

Safe streets and strong support for filters



84.9 percent of people living on streets with traffic filters want to keep their filter, compared with just 8.1 percent who want to remove it, according to a survey of 272 households in London, Birmingham, Bristol and Leeds.

The overwhelming popularity of modal filters among those who live with them makes a strong argument for installing many more in towns and cities, with a high likelihood that improved resident perceptions of street safety, ability to socialise with neighbours, and decreased traffic levels will result.

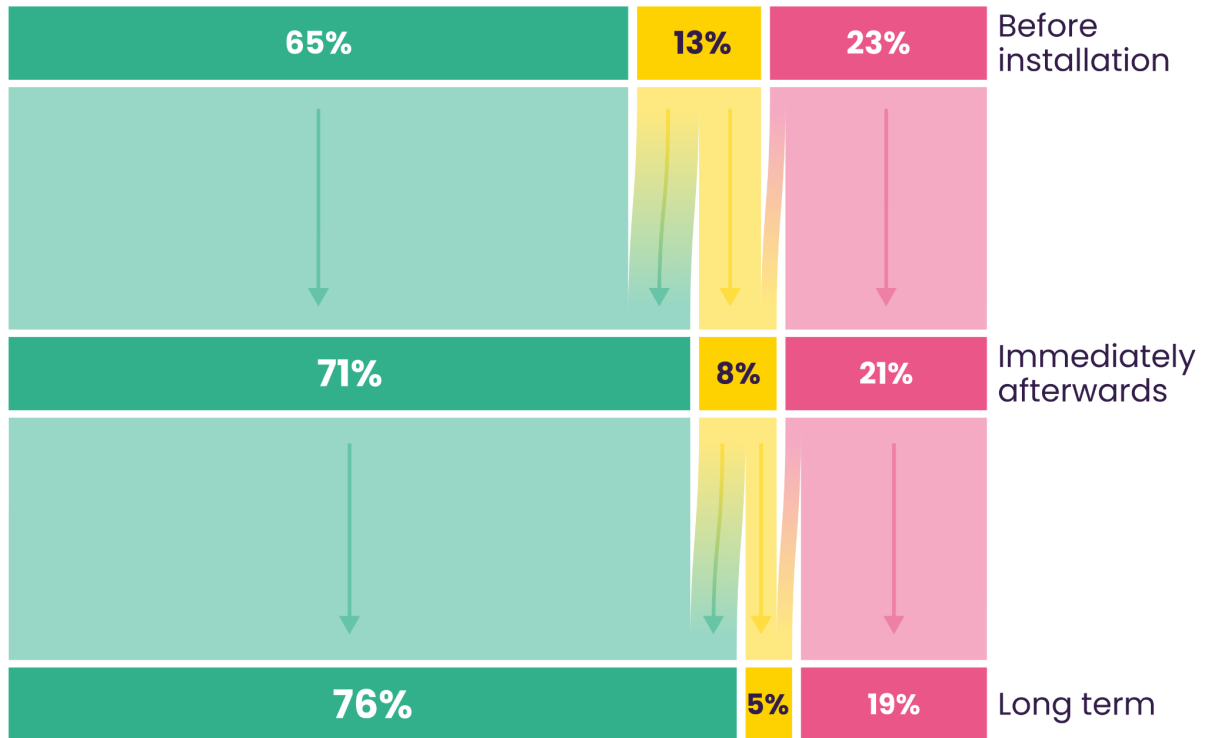
Traffic filters are overwhelmingly popular with residents



Many people surveyed (64.68%) were not living on the street when the modal filter was established, but a large proportion of those that were have changed their minds about it since it was installed. Prior to the filter's introduction, about two thirds of people (64.5%) felt positively about it, while a quarter (22.6%) were against it. Immediately after installation, positive reactions rose to 71.0% and negative reactions dipped slightly to 20.1%. Since then, the gap has widened further. Today, 75.8% of residents who lived on their street before the modal filter was installed like or strongly like their traffic filter and just 13% dislike or strongly dislike it.

People love their filter more and more over time

Percentage of residents who feel **positive**, **neutral** or **negative** about their traffic filter as time passes since installation



Of the surveyed households that lived on the street at the time, almost half (49.4%) said they knew the filter was going to be installed ahead of time, although due to the length of time that had passed a sizable minority (23.5%) said they couldn't remember either way. Neighbours (47.3%), council consultation (43.6%) and campaign groups (27.3%) were given as the main ways people were made aware of the installation of the filter in advance.

