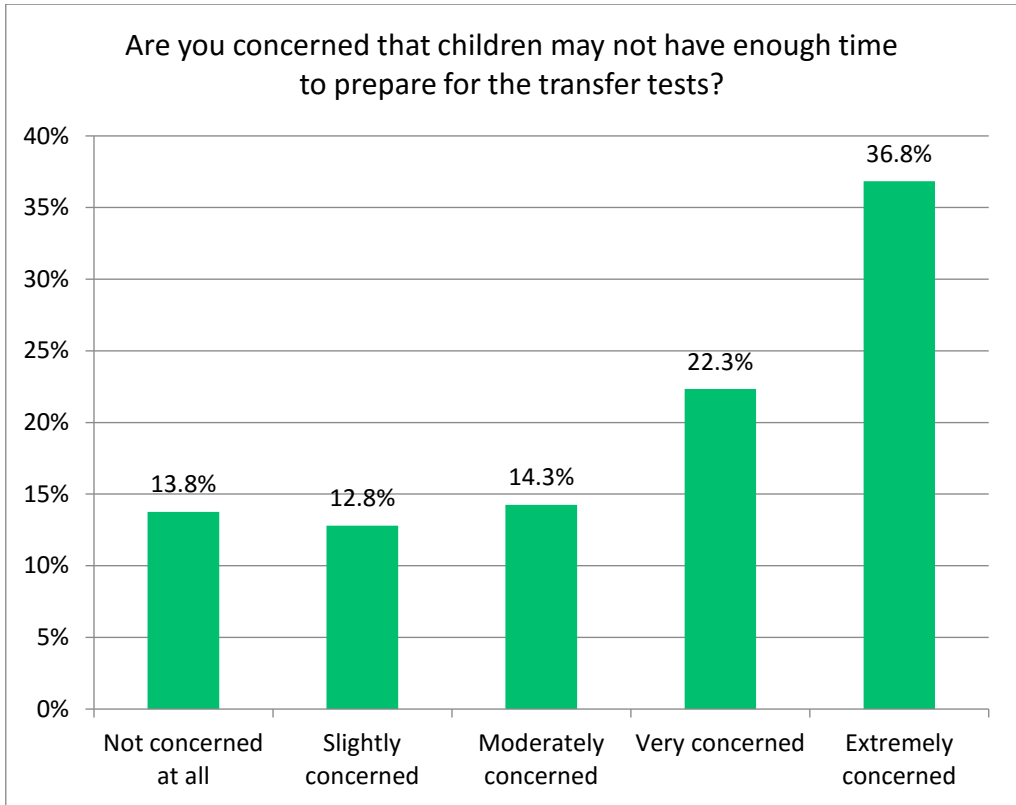


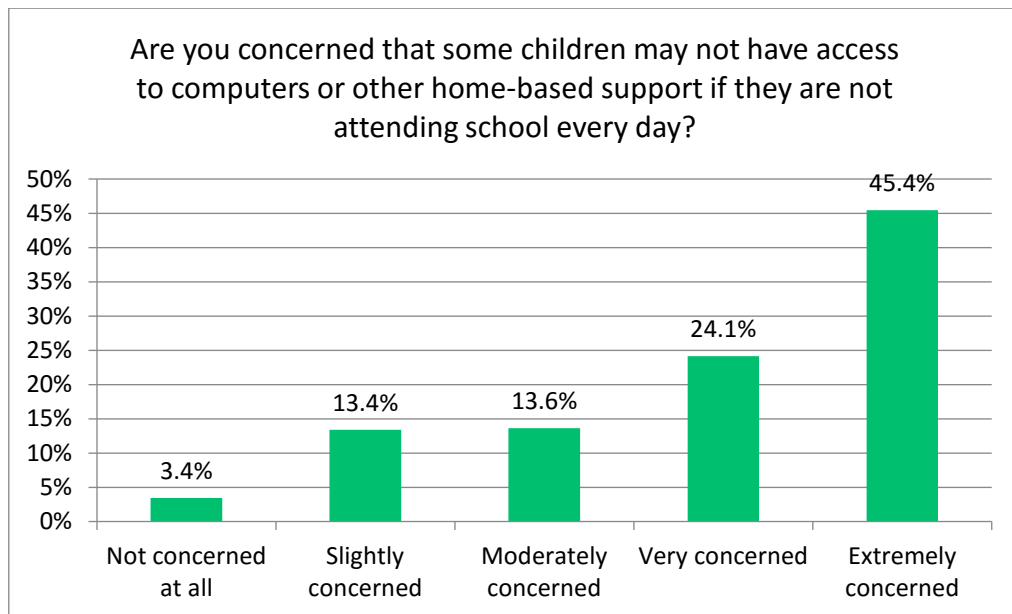
- They were then asked to explain their answer:



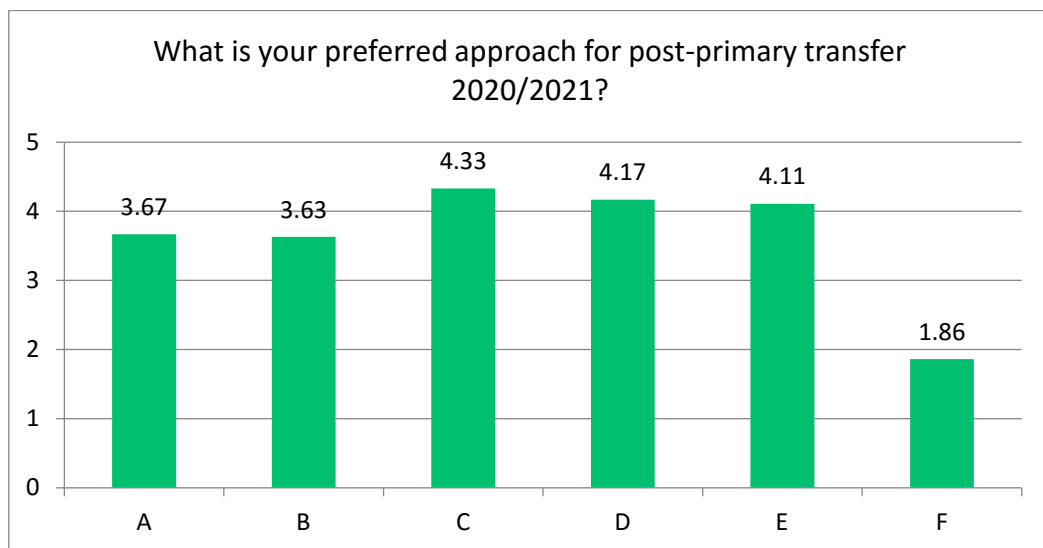
- 54% of comments related to concerns that children will be disadvantaged, with 38% relating to concerns that children will feel pressured.
- Teachers were then asked a series of questions on whether or not they felt lockdown, possible future school disruption, access to computers and other home-based support had or could impact on pupils' preparedness for the test. The results are as follows:





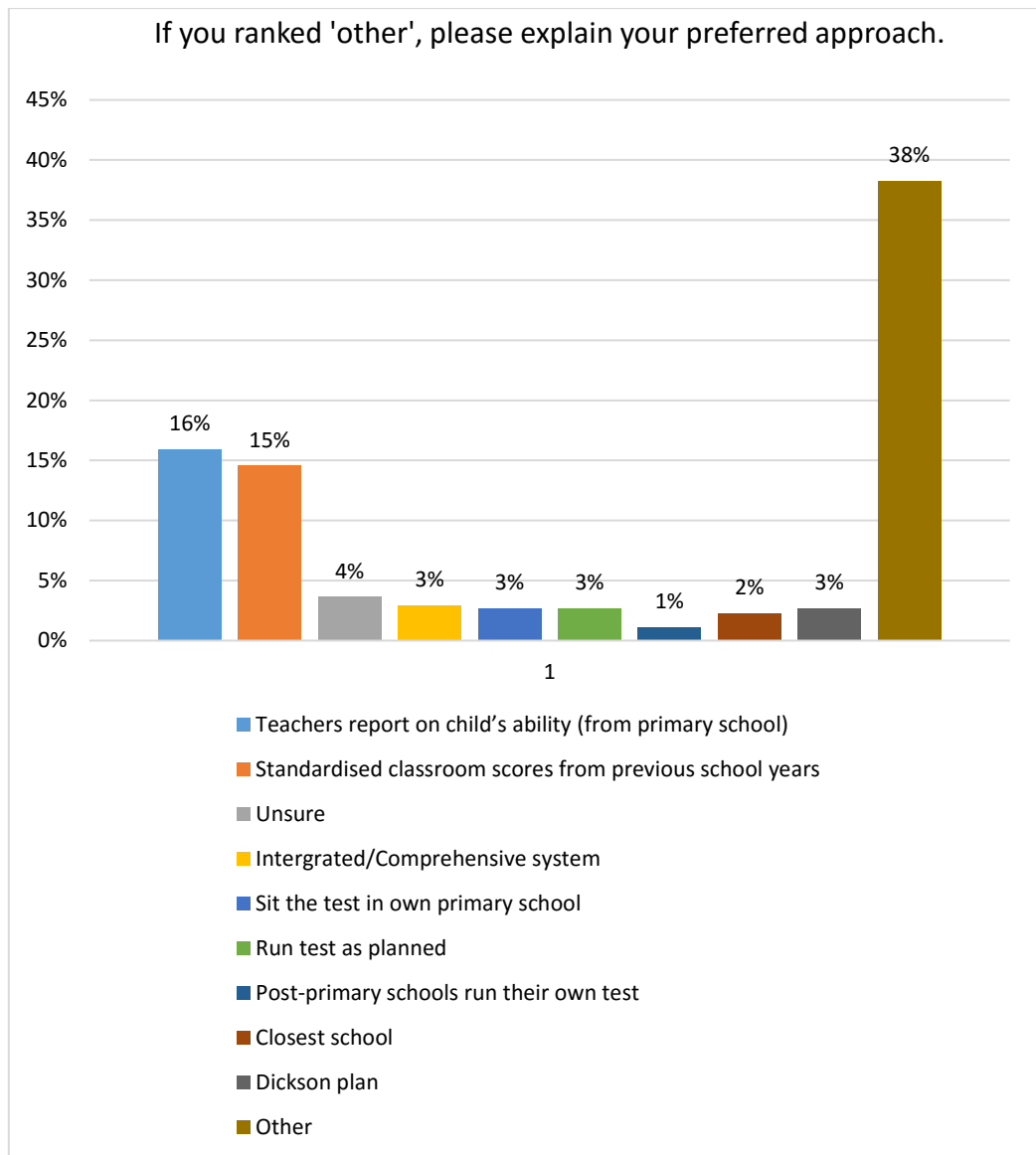


- Teachers were then asked what their preferred approach for the post-primary transfer would be for this coming academic year. They were asked to rank their preference from 1 to 6, with the results providing a score for each option.

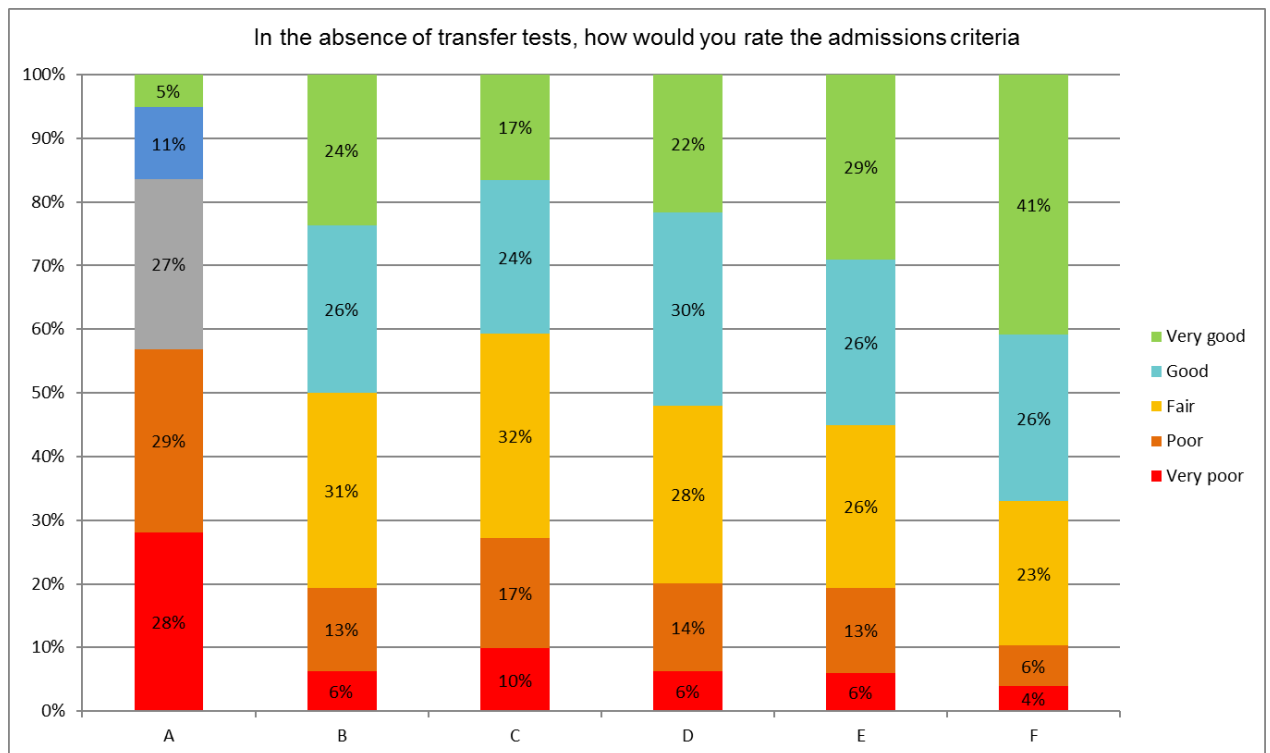


- A - Run the tests on the scheduled dates in November/December 2020
- B - Delay the tests until January 2021, even if this means some children may not be placed in a post-primary school at the start of the school year, in September 2021
- C - Do not run the tests and instead permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, for example the Department of Education recommended criteria, for this year only
- D - End the use of tests as a means of academic selection
- E - Use an alternative system to assess a child's academic ability
- F - Other

The highest scoring answer was to not run the tests and instead permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, with a score of 4.33. The second highest scoring answer was to end the use of tests as a means of academic selection, with a score of 4.17. The lowest scoring answer was to delay the tests until January 2021 with a score of 3.63. It must be noted that, excluding the 'other' option, the variation between the results of the scores is small.



- 16% of comments referred to support for a teacher's report on the child's ability; with 15% noting a preference for the use of standardised classroom scores.
- Respondents were then given a list of the Department of Education recommended admissions criteria for over-subscribed post-primary schools. They were asked, in the absence of transfer tests, how they would rate the admissions criteria. The results were as follows:

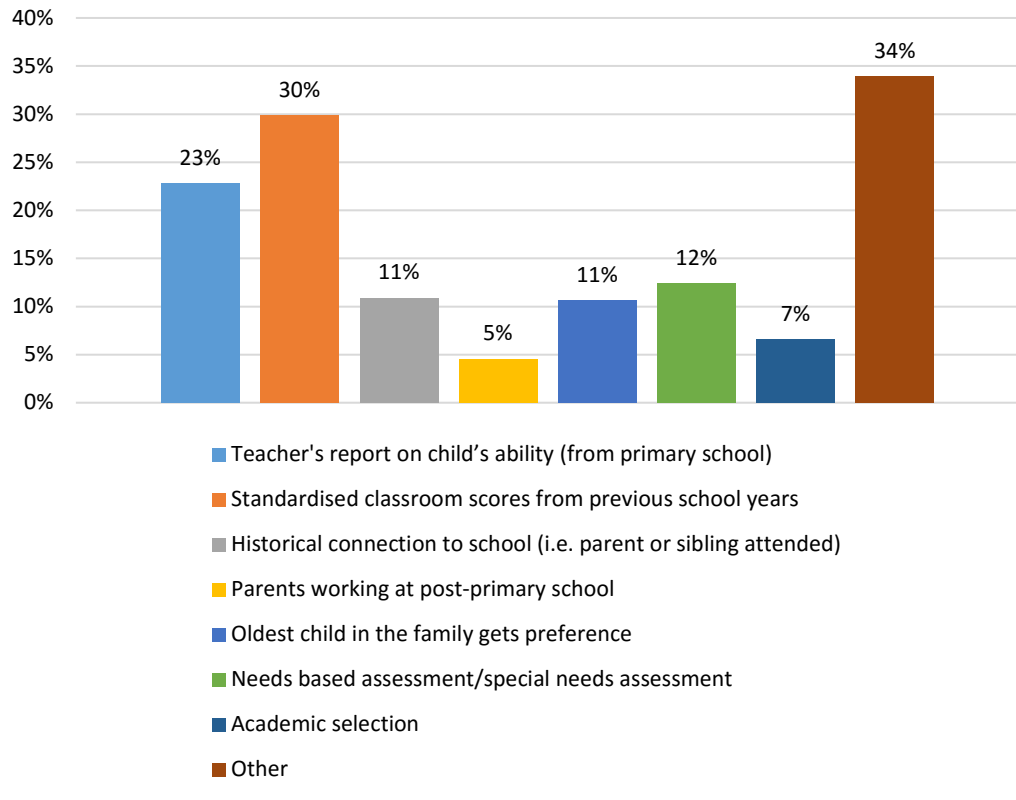


- A- Proportion of Free School Meal applicants received
- B- Applicants from a feeder/named primary school
- C- Applicants residing in a named Parish (with nearest suitable school)
- D- Applicants residing in a geographically defined/catchment area (with nearest suitable school)
- E- Applicants for whom the school is the nearest suitable school
- F- Applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school

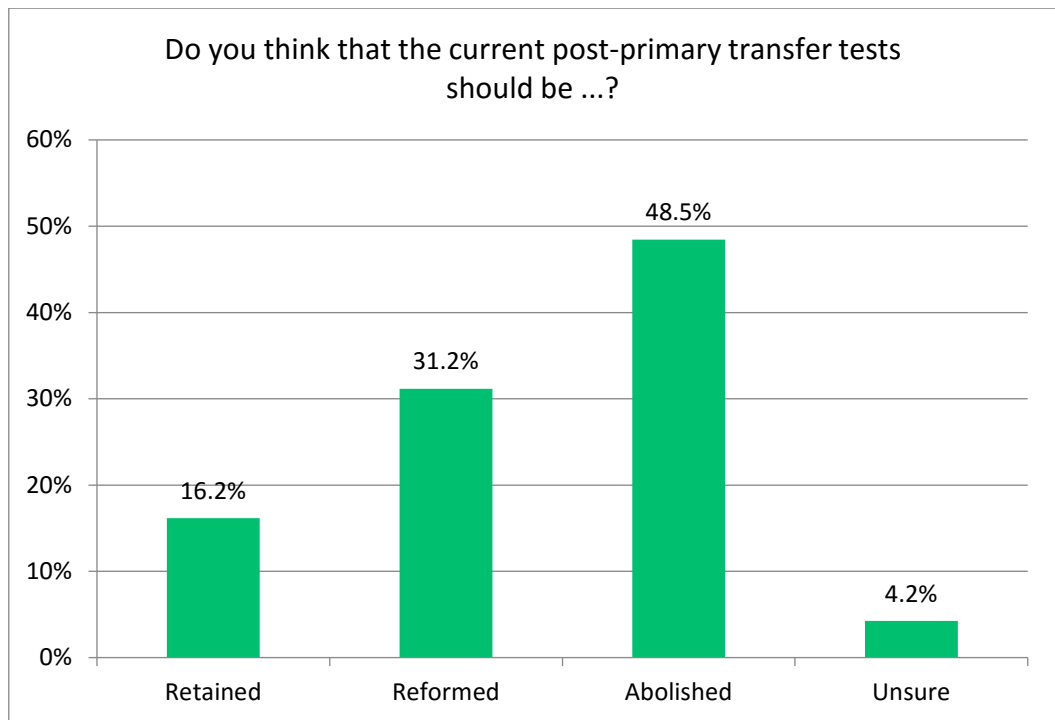
The data in the following analysis has been rounded to one significant figure.

- 16% felt the proportion of Free School Meal applicants received was a good or very good criteria, with 57% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 50% felt applicants from a feeder/named primary school was a good or very good criteria, with 19% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 41% felt applicants residing in a named Parish (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria, with 27% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 52% felt applicants residing in a geographically defined/catchment area (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria, with 20% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 55% felt applicants for whom the school is the nearest suitable school was a good or very good criteria, with 19% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 67% felt applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school was a good or very good criteria, with 10% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- They were then asked if there were other admissions criteria for over-subscribed schools that should be adopted.

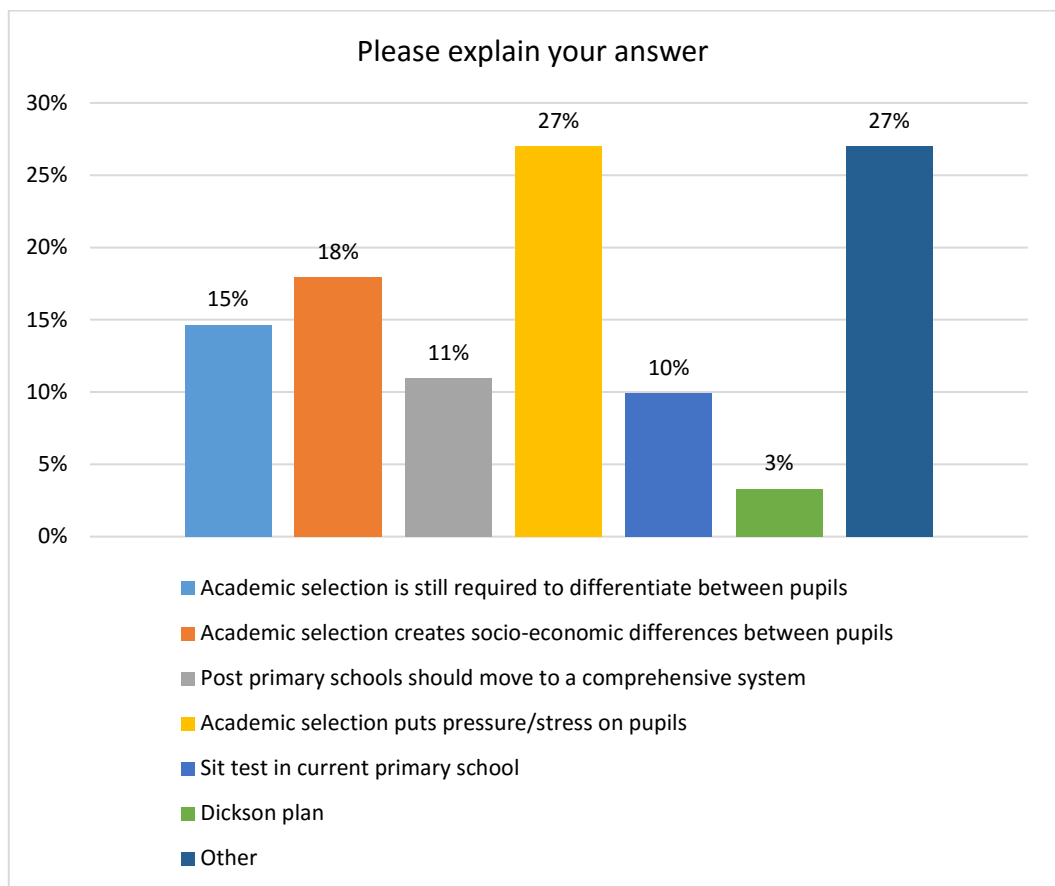
### Are there other admissions criteria for over-subscribed post-primary schools which you think should be adopted?