“I moved to this street in the early 1980s, before the traffic filter was put in. Drivers used to come down here much too fast and use it as a rat run to get to the North Circular. The barrier immediately had a positive effect on the street – it felt safer and quieter. I was so glad they did put it in. My children were able to grow up on a relatively safe and quiet street, compared to what it was before. And we got used to having to drive a bit longer to get to the other side. I’m surprised that anyone would want to remove it, even if it makes it easier to get to where they want to. They don’t know what it was like before the filter was there!” – **Helen, London**

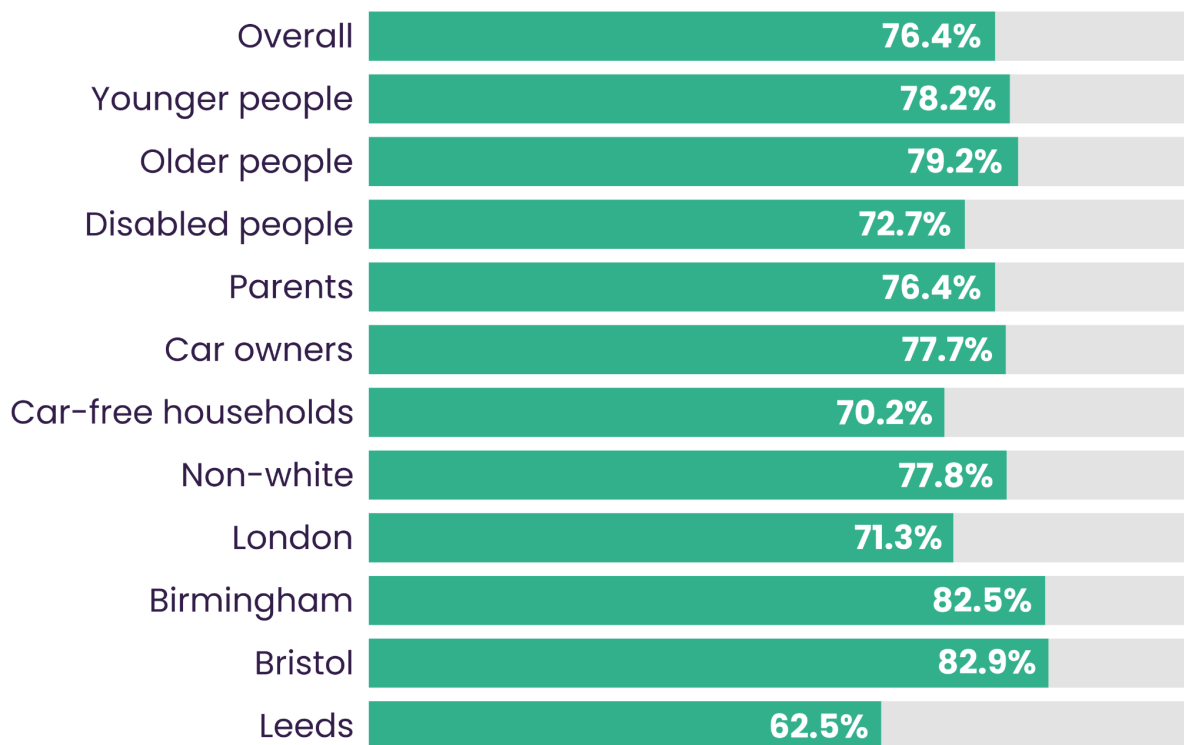
Safety and security

The majority of people (76.4%) perceive their streets as more safe than unsafe and 71.1% report that they have seen people playing or socialising out on the street. Only 17.7 percent of people said there was a lot of motor traffic on their street. This suggests that a modal filter positively shifts perceptions of traffic levels and safety.

However, 9.1% of people with disabilities report that they consider their street as “very unsafe”, compared to just 1.3% of people without disabilities. Similarly, 3.5% of households with children under 18 also consider their streets “very unsafe” – almost twice the rate of those without (2.0%). These percentages, while small, are a good reminder that perceptions of safety vary between people with different life perspectives, and it’s important to take all road users into consideration when making changes.

Nonetheless, people of all backgrounds living on streets with filters overwhelmingly believe that their street is safe.

People from many backgrounds think streets with filters are safe



“Our road is a very long straight road that runs directly parallel to another main road, and it would very quickly just become a through route for traffic. The filter is a sensible and safe way of separating the flow of traffic and means that vehicles that are travelling down the road are going there for a specific purpose.