- 30% of comments in this section suggested that admissions criteria should be based on standardised classroom scores from previous school years followed by 23% who suggested that a teachers report on the child's ability would be a good criteria to adopt.
- Teachers were then asked about the future of the transfer tests.

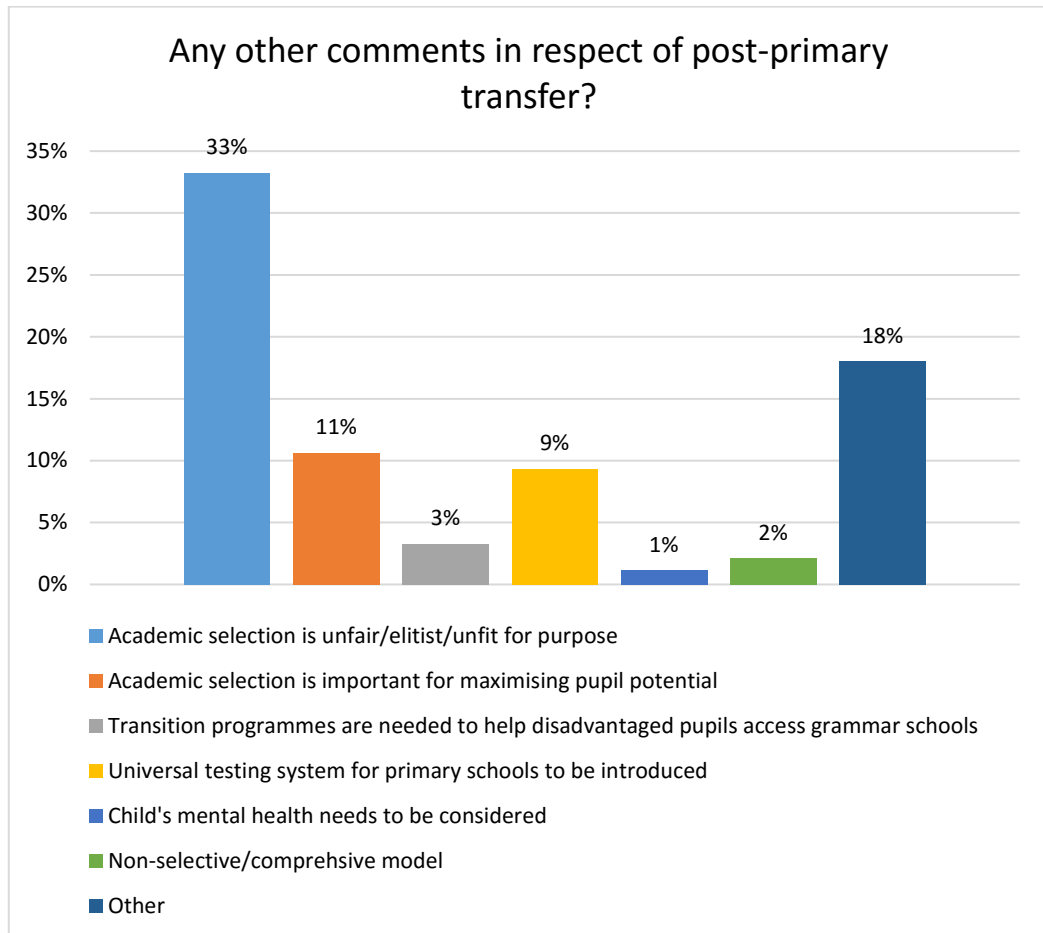


- 16% of respondents felt it should be retained, 31% felt it should be reformed, 48% felt it should be abolished and 4% were unsure.
- Teachers were then asked to explain their answer.





- 27% of comments suggested that the current system placed too much pressure on children, with 18% of comments noting that academic selection created socio-economic differences between pupils.
- They were then asked if they had any other comments in respect of post-primary transfer?



- 33% of comments related to teachers feeling that academic selection is unfair/elitist/unfit for purpose, with 11% of comments noting that academic selection is important for maximising pupil potential.
- 234 teachers stated they would like to be involved in discussing this topic further with the Assembly's Education Committee.
- 273 requested the link to the young persons' survey.

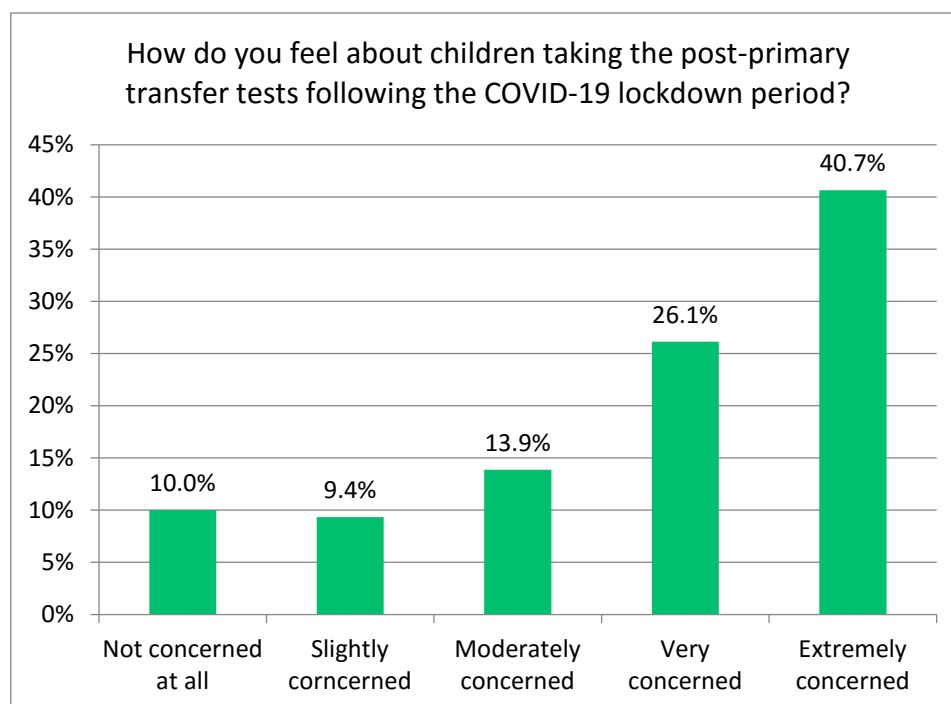
### Results of Post-Primary Transfer Survey: 'Other' Interested Parties

The following report details the quantitative and qualitative responses of 509 other interested parties who completed the post-primary transfer test survey.

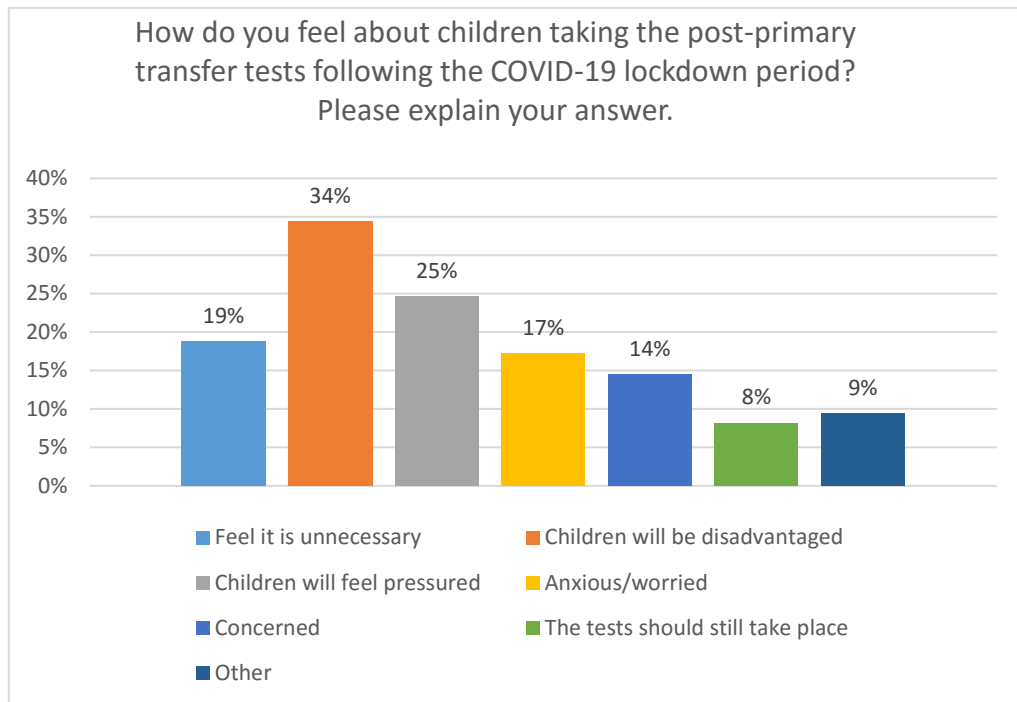
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Comments that were less frequently mentioned, or did not refer to the question, have been classified as 'other'.

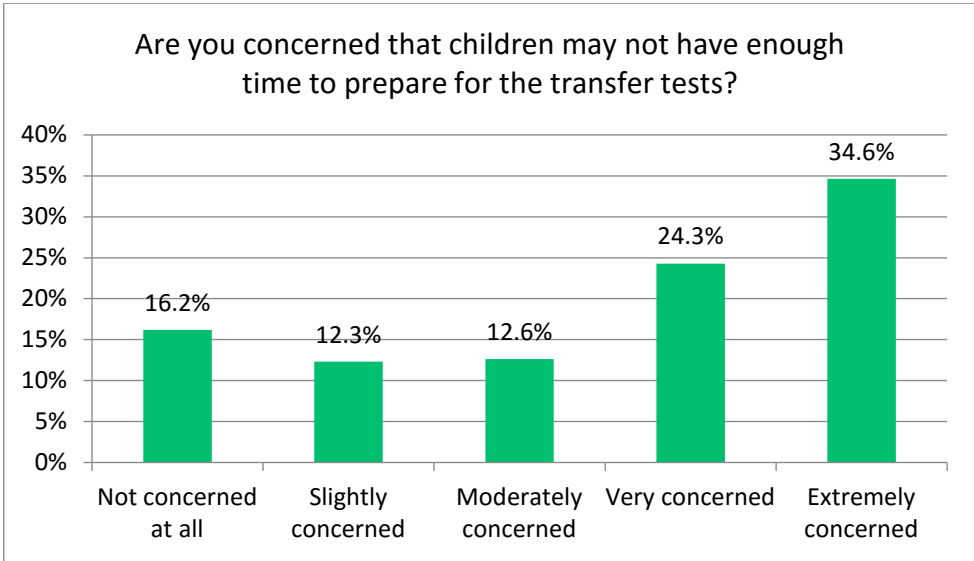
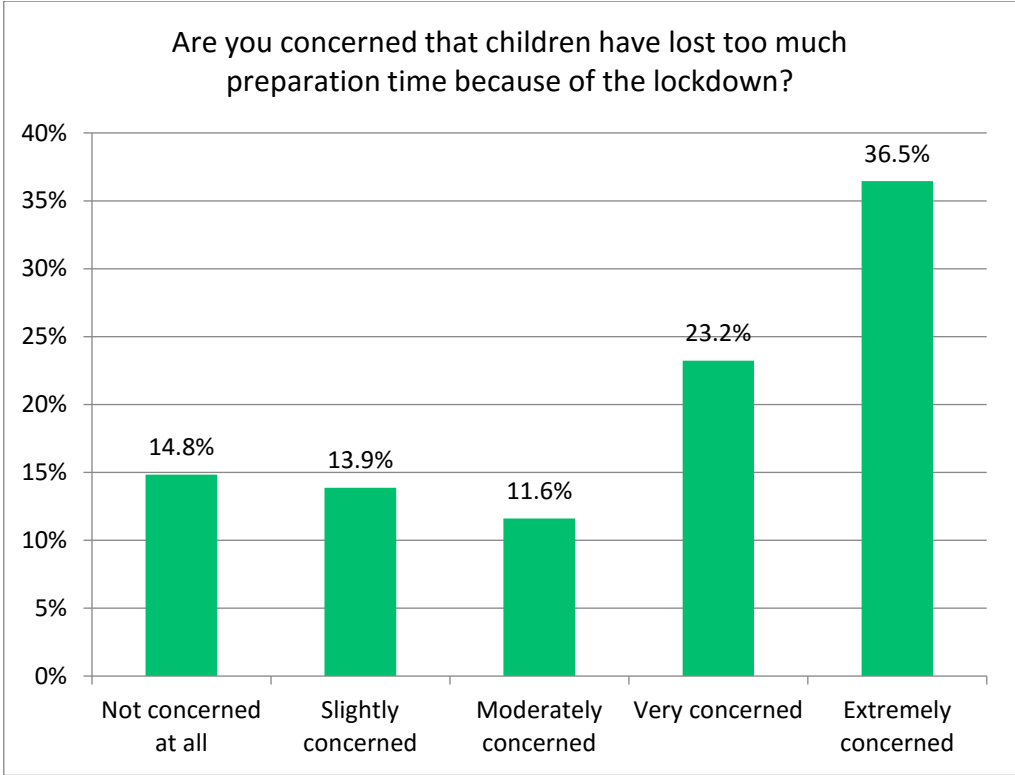
- Other interested parties included relatives, educational staff, academics and organisations with an interest in youth and educational issues.
- Respondents were asked how they felt about children taking the post-primary transfer tests following the COVID-19 lockdown period. The results were as follows:

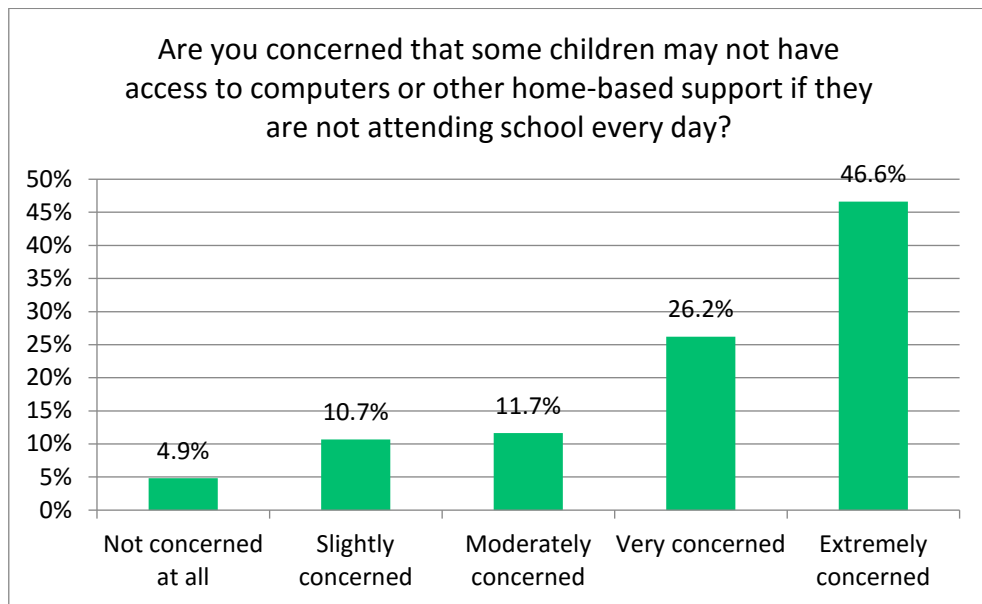
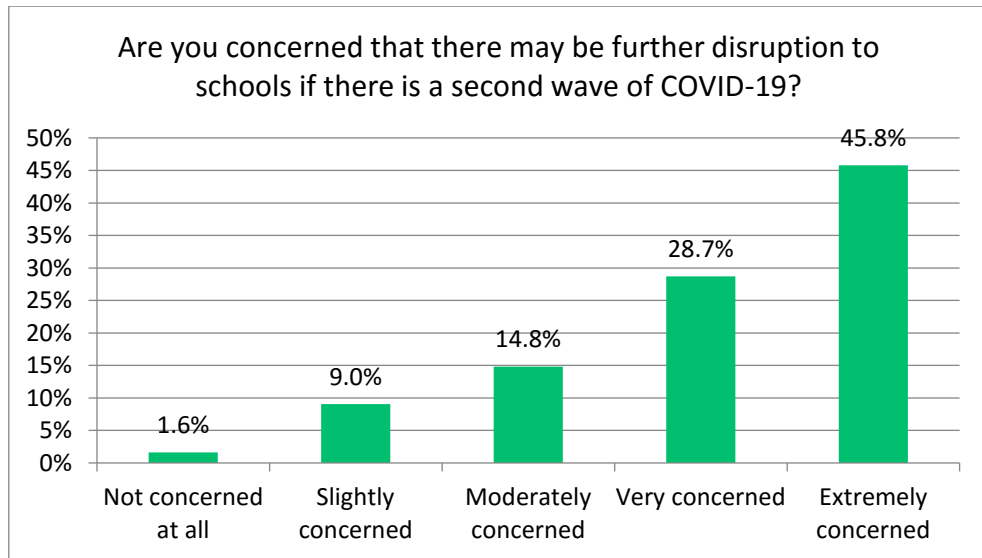


- They were then asked to explain their answer:

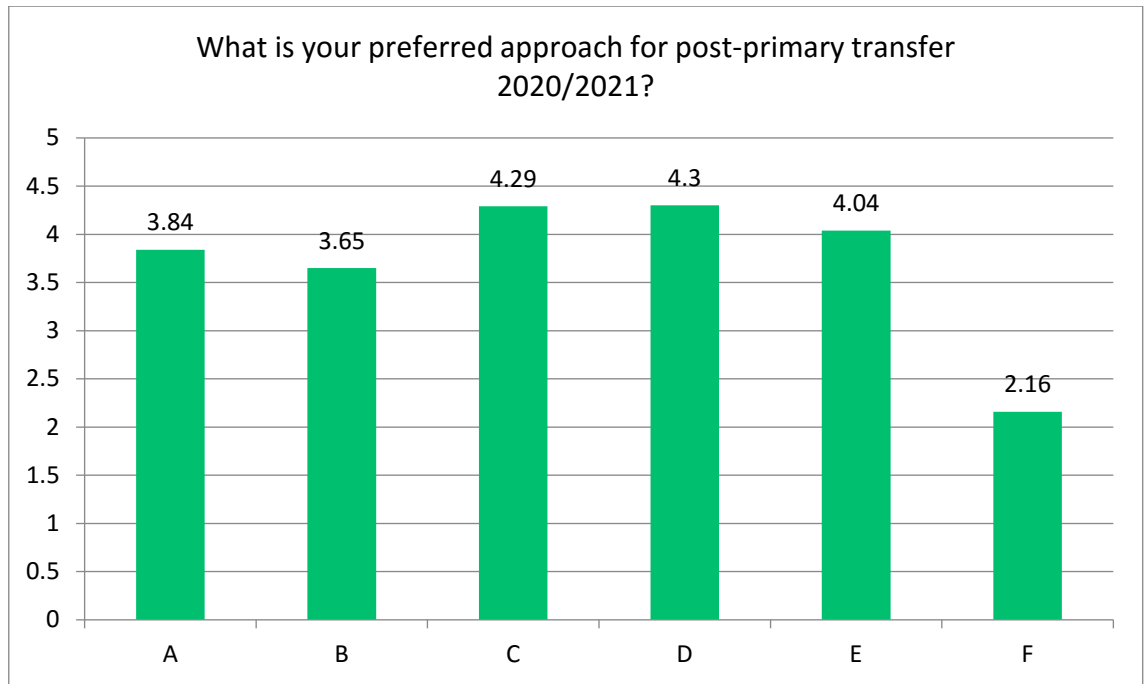


- 34% of the comments referred to children being disadvantaged due to the COVID-19 lockdown, with 25% of comments relating to children feeling pressured.
- They were then asked a series of questions on whether or not they felt lockdown, possible future school disruption, access to computers and other home-based support had or could impact on children's preparedness for the test. The results are as follows:



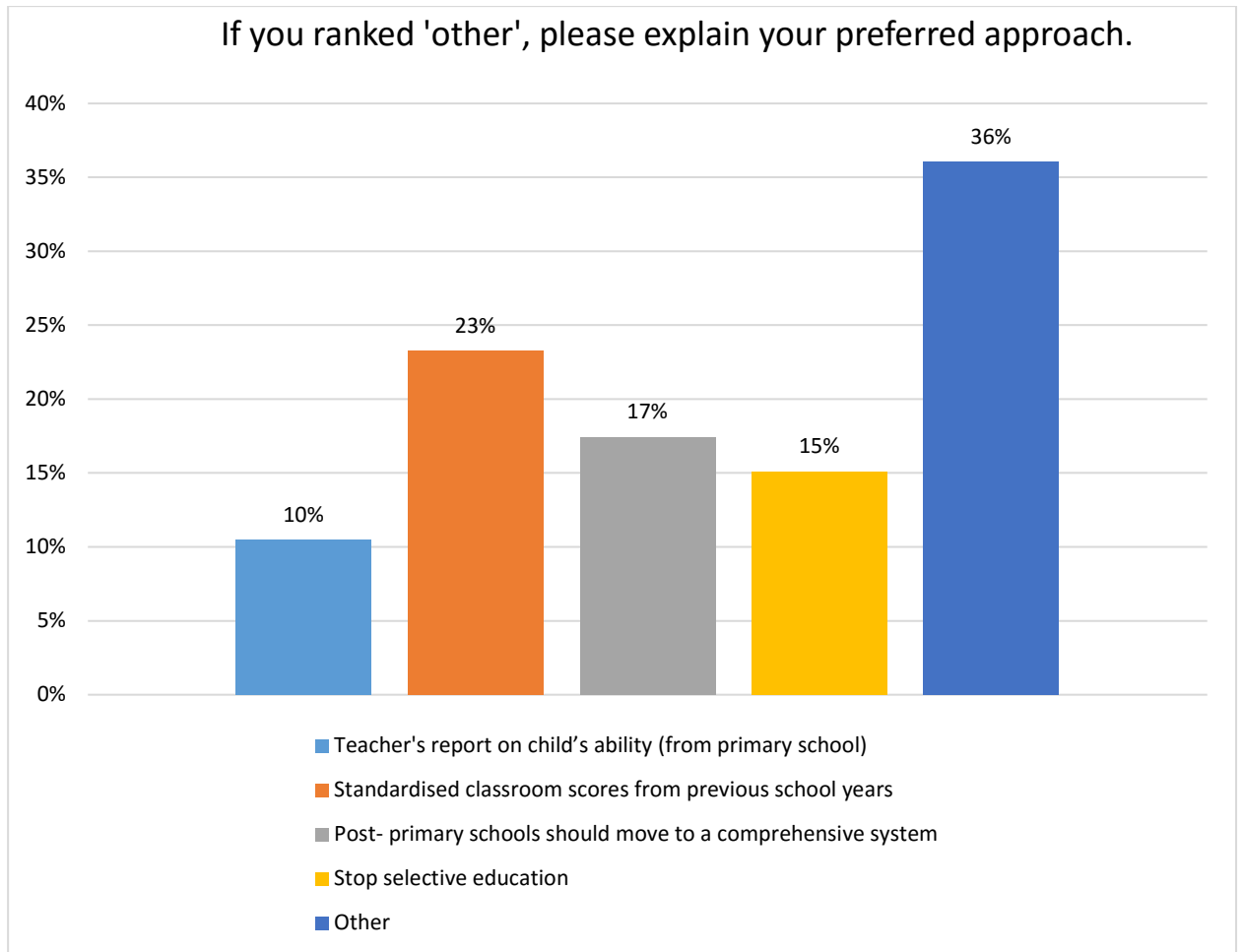


- Respondents were then asked what their preferred approach for post-primary transfer would be for this coming academic year. They were asked to rank their preference from 1 to 6, with the results providing a score for each option, in order of rank.



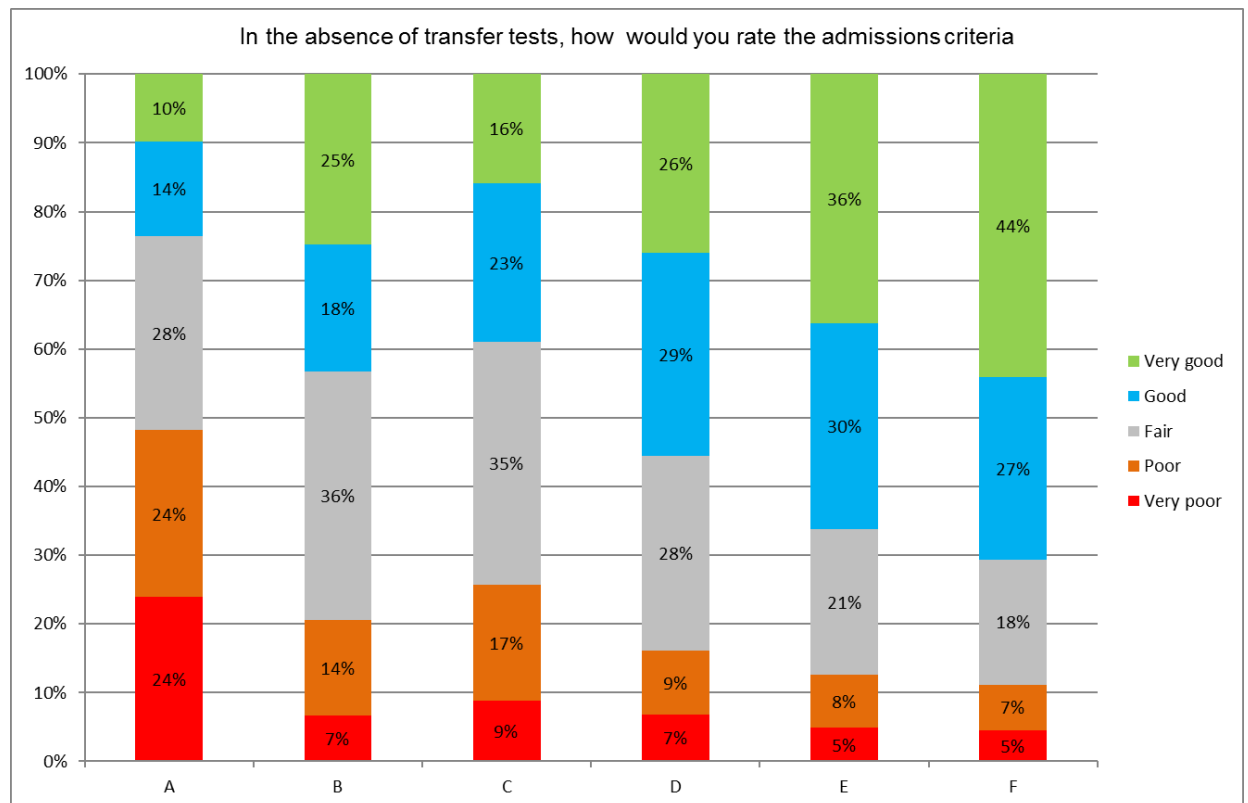
- A - Run the tests on the scheduled dates in November/December 2020
- B - Delay the tests until January 2021, even if this means some children may not be placed in a post-primary school at the start of the school year in September 2021
- C - Do not run the tests and instead permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, for example the Department of Education recommended criteria, for this year only
- D - End the use of tests as a means of academic selection
- E - Use an alternative system to assess a child's academic ability
- F - Other

- The highest scoring answer was to end the use of tests as a means of academic selection, with a score of 4.3. The second highest scoring answer was, to not run the tests and instead permit post-primary schools to use non-academic admissions criteria, with a score of 4.29. The lowest scoring answer was, to delay the tests until January 2021, with a score of 3.65. It should be noted that, excluding the 'other' option, the variation between the scoring in this category was minimal.
- Respondents were then asked to explain their preferred approach if they had ranked 'other' as an option.



- 23% of comments referred to support for standardised classroom scores, with 17% referring to a preference for a teacher's report on the child's ability.

Respondents were then given a list of the Department of Education recommended admissions criteria for over-subscribed post-primary schools. They were asked that in the absence of transfer tests, how would they rate the admissions criteria. The results were as follows:



- A Proportion of Free School Meal applicants received
- B Applicants from a feeder/named primary school
- C Applicants residing in a named Parish (with nearest suitable school)
- D Applicants residing in a geographically defined/catchment area (with nearest suitable school)
- E Applicants for whom the school is the nearest suitable school
- F Applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school

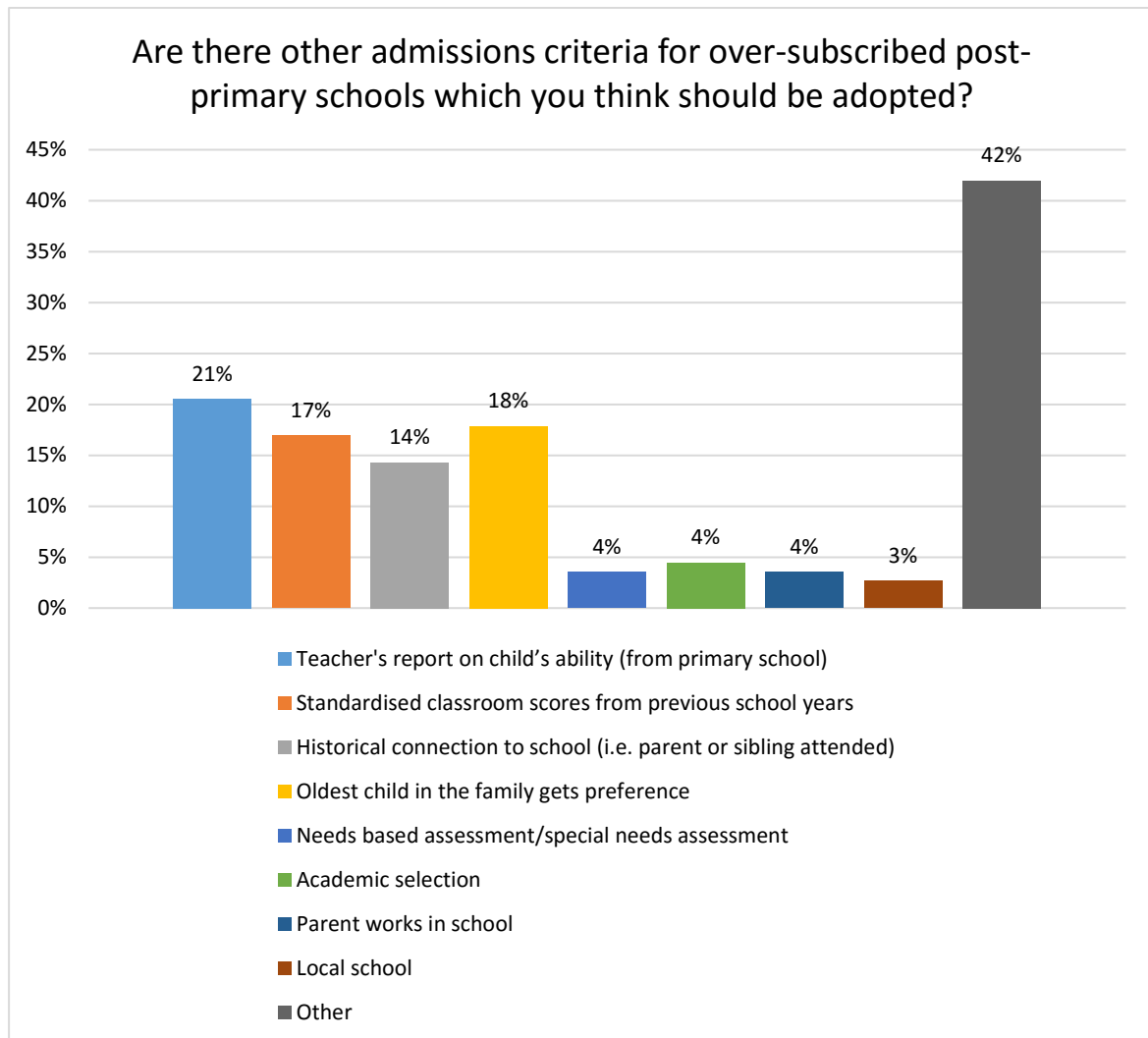
The following data has been rounded to one significant figure.

- 24% felt that the proportion of Free School Meal applicants received was a good or very good criteria, with 48% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 43% felt that applicants from a feeder/named primary school was a good or very good criteria, with 21% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 39% felt that applicants residing in a named Parish (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria, with 26% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 55% felt that applicants residing in a geographically defined/catchment area (with nearest suitable school) was a good or very good criteria, with 16% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.



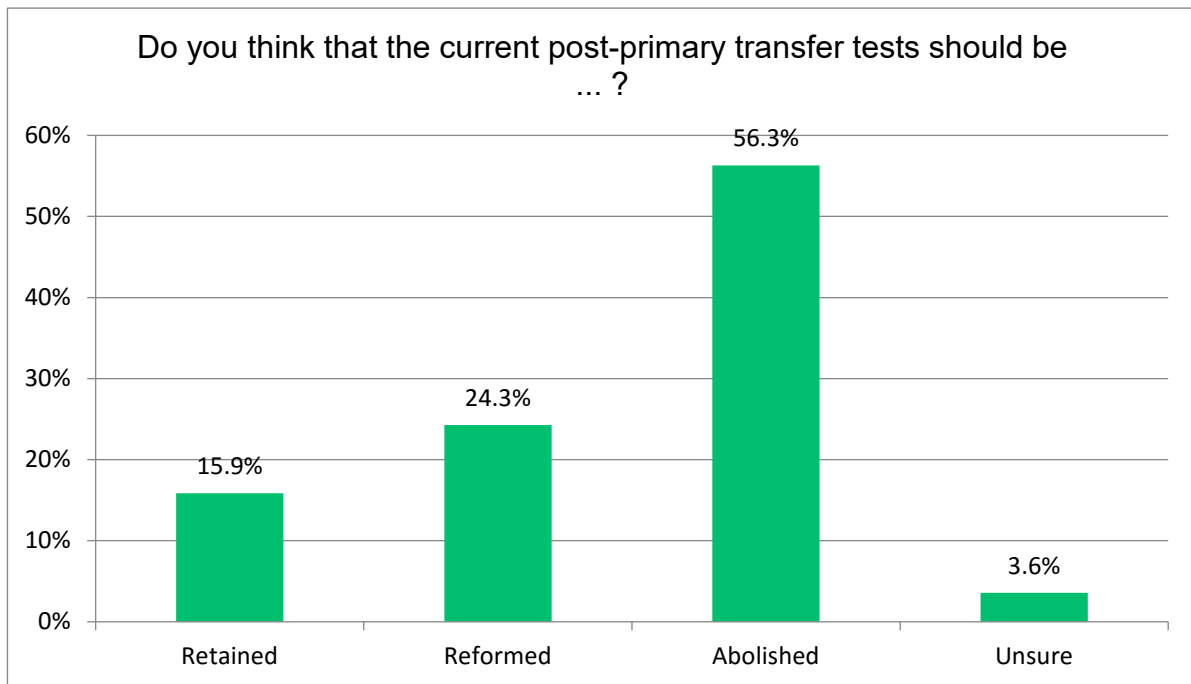
- 66% felt that applicants for whom the school is the nearest suitable school was a good or very good criteria, with 13% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.
- 71% felt that applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school was a good or very good criteria, with 12% feeling it was a poor or very poor criteria.