“Obviously we don't leave our children out unsupervised on the road, but it just means that it gives you a greater sense of safety that your children can walk out of the house and be out there on the pavement, and you haven't got cars shooting down at 40 miles an hour.” - **Jason, Bristol**

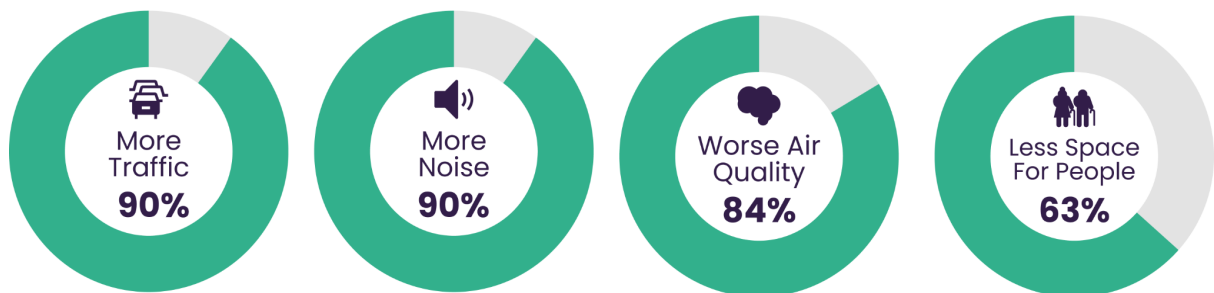
Space equity and car ownership – a mixed picture

With 82.4% of survey respondents having access to a private vehicle (higher than the national average of [about 76%](#)), it is perhaps unsurprising that a majority (61.8%) of respondents think there are the right amount of parking spaces on their street. This suggests that more work needs to be done on illustrating alternatives to mass car ownership in residential streets.

Even so, about a third (31.7%) of people want to see parking spaces actively repurposed for parklets, cycle/scooter storage, and other alternatives to car dominance of the street space.

Similarly, when asked about how removing the traffic filter would affect their street, an overwhelming majority think it would increase traffic (90.0%) and noise (90.0%), and a large majority think it would reduce air quality (83.6%) and space available for people (63.4%).

How would removing the filter affect your street?



Other findings

The survey also found that:

- 9.3% of households have access to a vehicle shared with others.
- 62.3% of households park their main vehicle on the street, rather than in a driveway or private land.

- The leading reasons for using a motor vehicle are shopping, leisure and visiting family.
- People aged 18–34 are the age group most likely to be in favour of converting parking spaces into cycle parking or parklets (43.5% support these measures).
- People who own private cars are much less likely to feel that their street is unsafe (13.1%) than people who don't own cars (27.7%).

Methodology

29 volunteers and 6 Possible staff members in four cities – Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and London – undertook a citizen science mass study, surveying people who live on streets that have been blocked to through traffic for years to find out whether they would like their modal filters to be taken out to allow the free flow of traffic back through. Volunteers also left cards for people who were busy or out so they could complete the survey using an online form.

The survey questions and summaries of the responses collected are provided in the [full datasheet](#). Details of the streets surveyed in each city are provided in the following table.

City	Completed surveys	Streets wholly or partially surveyed (adjoining streets to those with filters are in <i>italics</i>)
Birmingham	41	Augusta Road, Cheddar Road, <i>The Hollow</i> , Louise Lorne Road, <i>Mount Close</i> , Park Hill, Selwyn Road, <i>Sutherland Drive</i> , Wheatsheaf Road
Bristol	105	<i>Avon Park</i> , Cooperage Road, <i>Durham Road</i> , Felstead Road, Francis Road, Greenbank Road, Hassell Drive, <i>Hayes Close</i> , Hurlingham Road, Kingsholm Road, Lake Road, Robertson Road,

		<i>Rosebery Avenue, Sevier Street, Tavistock Road, Thurlow Road, Wilton Close, Woodchester Road</i>
Leeds	32	<i>Cautley Road, Copperfield Grove, Copperfield View, Cross Green Avenue, Grovehall Avenue, Grovehall Drive, Jessamine Avenue, Mayville Terrace, Norwood Grove, Rowland Road, St Hilda's Road</i>
London	94	<i>Barclay Road, Brookscroft Road, Hampton Road, Macdonald Road, Sinclair Road, Westward Road</i>

Note: names of quoted respondents have been changed.