They were then asked if there were other admissions criteria that should be adopted. The comments were as follows:



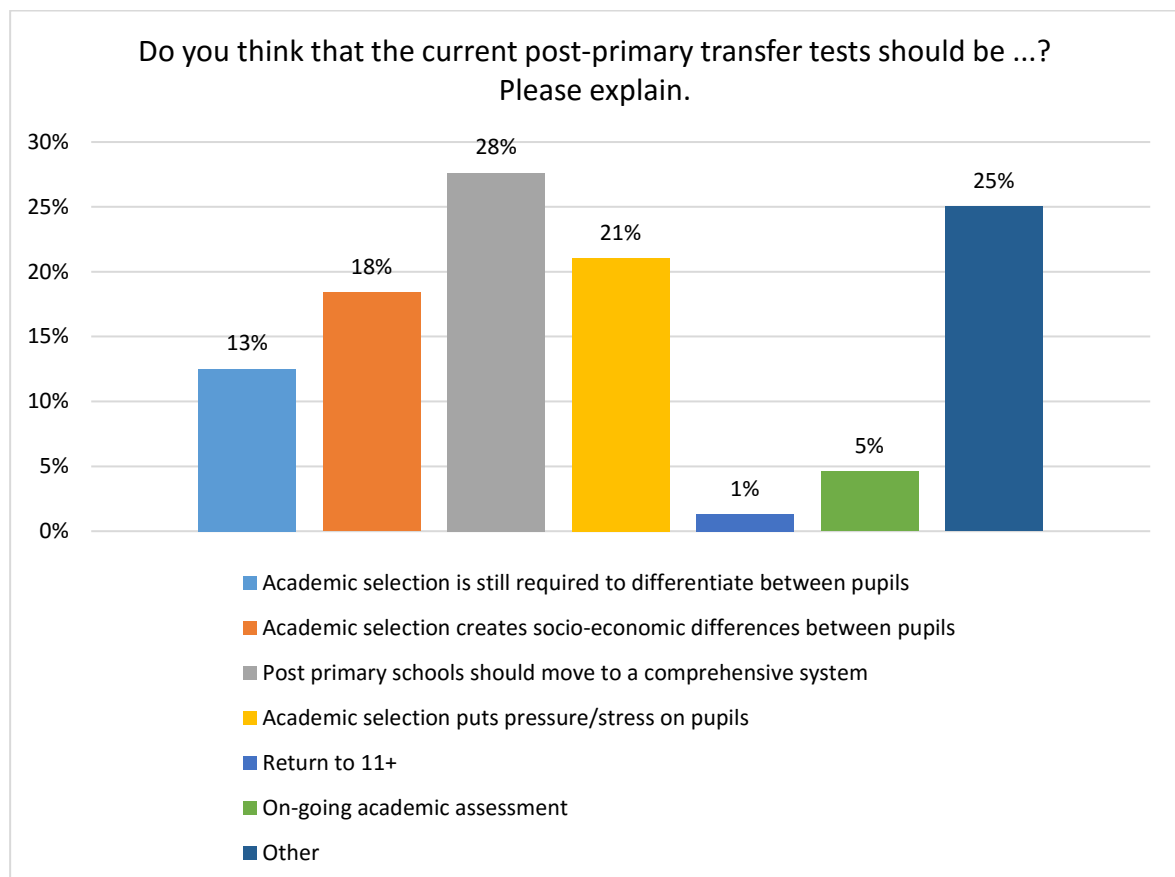
- Most comments related to respondents suggesting that it should be based on a teachers report on the child's ability (21%), followed by, oldest child in the family gets preference (18%).

- Respondents were then asked about the future of the transfer tests.

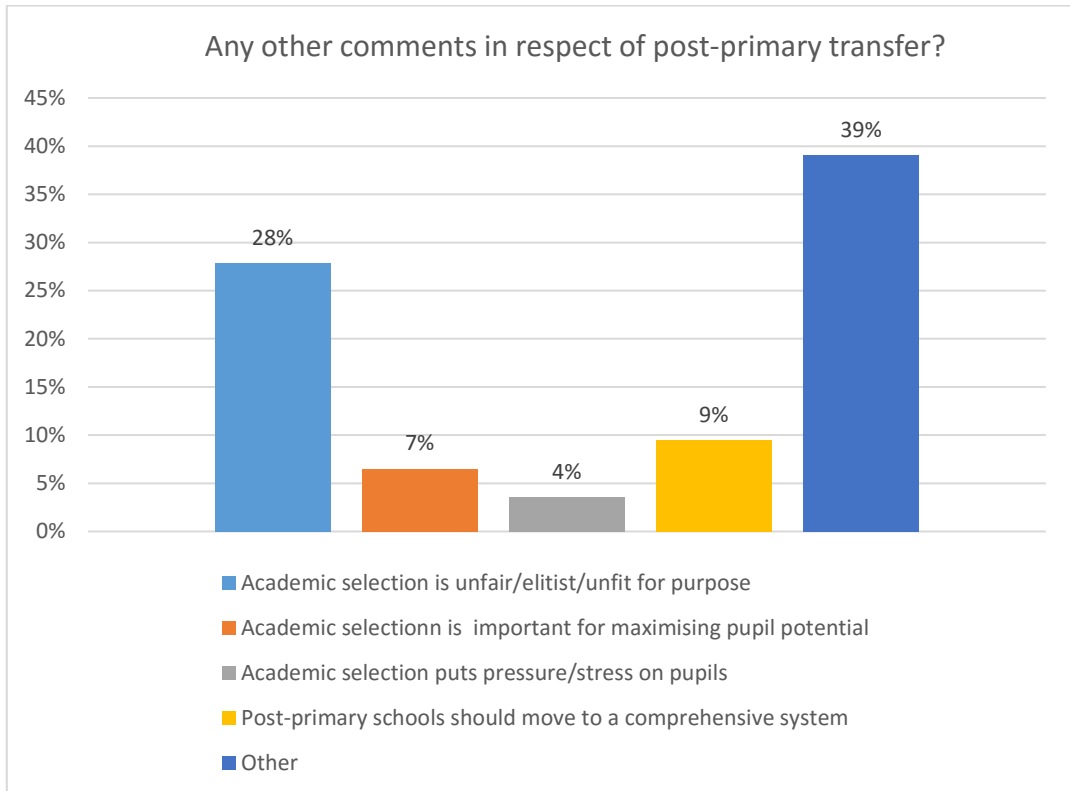


- 16% felt it should be retained, 24% felt it should be reformed, 56% felt it should be abolished and 4% were unsure.

They were then asked to explain their answer.



- 28% of respondents stated that they felt post primary schools should move to a comprehensive system, with 21% noting that academic selection puts too much pressure/stress on pupils.



- 28% of comments related to other interested parties feeling that academic selection is unfair/elitist/unfit for purpose, with 9% of comments mentioning that post primary schools should move to a comprehensive system.
- 81 people who responded in this category, stated they would like to be involved in discussing this topic further with the Education Committee.
- 104 respondents requested the link to the young persons' survey.

### **Results of Post-Primary Transfer Survey: Young Peoples Survey**

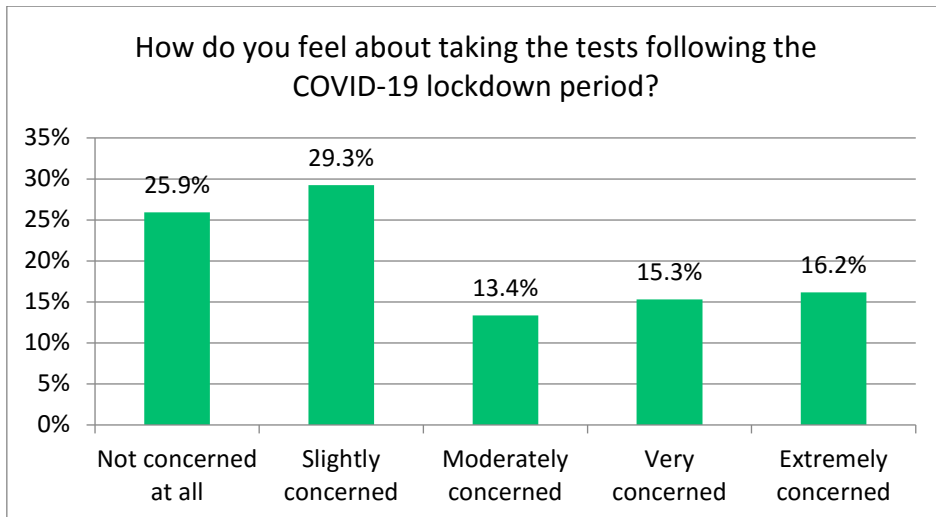
The following report details the quantitative and qualitative responses of 753 young people who completed the post-primary transfer test survey.

Due to the volume of qualitative results, the Assembly Engagement Team engaged the Assembly's Research and Library Service (RaLSe) to help identify the initial key themes emerging from the open-ended responses. Each comment was categorised into a theme/s which reflected its content. The results were then collated and presented in a graphical format. Please note that some responses may have covered a number of areas, and have therefore been categorised, into multiple themes.

Comments that were less frequently mentioned, or did not refer to the question, have been classified as 'other'.

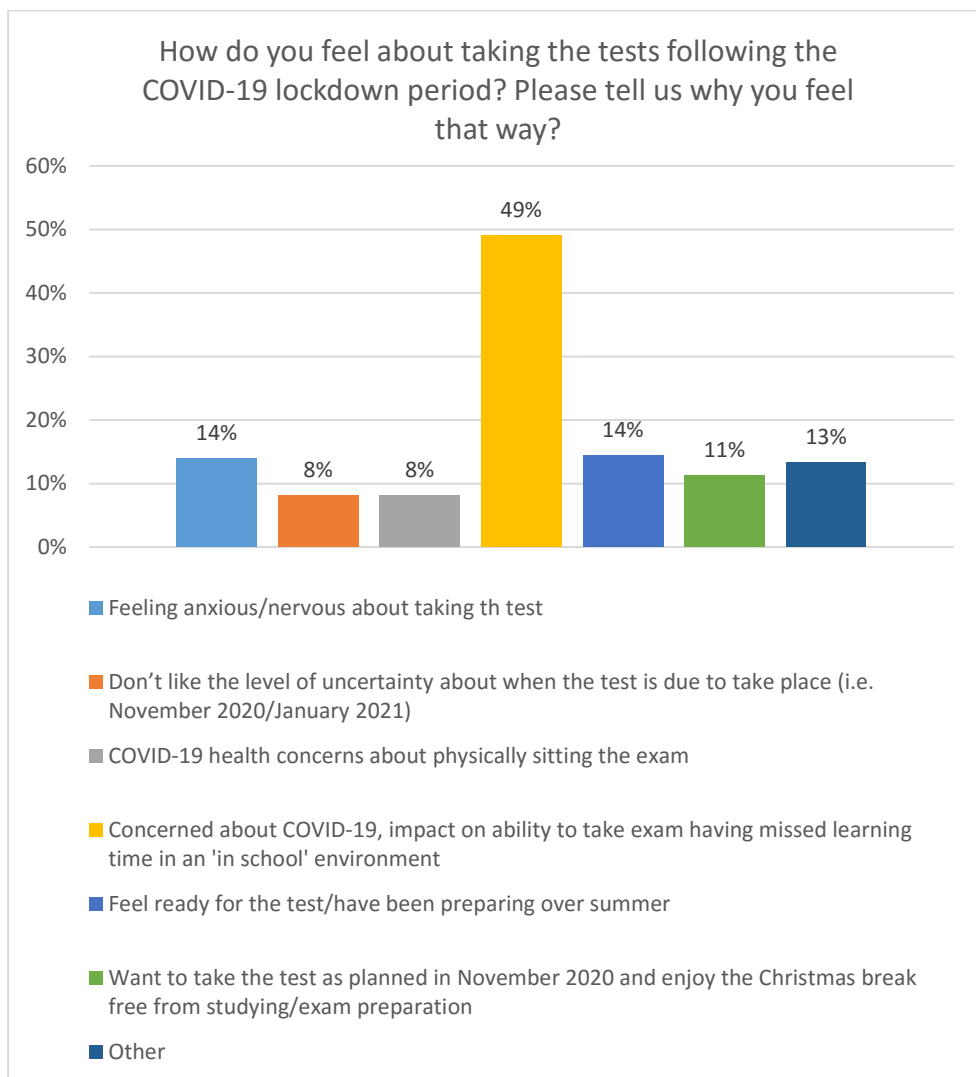
The responses from the young people can be found below:

- 76% of respondents were children going into P7 in September 2020.
- Before the COVID-19 crisis, 91% of those who responded were planning to sit the transfer tests, 4% were not and 5% were unsure.
- The young people who answered yes to the previous question were then asked if they still intended to take the transfer tests in 2020. 88% stated that they were intending to take the tests.
- Those who said no or were unsure were asked if they had changed their mind about taking the tests. 21% said they were going to take the tests, with 79% stating that they were still not going to take the tests.
- Respondents were asked how they feel about taking the tests following the COVID-19 lockdown period.

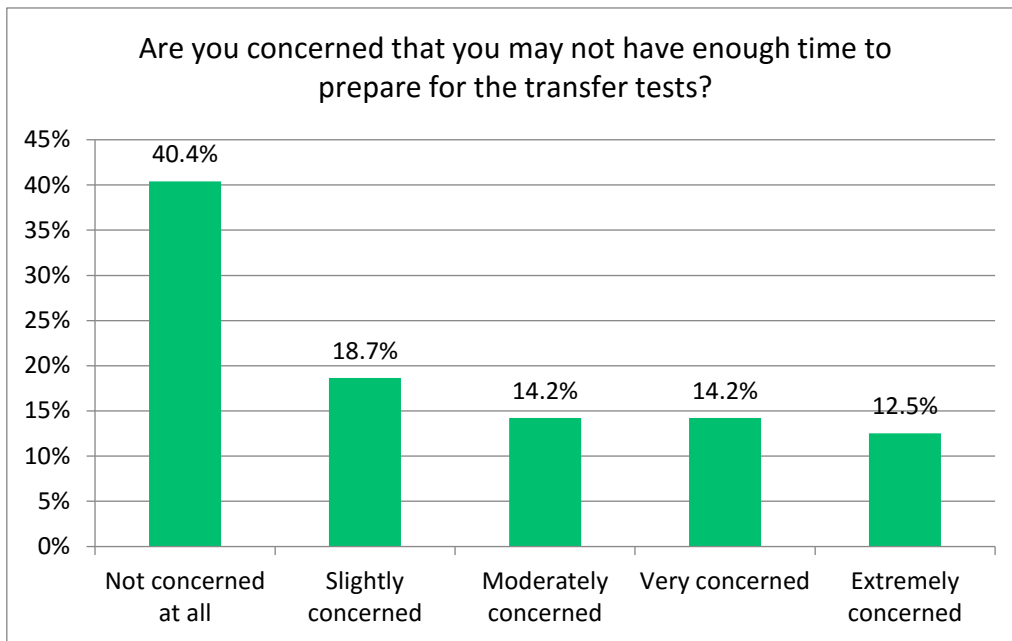


The data in the following analysis has been rounded up to one significant figure.

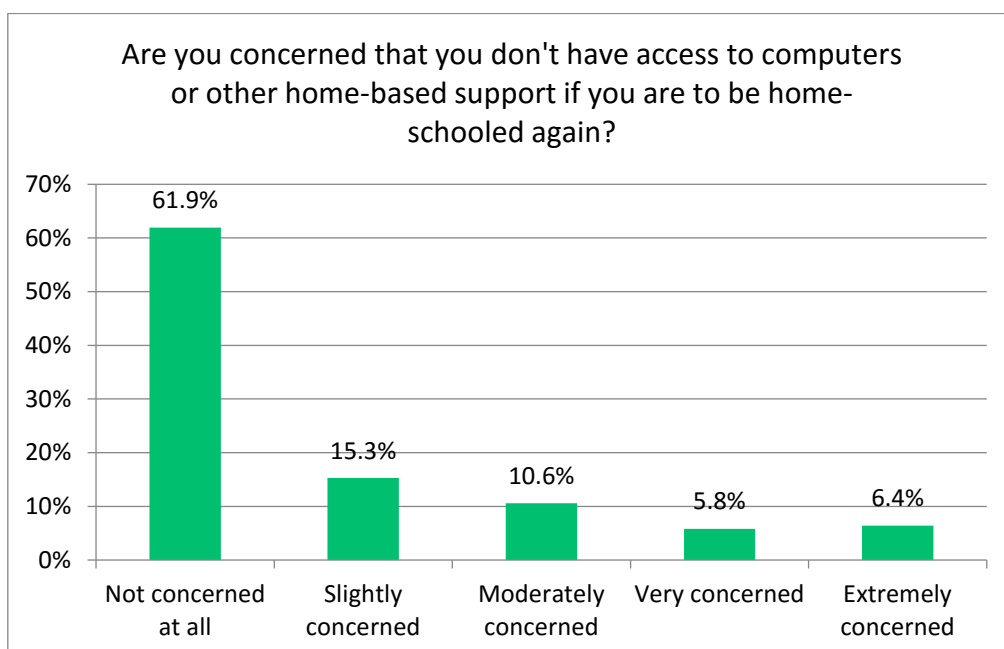
- 55% of young people stated that they were slightly concerned or not concerned at all, with 31% stating that they were very or extremely concerned. They were then asked to explain their answer.



- The most frequent comments referred to concerns about the impact on their ability to take the exam, having missed in-school learning. This appeared in 49% of responses.
- Young people were then asked how concerned they were about not having enough preparation time, and about access to computers and/or other home-based support. The results were as follows:

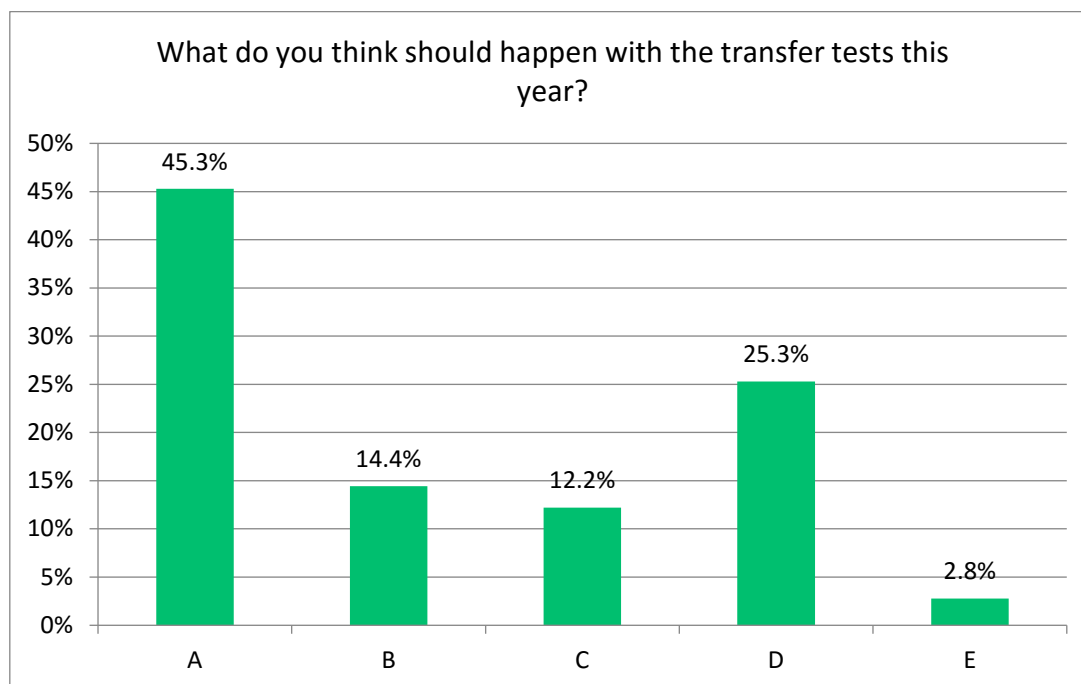


- 59% of young people stated that they were slightly concerned or not concerned at all when asked about not having enough time to prepare for the tests. 27% said they were very or extremely concerned.



- 77% of young people stated that they were slightly concerned or not concerned at all when asked about having access to computers or other home-based support if they were to be home-schooled again. 12% said that they were very or extremely concerned.

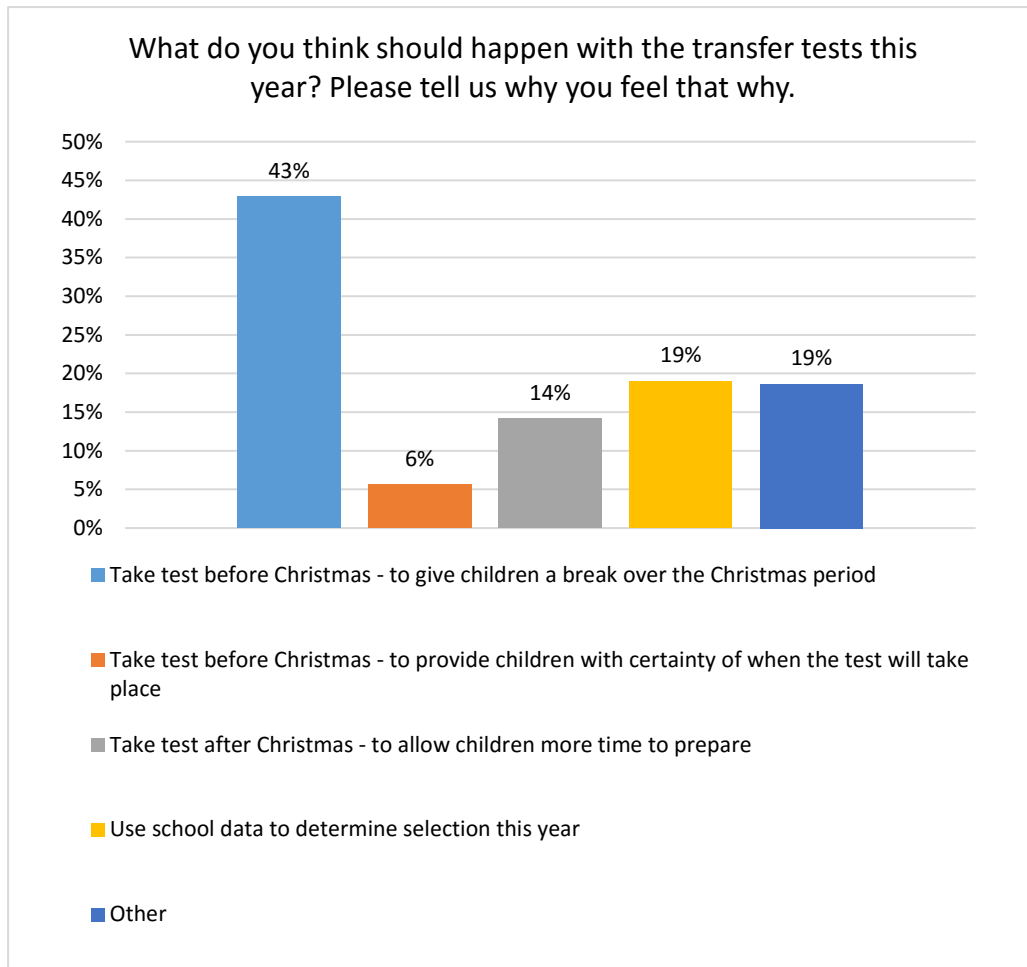
They were then asked what they thought should happen with the transfer tests this year.



- A- Run the tests as planned in the autumn
- B- Delay the tests until January 2021
- C- Do not run the tests, and instead allow post-primary schools to decide who they will take, not based on scores
- D- Use a different way to assess your academic ability e.g. based on your scores in primary school
- E- Other

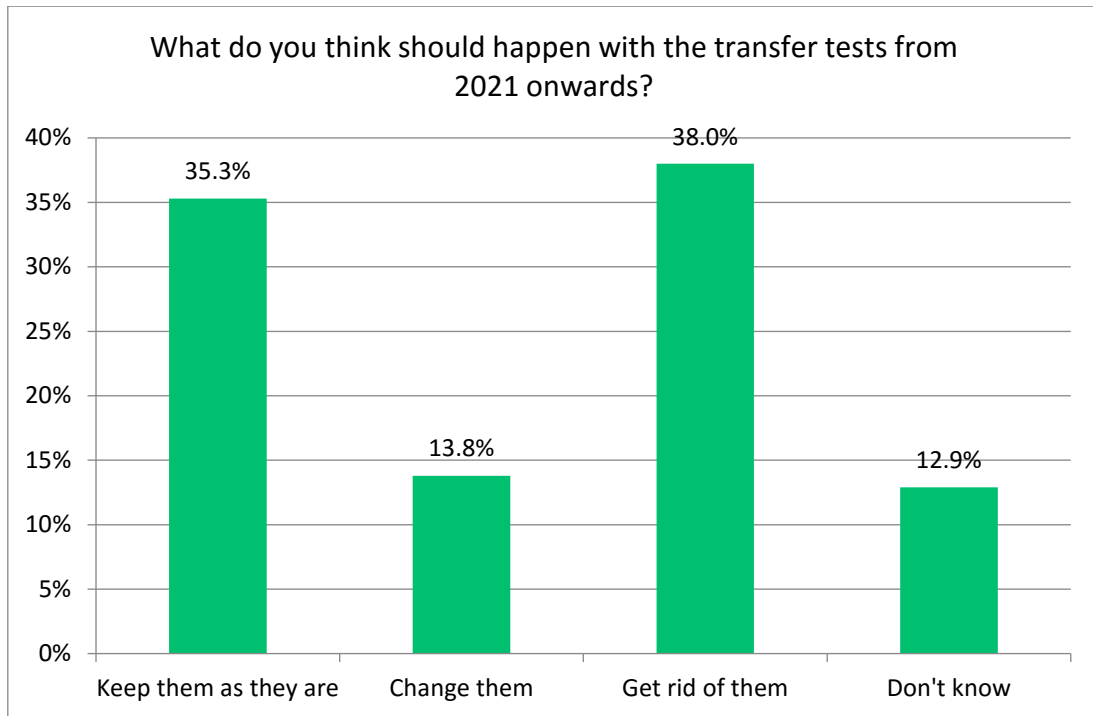
- 45% of young people said that they wanted the tests to run as planned in autumn 2020, with 25% feeling that schools should use a different way to assess academic ability, e.g. based on scores in primary school. 14% felt that the tests should be delayed until January 2021 and 12% felt the tests should run at all, and instead post-primary schools should decide who they will take, not based on scores.

The young people were then asked why they chose their answer. The results were as follows:

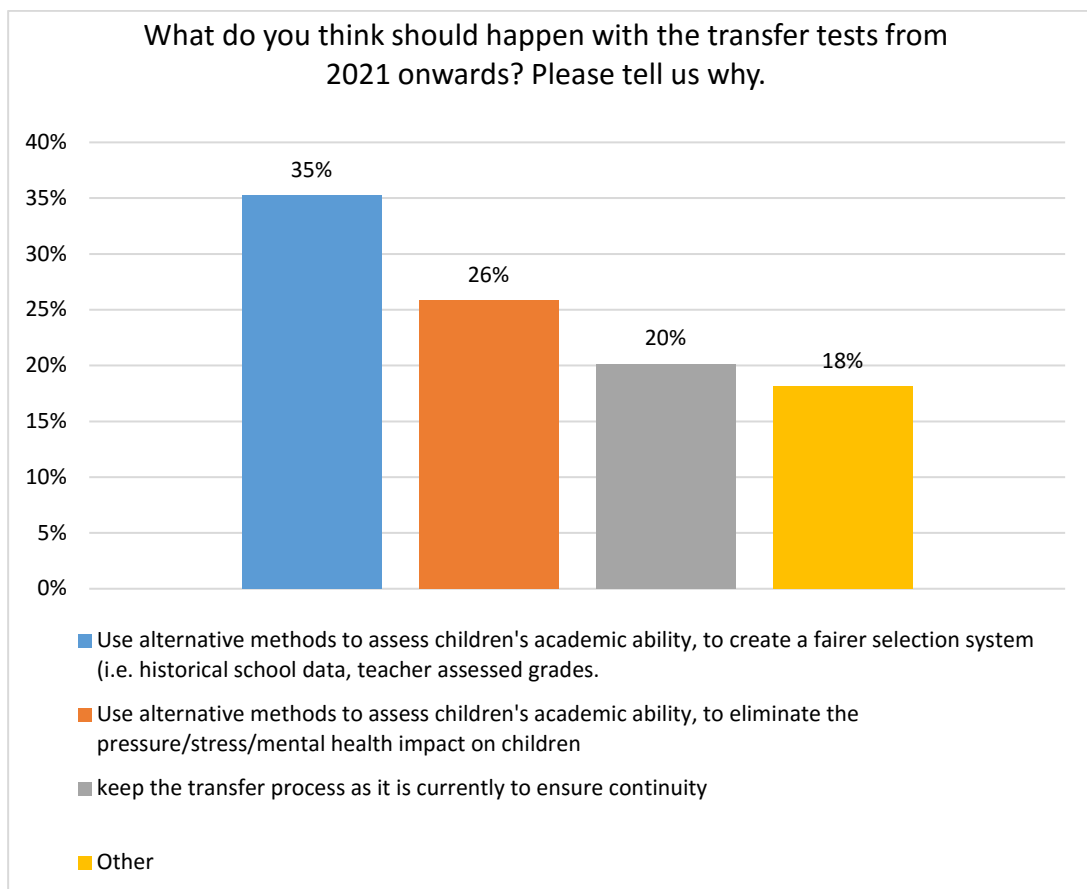


- The comments which appeared most related to the option for the test be taken before Christmas to give children a break over the holiday period. This was mentioned in 43% of comments.
- Young people were then asked what they thought should happen with the transfer tests from 2021 onwards. 38% said they felt the tests should be abolished, 35% said they should be retained, 14% felt they should be changed and 13% said they were unsure.





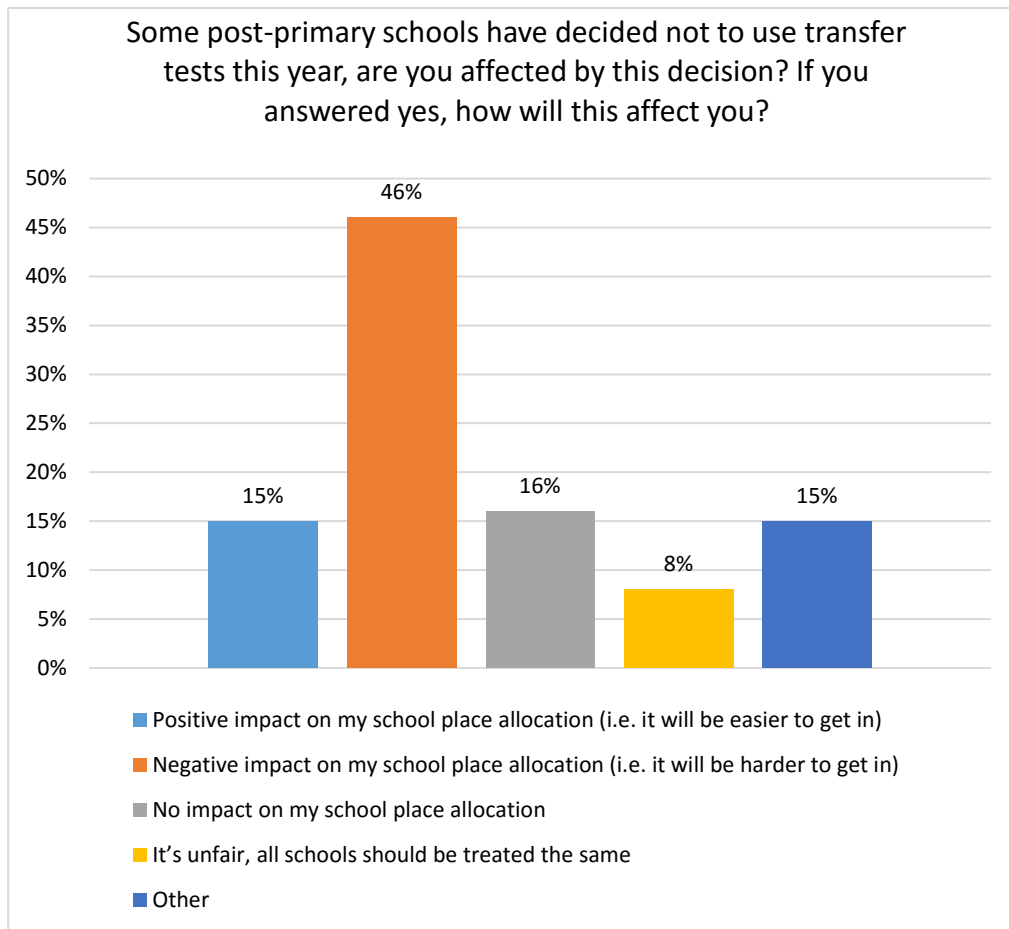
They were then asked to explain their answer:



- 35% of the young people's comments mentioned the use of an alternative method for assessing children's academic ability, with 26% saying that they

felt this would eliminate the pressure, stress and/or mental health impact on children. 20% of comments referred to keeping the transfer test as it is currently to ensure continuity.

- Young people were then asked if they had been directly affected by the decision of some post-primary schools to not use transfer tests this year. Those that answered yes were asked to explain how this decision had affected them. 82 young people said that they had been impacted by this decision.
- The following table outlines how the young people said they had been affected:



- 46% of comments related to young people feeling that this decision had negatively impacted on their school place allocation. 15% of comments related to this decision having a positive impact and 16% said that the decision had no impact at all. 8% of the young people stated that they felt that this decision was unfair and that all schools should be treated the same.
- Finally, the young people were asked to sum up their feelings on the transfer tests in 3 words. The following word cloud represents their responses:

