



Third Sector  
Dumfries and Galloway

# Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway

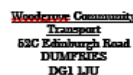
## A State of the Sector Report and Improvement Plan

April 2016

The report was prepared in partnership by local Community Transport Providers, The Community Transport Association, Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Fire and Rescue and Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway.

### Glenkens Transport Initiative

### Wigtownshire Community Transport



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# Foreword

The invitation by our Community Planning Executive Group to bring forward a set of proposals for the improvement of community transport in Dumfries and Galloway was one which on behalf of Dumfries and Galloway Third Sector Interface I was pleased to accept.

It had become clear to us from our engagement with the third sector and communities across Dumfries and Galloway that access to appropriate forms of transport at times when people and communities need it most was high on the list of issues people felt our Community Planning Partnership needed to address.

The impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals as a result of being unable to access transport are felt acutely by some of the most disadvantaged in our communities. Yet whilst our health and social care professionals seek to promote health and wellbeing, they know little about transport, and whilst our transport professionals seek to promote economic growth and protections for the environment, they know little about health and wellbeing.

No plan for the improvement of a public service should begin without reference to the Commission on the future delivery of public services, the Christie Commission.

In his foreword to the Commission Report Dr Campbell Christie observed that reform of the delivery of public services should **empower** individuals and communities ... by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.

He went on to say that public service providers must be required to work much more closely in **partnership** and to **integrate** service provision and thus improve the outcomes they achieve; that we must prioritise expenditure on public services which **prevent negative outcomes** from arising; and that our whole system of public services – public, third and private – must become more efficient by reducing duplication and sharing services wherever possible.

If we accept that access to appropriate forms of transport at time when people and communities need it most is a strategic issue then it follows that there is a need for a strategic, co-ordinated, integrated and co-produced approach to the provision of community transport solutions.

Despite the level of third sector innovation and activity described in this report what we did not observe was a strategic, co-ordinated and integrated approach across the Community Planning Partnership. Most notably there was little sign of community transport services being co-produced.

The principal conclusion of this report is that we need a strategic partnering arrangement locally which involves the third sector earlier and more deeply in the

design of our community transport services. So how do we take the step change that is needed?

It is our view that a Public Social Partnership may well be the means of achieving a meaningful strategic partnering of the third and public sector.

A Public Social Partnership (PSP) differs from other commissioning approaches in that it starts with the needs to be addressed, not the services available, which can be the driver for other partnerships. A PSP is a commissioning arrangement, not simply a procurement mechanism. The aim of a PSP in community transport should be to co-design and deliver innovative, high quality public services which meet the needs of individuals and communities across Dumfries and Galloway.

Ultimately our ability to plan for an improvement in our community transport and then to implement those improvements will depend upon resources and how we agree to use the resources available.

This report has been prepared following two meetings of public and third sector organisations with an interest in community transport. There is undoubtedly an appetite for dialogue; a willingness to work in partnership; and a recognition of the need to design our future community transport provision through co-production.

We have proposed a way forward – it is now for the Community Planning Partnership to exercise its leadership and to take the next steps.

David C Coulter

Chief Executive

Third Sector, Dumfries and Galloway

# What is community transport?

Community transport is about providing flexible, accessible and responsive solutions to unmet local transport needs, and often represents the only means of transport for certain user groups. Using everything from mopeds to minibuses, typical services include voluntary car schemes, community bus services, school transport, hospital transport, Dial-a-Ride, Wheels to Work and group hire services. Community transport benefits those who are otherwise isolated or excluded, enabling them to live independently, participate in their communities and access education, employment, health and other services.

The Community Transport Providers in Dumfries and Galloway have agreed the following definition:

**Community Transport** is the term used to describe passenger **transport** schemes which are owned and operated by local **community** groups. Each project has been set up by people working together to solve their own **transport** needs, and services are provided on a not-for-profit basis.

The term 'community transport' covers a range of services, including:

**Community car schemes:** volunteers drive their own cars to transport individual passengers who are often unable to travel by other means due to disability, illness or lack of public transport. Some operators own vehicles (sometimes accessible) that are available on a self-drive basis.

**Group transport:** community transport groups hire out vehicles – often accessible minibuses – and drivers to take the members of voluntary groups on trips. Alternatively, voluntary groups can use their own drivers. These are carried out under section 19 permits in Great Britain and section 10b permits in Northern Ireland.

**Community bus services:** demand responsive or fixed-route transport services, available to the public, operating where commercial bus routes are not viable, and run under section 22 permits (not applicable in Northern Ireland).

**Shopmobility:** loan or hire of wheelchairs and mobility scooters to allow disabled travellers to get around the shops when they visit local towns.

**Vehicle brokerage:** community transport organisations manage the sharing of a number of vehicles owned by several organisations in order to maximise the services that can be delivered.

**Wheels to Work:** scooters are loaned to geographically isolated people (often young people) to enable them to get to work, apprenticeships or training.

**Door-to-door Dial-a-Ride services:** these are services for individuals who can't, or find it difficult to, use or access mainstream transport services. People are usually

picked up from their homes and dropped off at their destination such as the doctor or the shopping centre. Each vehicle will carry several passengers going to and from different places. These are run under section 19 permits in Great Britain.

# 1. Introduction and Strategic Context

1.1 Dr Campbell Christie in his foreword to the 2011 Christie Commission Report on The Future of Public Services recognises that " ... our public services are now facing their most serious challenges since the inception of the welfare state. The demand for public services is set to increase dramatically over the medium term - partly because of demographic changes, but also because of our failure up to now to tackle the causes of disadvantage and vulnerability, with the result that huge sums of money have to be expended dealing with their consequences." There can be little doubt that in Dumfries and Galloway the ability of our people and communities to access transport is a major cause of disadvantage. This report is concerned with tackling that disadvantage and proposing the means by which we might achieve an improvement in public transport services, specifically those provide by Community Transport providers.

1.2 Christie goes on to state "The principles informing this process are clear:

- Reforms must aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.
- Public service providers must be required to work much more closely in partnership, to integrate service provision and thus improve the outcomes they achieve.
- We must prioritise expenditure on public services which prevent negative outcomes from arising.
- And our whole system of public services – public, third and private sectors – must become more efficient by reducing duplication and sharing services wherever possible.

1.3 Experience tells us that all institutions and structures resist change, especially radical change. However, the scale of the challenges ahead is such that a comprehensive public service reform process must now be initiated, involving all stakeholders."

1.4 In 2013 the Scottish Government published its approach to an inquiry into community transport in Scotland. The report states the Scottish Government's intention to "make some real and tangible improvements to the sector". It sees community transport as an essential element to ensure service delivery to an ageing population.

- The report recognises and values the important role of community transport in enabling access to health care, leisure and social opportunities for those who need it most. It also acknowledges that “community transport allows many service users to live independently”.
- The report further emphasises the need for support for “assisting volunteers to obtain the training required through collaboration and funding support to community transport providers. There is scope to examine the potential benefits of coordinating training across the sector and of supporting and increasing the capacity of larger operators to provide driver training”.
- Finally, the report encourages joint working by recommending that: “local authorities consider the value of engaging with partnership agencies and third sector groups in their area to establish what resources might be available for shared use, and how these groups can work together to meet local shared outcomes”.

1.5 The Scottish Government set in motion a process to reform procurement, culminating in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. This act places a duty on public agencies to consider the wider social impact of each procurement. The Scottish Government is providing a range of support mechanisms to assist the implementation of this legislation, including the Scottish Government’s Developing Third Sector Markets programme. The implementation of this legislation may open up opportunities for our Community Transport Providers to work closer together with public sector partners in designing and delivering public transport.

1.6 Furthermore, the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill passed in 2014, governs the integration of health and social care. This means shared outcomes between Councils and Health Boards, integration of budgets and a requirement to work closer together with the third and private sector. This legislation and the changing ways of working will provide opportunities for a joined-up community transport sector to co-design and co-deliver transport solutions.

1.7 Transport is an essential element to the delivery of Dumfries and Galloway’s Local Outcomes as described in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). Following a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership in September 2015 the Community Planning Executive Group (CPEG) tasked Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway with developing thinking around the development of a strategic region wide network of community transport.

1.8 Since then we have had two meetings with Community Transport Providers in Dumfries and Galloway and submitted a co-produced report to CPEG. From the recommendations in the report, CPEG agreed that:

- there is a need for a shared vision for community transport across all partners;

- that the proposed Community Transport Strategy (as contained in the Single Outcome Agreement Priority Six Action 6.2.1) could be developed as a Community Transport Improvement Plan;
- the aim is to achieve a sustainable and integrated transport model that will support and enhance local initiatives within a strategic framework;
- the funding and charging model which will flow from the Strategy/Plan should be equitable, consistent across the region; and encourage social enterprise;
- there should be a mapping exercise to establish current provision across Dumfries and Galloway (the range of services, volunteer drivers, vehicles (including cars, buses and scooters) and routes etc); and market analysis describing clients' needs, where, what and when they need it;

1.9 The purpose of this report is to set the context for community transport in Dumfries and Galloway. It builds a detailed picture of the size and scope of the community transport sector. It helps to build up the evidence base of community transport's contribution towards the health, wellbeing and prosperity of the people and communities of Dumfries and Galloway, particularly in relation to health and social care and also makes recommendations for a partnership approach to improve support for the sector and ensure that it becomes more visible and sustainable, so that it can better support people and our communities.



1.10 This enhanced understanding of the community transport sector in Dumfries and Galloway was jointly produced by local Community Transport Providers, The Community Transport Association, Public Sector partners and Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway and will be shared with funders, policy-makers and other stakeholders.



1.11 The data for this report was drawn from an electronic survey which was issued by Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway to 16 voluntary organisations that provide transport, whether as a primary or ancillary service.

1.12 A total of 11 community transport organisations responded to the survey, which was issued in the March 2016, although 2 were incomplete. Responders included The Order of St John, Wigtownshire Community Transport, Community Integrated Care, Creetown Initiative Ltd., Glenkens Transport initiative, Co-Wheels Car Club CIC, Dalbeattie Community Minibus, Thornhill and District Community Transport, Royal Voluntary Service, Annandale Transport Initiative and Woodgrove Community Transport. The survey explored several areas to assess the state of the community transport sector across Dumfries and Galloway:

- Organisations and their services
- Organisational membership
- Journeys and vehicles
- Employees and volunteers
- Finances and other challenges

1.13 The findings will enable the Community Transport Sector to be better supported and for the Community Planning Partners to concentrate their efforts on those issues which have most impact upon operators and their service users.



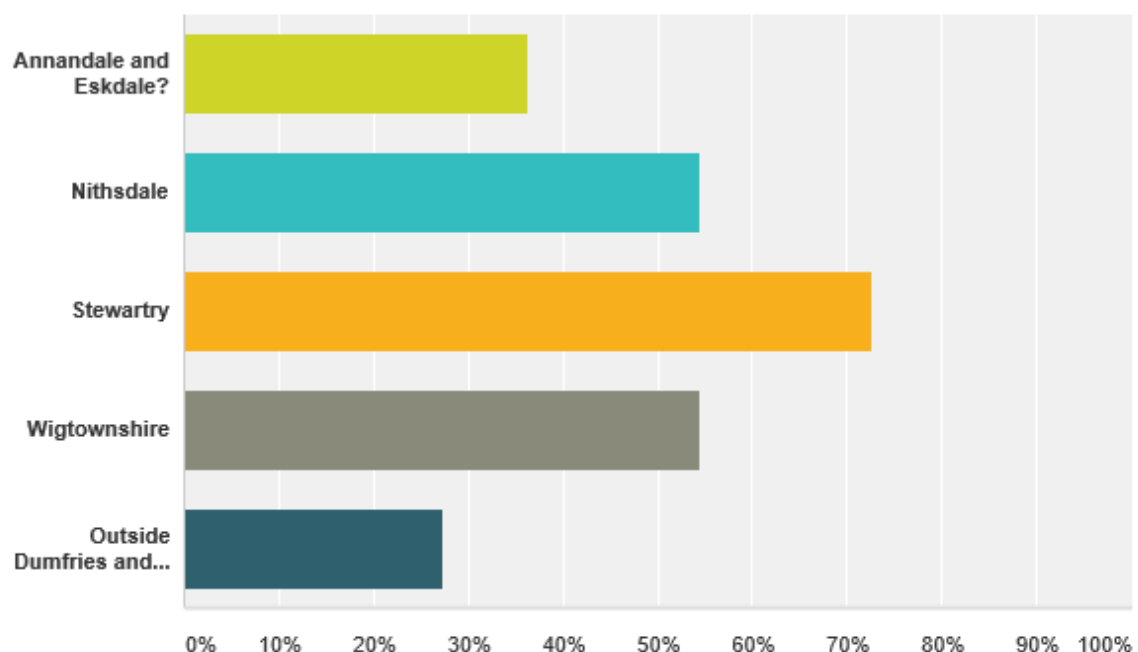
## 2. Where does community transport operate, both across Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway?

2.1 Community transport is spread rather unevenly across Scotland. Looking at the four largest cities, there is significant community transport activity in Edinburgh and Glasgow (Lothian and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) have both independently set up public social partnership arrangements with their local transport providers as they are seen as an essential part of future public transport provision – see appendix B). Aberdeen and Dundee have fewer community transport services. The Highland Council area has the highest number of community transport operators and other areas such as Aberdeenshire and Dumfries and Galloway have significant concentrations, but some areas such as Shetland and Angus have very little community-based transport at present.

2.2 In Dumfries and Galloway 11 groups responded to the survey. The majority of these groups cover the Stewartry (8 groups), 6 cover Nithsdale and Wigtownshire and 4 groups cover Annandale and Eskdale. 3 groups work outside of Dumfries and Galloway, some transporting people outside the region for patient appointments.

2.3 Below is a summary of the groups' geographical coverage (it should be noted that respondents could select more than one option):

### What is your geographical coverage?



2.4 Of the 11 groups who responded, 9 have the potential to expand their services; 2 are interested in doing this, 3 are unsure and 4 do not want to expand.

2.5 The map below shows the base of operations (i.e. headquarters) for the survey respondents.



Key:

- 1 - Wigtownshire Community Transport
- 2 – Creetown Initiative Limited
- 3 – Glenkens Transport Initiative
- 4 – Dalbeattie Community Minibus
- 5 – Thornhill and District Community Transport
- 6 - Woodgrove Community Transport
- 7 – Co-Wheels Car Club CIC
- 8 - The Order of St John
- 9 - Royal Voluntary Service
- 10 – Annandale Transport Initiative
- 11 - Community Integrated Care

## 3. The resilience of community transport

3.1 Despite the difficult economic climate, community transport in Dumfries and Galloway has proved remarkably resilient. The majority of organisations have been in existence for more than 13 years, including 36% who have been around for 20 years or more. However, the era of austerity appears to have had an impact on the setting up of new community transport organisations: only 1 respondent was formed in the last five years. On a highly positive note, very few community transport operators have gone out of business in the last few years, which indicates the commitment they have to their communities.

3.2 Operators may be surviving because the demand for their services appears to be growing. Over the last year 75% of respondents said that their service had increased, with the remainder remaining stable, although one organisation showed a decline in a full-time member of staff.

3.3 Whilst the resilience of the sector is notable, this should not disguise the difficulties in running a community transport service. In terms of planning for the future, 75% of operators said that they plan their business one year into the future; none said that they plan their business up to two or more years into the future. 25% of respondents said that it depended on the project they were planning.

## 4. Size of organisations

4.1 All sorts of voluntary organisations are involved in community transport. Some are very large organisations which have a presence across the whole of the UK (such as the Royal Voluntary Service and Community Integrated Care); many would not immediately describe these as community transport operators but transport provision forms an important part of their services.

4.2 However, the typical community transport operator is a relatively small organisation rooted in a local area and formed because mainstream transport either does not exist or is very limited for local people.

4.3 Locally based community transport operators tend to be small organisations. The largest local group in Dumfries and Galloway has an annual income of £2-300,000 but most are significantly smaller than this. According to the survey, 33% have an annual income of between £60-200,000, while the majority (44%) have an annual income less than £21,000. This is higher than the national average (which is 22.6% organisations below £21,000). Nationally the majority of operators have an income in excess of £100,000 but less than £500,000.

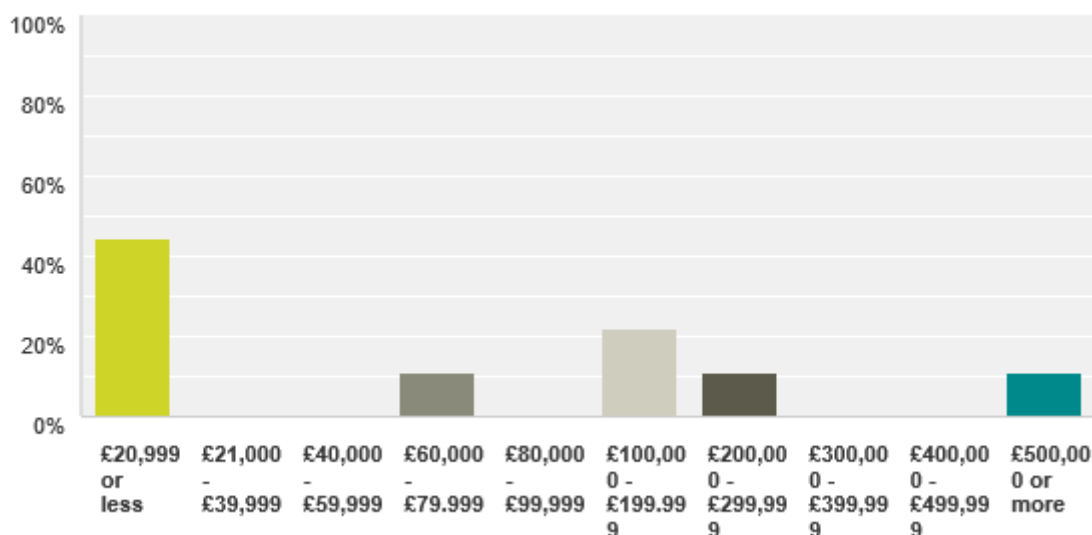
*... no community transport operators have gone out of business in the last few years, which indicates the commitment they have to their communities.*

44% of providers have an annual income of less than  
**£21,000**, higher than the national average.

4.4 There are other groups providing community transport that we have not yet engaged with because of the timescale within which the report was prepared. But the resources they own and manage are important, and as we work to avoid duplication, they should become part of the plan. Other community transport operators include schools, universities or care homes which need their own transport. Schools, colleges and universities often need to take students to sports facilities, arts events and other destinations. Care homes often have their own transport to take residents to local services, and day care services sometimes have their own transport to take clients to and from their facilities. Though these services are usually free to users, they are subject to transport regulations and invariably require a permit.

4.5 The majority of respondents to our survey (73%) were organisations for which transport is their primary function. Generally the focus of community groups is very much on local transport. Rarely do services go long distances or travel outside of Dumfries and Galloway.

#### What is your organisation's total annual income?



## 5. Legal status of community transport organisations

5.1 In total 82% of the respondents are registered charities (of that number 36% are companies limited by guarantee with charitable status and 46% Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIOs). The introduction of SCIOs has made incorporation easier, as they are designed specifically for charities, and the number of community transport operators that are not incorporated has reduced as a consequence. Just 9% of the respondents are unincorporated associations. 9% of organisations are Community Interest Companies.

5.2 Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway considers that any organisation involved in transport provision should become incorporated. Trustees and management committee members are otherwise exposed to the risk of personal liability if, for example, road accidents take place. Transport provision clearly has a higher level of risk than many other forms of voluntary activity.

5.3 To help ensure that small community transport operators are properly structured and comply fully with transport regulations, the Community Transport Association has developed a quality standards framework. This can help to ensure that services are safe and legal.

## 6. Regulatory Regime for Community Transport

6.1 Community transport operators are required to comply with both charity law and transport law. Charity law ensures that the organisation's activities are focused solely on providing public benefit. Within transport law there are special provisions for non-profit voluntary and community organisations.

6.2 The key legislation is contained within the 1985 Transport Act and its subsequent amendments. This was the Act that denationalised the bus industry; it recognised that transport provision in some places was unlikely to be commercially viable and so provision was made to make it feasible for community groups to provide transport.

6.3 The regulatory regime strikes a balance between placing sufficient rules on community transport services to ensure that they are safe and legal but not making them too stringent that they deter community organisations and volunteers from getting involved in operating a transport service. Any organisation that provides



transport using a minibus should have a permit, whether or not it charges a fare to its passengers.

6.4 For 30 years this regime has brought mobility and access to services to many thousands of people for who public transport does not work. As a result, where public transport may be limited, community transport can help disabled people to get out and about, older people to live independently, young people to get to youth clubs, patients to get to health appointments and communities to get together at costs which are affordable.

6.5 Volunteer car schemes are also subject to transport legislation. Essentially car schemes are exempt from the licensing and regulatory rules for taxis and private hires but are permitted to charge a fare to the people they are transporting. The charge can only cover the cost of fuel and the wear and tear of volunteers' vehicles. Car schemes cannot carry the general public. They are used by people who have difficulty in using public transport or who have no public transport.

6.6 Apart from car schemes, most community transport operators are required to have a permit to enable them to carry passengers. Over 60% of the survey respondents (5 operators) reported that they use a section 19 permit; this permit gives a lot of flexibility to the operator. Operators can charge a fare and services do not necessarily have to run a timetable, but they cannot carry the general public. Services operating under a section 19 permit are restricted to certain categories of passenger such as older people, young people, disabled people and people whom the organisation exists to support.

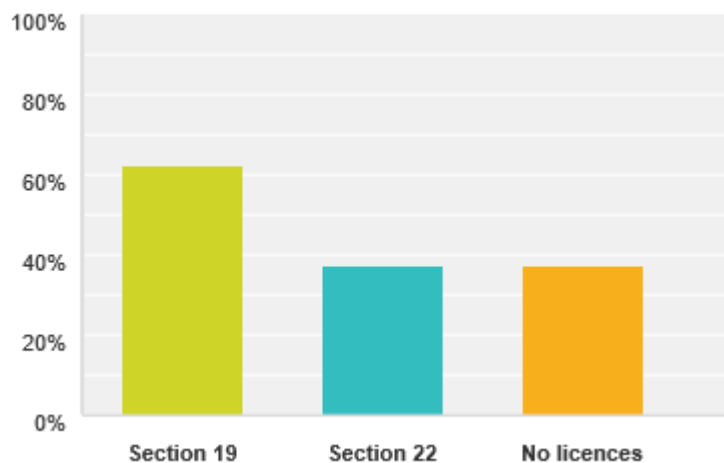
6.7 In addition, 37.5% of the survey respondents (3 operators) told us that they have section 22 permits. These enable operators to run community bus routes as registered services, just like scheduled mainstream bus services, through using minibuses with up to 16 passengers. Across Scotland there has been steady growth in section 22 services, reflecting the pattern of bus service withdrawal or reduction in many areas, with community groups stepping in to fill some of the emerging gaps. In most instances, operators running section 22 services also run section 19 services.

6.8 None of the responders have a PSV (Public Service Vehicle) operator licence. These licences place significant obligations on the operator and are used for mainstream bus services serving the general public. Community transport operators who obtain operator licences do so usually because they have trading subsidiaries which may run commercial services.

6.9 Community transport usually emerges where people either do not have any local transport services or cannot use the existing transport, perhaps because it is inaccessible for people with specific forms of disability. In many places community

transport is the difference between some kind of transport and no transport, as conventional services may not be viable in these areas.

### What licences/permits do you have?



## 7. People in community transport

7.1 Some community transport operations are run entirely by volunteers but most have a small number of staff and paid drivers backed up by volunteers. Only 1 survey respondent told us that their organisation has no volunteers.

7.2 50% of respondents have between one and five full-time administration/management employees but 37.5% have no full-time employees. Only 12.5% have six or more full-time employees. In terms of part-time employment, 57% of respondents have between one and five part-time employees and 14% have six or more part-time employees; 29% have no part-time employees. The typical community transport operator therefore is a small employer

7.3 Employment in community transport in Dumfries and Galloway has only slightly increased with 14% increase in part-time staff. Otherwise there was no change to staffing numbers.

7.4 None of the providers employed full-time drivers, but 25% employed between one and five part-time drivers and 12.5% employed over 6 drivers. The number of employed part-time drivers has increased by 12.5% over the last years.

7.5 The survey respondents also told us about their volunteers. Volunteers contribute significantly to the wellbeing of individuals and communities and volunteering has an economic value, although this has not yet been captured in monetary terms (for example through a Social Return on Investment evaluation). The majority of responders had over 25 volunteers, with one group reporting greater than 70 volunteers and another 122 volunteers. More than half of these volunteers are drivers

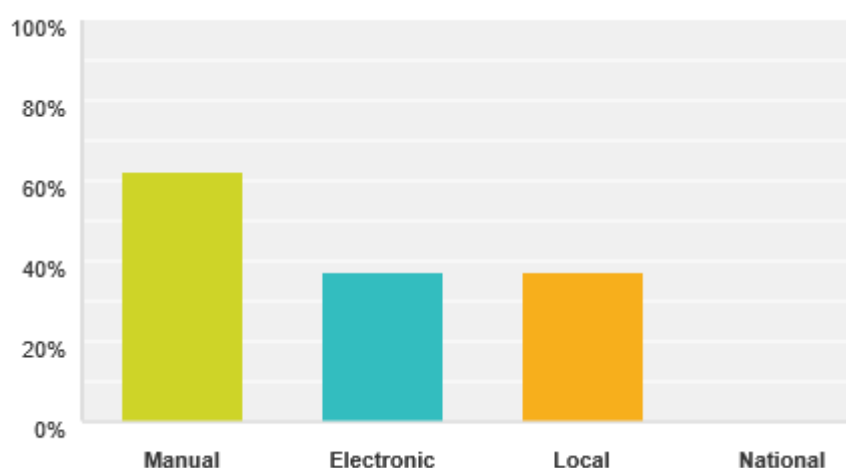


but others give their time as trustees or management committee members and in other roles such as administration or driver escorts. Whilst 62.5% of the respondents said that their volunteer numbers had remained the same over the previous 12 months, 37.5% said that their volunteer numbers had grown. No one reported a decrease in volunteer. So, although there was only a small increase in paid staff numbers, it appears that more people are getting involved in community transport on a voluntary basis and Dumfries and Galloway already has the second highest rate of volunteering in Scotland.

7.6 If volunteers use their own car, 67% of operators reported checking driver's insurance details, and 56% reported that their drivers were disclosed under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme, when required by the terms of the job.

7.7 62.5% of operators use a manual booking system. Local co-ordinators are seen as more important than a central booking system, for local knowledge and clients like to speak to someone they know. 37.5% use an electronic system including a bespoke database, which doesn't include route planning, goggle calendar and [www.moorcar.co.uk](http://www.moorcar.co.uk).

#### What Booking system does your organisation use?



## 8. Types of services

8.1 Community transport offers a variety of services. These range from section 22 community bus services, which may be scheduled and look like mainstream bus services, to Dial-a-Ride services which are completely flexible and tailored to the needs of individuals.

8.2 Group hire services of vehicles is the most common form of community transport, with 62.5% of survey respondents offering this kind of service. 50% of our survey respondents offer a community bus service, which is a demand responsive or fixed route service, operating where commercial bus routes are not viable. The following breakdown shows the range of services offered, although some operators run several types of service so respondents selected all the services that applied to them:

Group hire	62.5%
Community bus	50%
Door to door/Dial a Ride	37.5%
Training	37.5%
Other (e.g. school transport, patient transport etc.)	25%
Community Car scheme	12.5%
Wheels to Work	0%
Shop Mobility	0%

8.3 There were also some restrictions imposed on the availability of transport to groups and individuals, for example, certain services are only available to groups who are members of the Community Transport Organisation, and/or the group must be located within a certain geographical area or the individual must be within a certain age bracket, i.e. over the age of 60.

## 9. Vehicles

9.1 The combined community transport 'fleet' in Scotland is large. The Community Transport Association State of the Sector Report reported that they own, or have access to, 1,327 vehicles. In Dumfries and Galloway, 8 of our respondents reported owning, or having access to 154 vehicles, most of which are volunteer cars owned by volunteers. The second biggest group was minibuses, then community cars and finally a community bus (with 28 seats plus the driver) and MPV's or people carriers. The average age of the vehicles was 4 years old. None of the operators who were surveyed currently lease vehicles but 37.5% would consider the option.



9.2 Replacing vehicles which are at the end of their life, particularly minibuses, is a cause for concern for many operators as the cost of vehicles is high. Most community transport organisations cannot factor the full cost of vehicle replacement into their fare structure, as this would make the cost prohibitive for passengers. Instead most

fundraise constantly from other sources, but in a climate in which competition for charitable funds is extremely high.

9.3 The Scottish Government recognised these difficulties and helped to address the problem in 2014 by opening a fund for community transport vehicles. This funded the purchase of 29 vehicles which were mainly replacements for vehicles at the end of their useful life. The fund attracted 130 applications, however, which highlights the fact that vehicle replacement is a significant issue for the community transport sector.

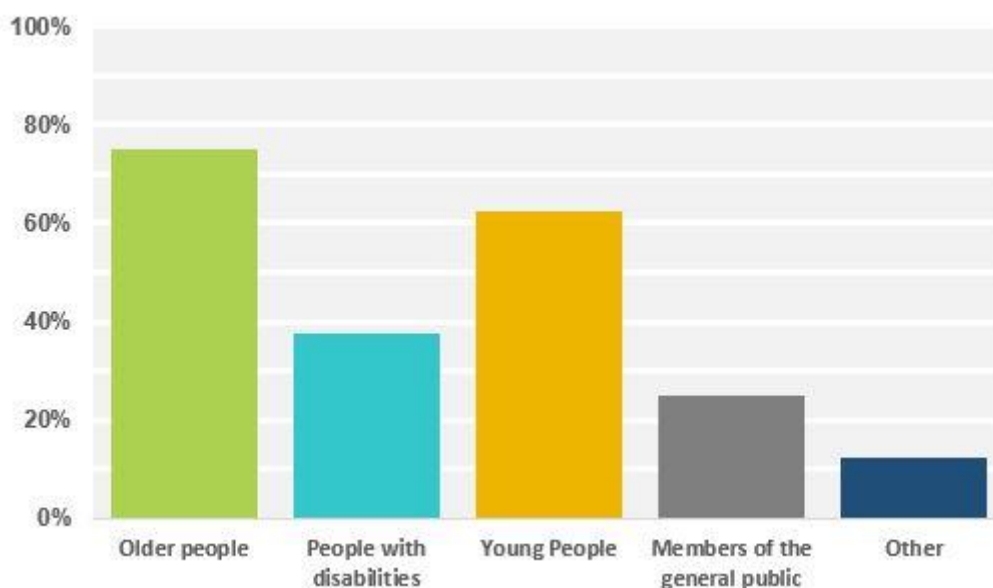
## 10. Who uses community transport?

10.1 It is not possible to determine an exact figure for the number of people who use community transport each year in Scotland. A very conservative estimate is that this is at least 100,000 people. We do not yet have comprehensive and validated data for Dumfries and Galloway. Most community transport services are for individual or group members who can be classified to meet the requirements of a permit, e.g. older people, disabled people, young people or people who live in areas where there is no public transport. Generally services are not for the general public, apart from section 22 community bus services.

10.2 Information in this section is still being collected, however, of the four respondents, three indicated that they have at least 13,260 individual members who use their transport services, with another respondent citing 5240 passenger journeys (including daily school runs) in the year April 2015 to March 2016. The survey also showed that 4 of respondents provide transport to up to 203 different community organisations. Examples of organisational users could be a day centre for older people, a youth club, a community organisation that takes people on social outings; the range of voluntary activity that requires transport is extremely wide.

10.3 Older people are by far the biggest users of community transport, with children and young people a close second. The following table shows the user groups that community transport operators serve (respondents were able to select more than one option):

## What users groups does your organisation serve?



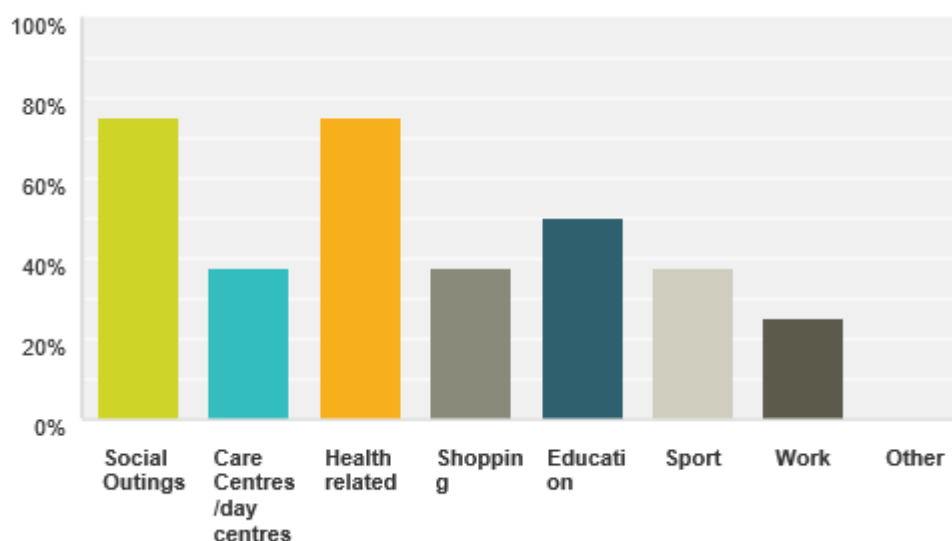
*... on most community transport services the national concessionary bus fare scheme for older and disabled people cannot be used.*

10.4 Given that older and disabled people are two of the main users of community transport, one of the anomalies within the transport landscape is that on most community transport services the national concessionary bus fare scheme for older and disabled people cannot be used. It is only on section 22 community bus services that concessions are eligible. Section 19 services, which are largely the norm in community transport, do not fit with the current rules for the national concessionary scheme. Even if they were to be included, there would still be issues relating to the reimbursement rate and the requirements for ticket machines and 'back office' technology; these could act as disincentives for small operators to be involved in the scheme as it is currently designed. If there is a rethink on the concessionary fare scheme then the needs of community transport users should be factored into its planning.

## 11. What is community transport used for?

11.1 The survey asked respondents to list the main purposes for which their services are used. These purposes are as follows (it should be noted that respondents could select more than one option):

## What is your community transport used for?



11.2 This data shows the important role that community transport plays in connecting older and disabled people with others and in enabling them to access basic services such as shops and NHS facilities. Survey respondents said that social outings and health related travel were the most common use for community transport. This suggests that transport not only fulfils a functional role of getting people from place to place, but is also a key to enabling people who are often seen as vulnerable and potentially isolated to live as full a life as possible by connecting with others. (See Appendix A)

11.3 The data also shows that Education was the next biggest category. Community transport has a key role to play in transporting our young people to access education.

## Annandale Community Transport used by the Lacrosse Team for the British Championships and the Olympic Curlers

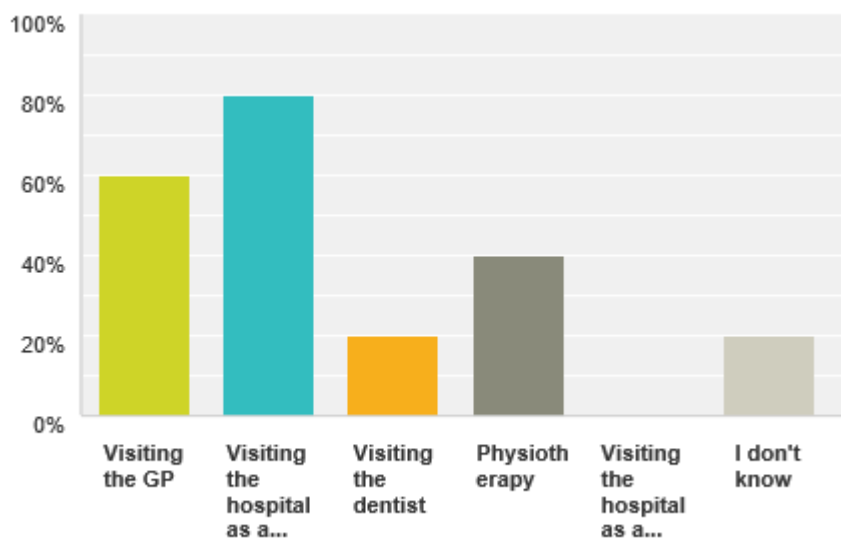


## 12. Access to health services

12.1 The demand for community transport to take people to health services is growing. This reflects the rise in demand for NHS services as the population grows older and the fact that the assessment for non-emergency patient transport is now more rigorous than it was in previous years.

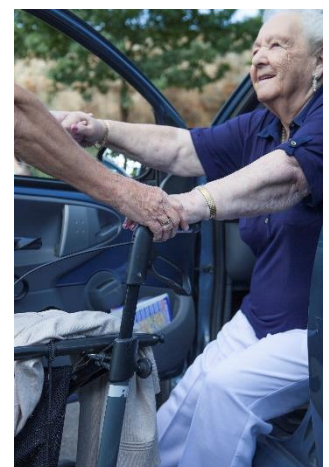
12.2 A total of 50% of respondents said that their services are used to take people to health services such as GP surgeries, hospitals and dentists. The main health-related purposes for which their services are used are as follows (it should be noted that respondents could select more than one option):

**What are the main health related purposes for which your services are used?**



12.3 Despite the significant contribution that community transport makes towards providing access to health services, engagement between health authorities and community transport organisations is piecemeal and fragmented. The sector could have a bigger role in getting patients to NHS services, but only if proper arrangements are put in place which fit with community transport operations. There is an opportunity to improve matters with the current plans to integrate health and social care services.

12.4 As the local Health and Social Care Partnership develops transport must be given a prominent place in health and social care planning, in order to support better outcomes for NHS patients and people who use care services, hence the need for an co-produced Improvement Plan.





## 13. How is community transport funded?

13.1 The current economic climate and cutbacks in public expenditure are already having an impact on community transport operations. Furthermore, locally the funding for this sector is fragmented, and as a result is not strategically driven or co-ordinated. Funding currently comes from a range of sources and ability to access these depends on the activities the organisation provides and the permits it holds. (See section 6). Sources of funding/income include the NHS, Area Committees of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Integration Fund, donations, Scottish Government (Bus Service Operators Grant), contracts and local trade. The “Area Committee” approach to funding in particular contributes to a geographic inequality of outcome in the development and provision of community transport solutions. There may be considerable advantage in placing all resources within a single pot.

13.2 Community transport is not alone in feeling the effects of the current climate and the challenge of finding sustainable funding is not new, but it remains a significant and complex challenge.

13.3 The funding issues faced by community transport providers vary according to the size, scope and scale of the organisation. Community transport services cannot operate without some form of investment or public support and funding for the following reasons:

- The cost per trip is higher than in mainstream public transport, owing to the personalised and specialist nature of most community transport services.
- The non-profit aspect of section 19 and 22 prohibits profit-making, which creates barriers to sustainability.
- Charging passengers for all the costs would put the services beyond the reach of the very individuals and groups that community transport exists to serve.

13.4 Funding is therefore a key concern to the sector, especially during this time of uncertainty arising from wider economic pressures. It is thus imperative to gain a greater understanding of the types and sources of income available to community transport organisations. The survey asked respondents about their sources of income. Respondents said that the percentage of their total income derived from a variety of sources. The table shows the patterns that have emerged for the main sources of income (the comparative percentages relate to the percentage of respondents who fell into each category):

## What are your main sources of income?

	2016 D&G Figures	2014 National Figs
<b>GRANTS</b>		
Rely on grants for more than 50% of income	0%	40%
Rely on grants for up to 50% of income	86%	51%
Do not rely on grant income	14%	9%
<b>SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS</b>		
Rely on service level agreements for more than 50% of income	20%	25%
Rely on service level agreements for less than 50% of income	40%	46%
Do not rely on service level agreement income	40%	29%
<b>CONTRACTS</b>		
Rely on contracts for more than 50% of income	40%	20%
Rely on contracts for less than 50% of income	40%	46%
Do not rely on contract income	20%	34%
<b>PAYMENTS FROM FARES</b>		
Rely on fares for more than 50% of income	12.5%	13%
Rely on fares for less than 50% of income	75%	65%
Do not rely on fare income	12.5%	16%
<b>TRAINING</b>		
Rely on training for more than 50% of income	17%	3%
Rely on training for less than 50% of income	50%	66%
Do not rely on training income	33%	32%
<b>FUNDRAISING</b>		
Rely on fundraising for more than 50% of income	25%	13%
Rely on fundraising for less than 50% of income	25%	73%
Do not rely on fundraising income	50%	13%
<b>DONATIONS</b>		
Rely on other sources for more than 50% of income	17%	Unknown
Rely on other sources for less than 50% of income	83%	Unknown
Do not rely on other sources of income	0%	Unknown
<b>OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME</b>		
Rely on other sources for more than 50% of income	0%	18%
Rely on other sources for less than 50% of income	67%	61%
Do not rely on other sources of income	33%	21%

13.4 Other sources of income include Windfarm funding for specific projects, bus service operators grant and mileage fees paid by user groups who hire of vehicles.

13.5 Grant income is still the most significant source of income for community transport, however, there has one been only one 3 year funded project in 12 years in Dumfries and Galloway. None of the operators rely on grants for more than 50% of their income, which is a significant difference from the national perspective and demonstrates an enterprising third sector in Dumfries and Galloway with payments from fares also a significant contributor.



13.6 Although the national statistics and our local statistics were not generated in the same year, contract work provides greater income to Dumfries and Galloway than the rest of Scotland. This could highlight an area of market failure. 40% of respondents rely on contracts for over 50% of their income, as opposed to 20% nationally. It was mainly the larger providers who responded to this survey, so this may not be the case for much smaller providers where tendering for contracts is still relatively uncommon. This may be because the procurement and commissioning process is usually unduly complex, even for work that is of low financial value. Factors such as the need to provide assistance for passengers who may be frail or disabled are rarely factored into tender documents, yet these are often the things which make the biggest difference for users and are what make community transport the best fit for those people. Community Benefit Clauses in tender documents would be one way of attracting bids from community transport operators but at present such clauses are very rare.

13.7 There is a trend within public bodies towards procurement and away from grants but this is not a solution to tackling the local transport problems with which community transport is grappling. Procurement is perfectly appropriate for commercially viable services but not necessarily for the difficult parts of transport that community organisations deal with.

13.8 In May 2011 the Rural Transport Solutions Project was launched. It is an innovative partnership model that brings together the local transport commissioning bodies Dumfries and Galloway Council, SWesttrans, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, and the Scottish Ambulance Service to seek solutions to transport issues for communities using community transport operators as delivery partners. The agreed Planning and Environment Services Business Plan for 2012 – 15 had a target to have Rural Transport Solutions operational in all four areas of the region during 2013/14. Although this did not happen, it was particularly successful in Wigtownshire.

13.9 What may be a more appropriate model is a Public Social Partnership (PSP). This is a strategic partnering arrangement which involves the third sector earlier and more deeply in the design and commissioning of public services. The third sector is often best placed to interact closely with communities and its involvement can mean that people have more choice and control over what services are delivered locally. A PSP differs from other commissioning approaches in that it starts with the need to be addressed, not the services available, which can often be the driver for other partnerships.

13.10 PSPs can involve one or more organisations from both the public and third sectors, and potentially from the private sector. They are based on a co-planning approach where organisations jointly design services based on service user needs, with the model building in an opportunity to pilot services to ensure effectiveness before any procurement. This approach requires resources (financial and/or people) to be contributed by all parties and responsibility for managing the PSP, designing and

piloting the services is shared. Once piloted, the new service can be competitively tendered whilst still giving third sector organisations a good opportunity to meet the contract, as they have already had a chance to assess their ability to meet the requirements. This is seen as a leading approach and is being developed by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Lothian.

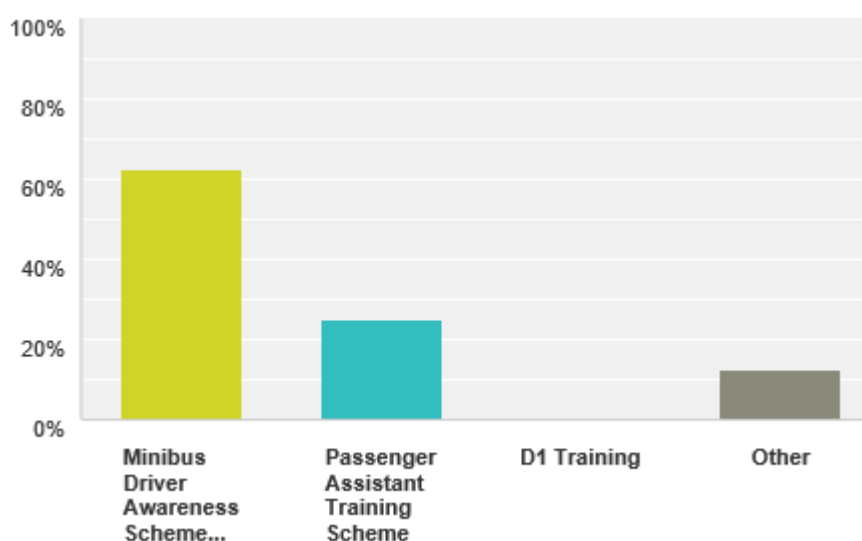
13.11 State aid has also recently begun to emerge as an issue for community transport and has been causing confusion for some operators and funders. It is borne out of a lack of clarity on state aid and whether grants from public bodies for community transport should be classified as such. Charities and community groups get involved in transport provision arguably because of market failure. The motivation is to help people who have inadequate or no transport services, rather than to act as a competitor to commercial transport providers. The kind of work that community transport generally does is highly unlikely to affect trade between member states of the European Union or distort any market, which is what the rules on state aid are intended to prevent. The Department for Transport has recently produced guidance for local authorities on how community transport can be treated in the context of state aid.

13.12 The community transport sector in Scotland and across the UK is unlike anything else in the EU but there are strong arguments for at least maintaining, if not enhancing, its regulatory regime.

## 14. Training and licensing

14.1 It is imperative that passengers on community transport receive safe services which are of good quality. Training is therefore an important feature of community transport. A large majority – 62.5% of respondents - said that they provide the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training to their drivers, though it should be noted that some organisations do not run minibuses. In addition 25% of respondents put drivers and assistants through the Passenger Assistant Training Scheme, which trains people in how to work with frail or disabled passengers who usually cannot use public transport.

## What training do you provide?



14.2 None of the operators provide D1 training to their drivers, which touches on one of the biggest problems facing the community transport sector: it is becoming increasingly difficult to find drivers, particularly volunteer drivers, who are eligible to drive minibuses, as many will not have the D1 entitlement on their licence. This is due to the fact that whilst drivers who passed their test before 1 January 1997 have automatic D1 entitlement (entitlement to drive a minibus, not for hire or reward), those who passed **after** this date only hold the B category on their licence.

14.3 In order to drive a minibus with a B category licence a person must meet all of the conditions below:

- the driver is aged 21 or over, but under 70 (unless the driver has passed a PCV medical and has gained the restriction code 120 or 79 [NFHR])
- the driver has held a full B licence for an aggregate of at least two years
- the driver receives no payment or other consideration for driving the vehicle other than out-of-pocket expenses
- the vehicle weighs no more than 3500kg (this is its maximum authorised mass or maximum permitted weight when fully loaded, and may also be described as the GVW – gross vehicle weight), excluding any part of that weight which is attributable to specialised equipment intended for the carriage of disabled passengers; or
- no more than 4250kg otherwise
- there is no trailer of any weight attached.

14.4 These conditions make it problematic for younger people to volunteer in community transport, as vehicles tend to be heavier than the stated weight restriction. Currently the youngest possible age at which D1 entitlement exists without having to sit a test is 37. The number of volunteers with automatic D1 entitlement is therefore dwindling but the cost of obtaining a D1 licence for those without it is generally around £1,000 to cover training and test fees. Providing this training is unaffordable for most community transport providers.

14.5 As each year passes D1 will become a bigger and bigger problem and a crisis is looming, not just for community organisations but for others such as educational establishments where, for example, teachers who drive school pupils to sports events will also need D1 entitlement. There is also a dearth of D1 trainers. (The Community Transport Association do not currently have any D1 Trainers in Scotland within their directory). Instruction can only be given by people who have passed the D1 test (not those who have 'grandfather rights' from having passed their normal driving test prior to 1997) and who have held it for at least three years. Thus there is a strategic need at the outset to ensure that there are enough people qualified to train in D1 before the issue becomes a full-blown crisis.

14.6 We understand from the Community Transport Association that this issue is being looked at nationally and we await the results with interest.

# 15. Conclusions

## ➔ 15.1. Community transport is making a positive contribution

- Despite the issues and challenges raised within this report, the research findings are positive on the whole.
- The essential role that community transport plays in Dumfries and Galloway in providing access, mobility and choice for people who would otherwise experience significant isolation is one of the reasons that community transport organisations are surviving during an era of austerity and a very difficult climate for public finance.
- The findings reveal that community transport organisations have expanded over the last year.
- The fact that older people and individuals with mobility impairments are the biggest users of community transport also suggests that the demand for community transport is likely not just to continue but to escalate rapidly in view of the demographic changes taking place in Dumfries and Galloway's population.
- The demand for more 'traditional' community transport services is on the increase since for many people other transport modes are just not viable (or even available), e.g. £205,000 has been cut from the SWestrans budget this year, which will affect evening and Sunday bus services.
- Moreover, the findings clearly demonstrate that the community transport sector is providing support to those people most at risk from suffering social isolation and who would otherwise be prevented from accessing essential services. At a time when community transport organisations are more likely to experience pressure to provide transport solutions for the general public, particularly with cuts to bus services, and increased demand from service users that they were usually designed to serve.
- Community transport organisations therefore have a difficult balance to strike between achieving their charitable objectives and exploring options which could lead to better financial sustainability.

## ➔ 15.2. Community transport faces significant challenges

- The economic climate is challenging. Making decisions on competing spending priorities is increasingly difficult as resources diminish. Community transport offers excellent value in tackling some of the most difficult transport problems and it achieves much with comparatively little.

- The meeting of the Community Planning Executive Group on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016 agreed that there was a need for a shared vision for community transport across all partners.
- As each year passes, the pool of people who have D1 entitlement to enable them to drive any minibuses is gradually diminishing. Drivers now must be at least 37 years of age and that age increases year by year. This is a significant barrier to recruitment of both staff and volunteers and is an issue not just for community transport operators but also for statutory agencies such as educational establishments. A strategic approach is currently being looked at nationally to ensure that the lack of qualified drivers does not become a crisis in the future.

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## 16. Draft Recommendations

### → That Community Planning partners:

1. Investigate the potential of a Public Social Partnership approach, which starts with the need to be addressed, not the services available, and ensures that appropriate social value criteria and community benefit clauses become a feature in future commissioning of transport services.
2. Recognise the need for strategic funding for Community Transport with funding periods of at least 3 years.
3. Explore the provision of support for training and recruitment of both paid and volunteer drivers and investigate the possibility of linking to the employment agenda.
4. Seek feedback from the Community Transport Association on the strategic approach to providing D1 training to ensure that the lack of qualified drivers does not become a crisis in the future.
5. Continue to work with The Health and Social Care Partnership to embed transport in their planning so that they can have better working arrangements with community groups and thus make progress towards solving the problems people have in accessing health and social care services.
6. Develop a co-ordinated public and community time table and transport directory, (which is not at the expense of undermining commercial services or represents community transport as a commercial provider). It was noted that a time table will be crucial to locality and strategic plans for integration.
7. Investigate through SWestrans opportunities to enable older and disabled people to use their concession on all community transport services in Dumfries and Galloway.
8. Investigate brokerage and sharing of vehicles to use our capital assets to their full benefit by sharing vehicles during downtime.
9. Develop co-ordinated sub-regional trip knowledge and increased communication between Community Transport providers and partners, but not at the expense of data protection. (It was noted that Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, are currently investigating new scheduling software and GIS mapping to optimise trips.)
10. Continue to support the sector to ensure that vehicles can be replaced easily, as many community transport organisations are less likely to be able to build sufficient capital reserves to enable them to replace vehicles easily.

## 17. Acknowledgements

17.1 Thanks are also due to all the community transport operators that responded to the survey and helped co-produce this document. We would also like to thank our partner organisations for their input: Community Transport Association Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council, particularly Douglas Kirkpatrick and James Parker, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The report was compiled by Sharon Ogilvie of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway.

17.2 The Community Transport Association is the national membership association for community transport operators in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## Appendices

### A. Why Community Transport Matters – A report by Ealing Community Transport

In January 2016 Ealing Community Transport published its report *Why Community Transport Matters*, an amalgamation of two ground-breaking studies led to help community transport organisations around the UK demonstrate their social value.

The report concludes that community transport schemes have the potential to make savings of between £0.4 billion and £1.1 billion a year for the public purse, as well as reducing pressure on public services and helping older people to remain active members of society.

The second study, *A Practical Method for Measuring Community Transport Social Value*, will help community transport organisations make a compelling case to commissioners on the value of their services. It was developed through the London Strategic Community Transport Forum (LSCTF).

*Why Community Transport Matters* brings together the highlights from both research initiatives, including a toolkit distilled from the Deloitte research, and an introduction to the practical measurement framework.

Lilian Greenwood MP. Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, said: “Upon reading this report, there will be no doubt in anyone’s mind as to the potentially huge benefits that community transport can deliver in communities and to public services all over the UK.”

Dr. Alice Maynard, an opinion former on Disability and Inclusion in Transport and the former Chair of Scope, said: “If we in the transport sector, who are interested in people’s wellbeing, want to make change happen and want to make sure that people are better included, then we need to be able to make the economic argument. That is why this report is so important.”



Bill Freeman, Chief Executive of the Community Transport Association, said: “Community transport, in all its forms, has the potential to offer a more reliable and resilient way of addressing a growing number of transport needs and contributing to areas of public policy where access and inclusion are significant challenges. It is vital that the CT sector can demonstrate the quality of its services, but also that they add value, so there is something that is a broader benefit beyond the simple fulfilment of the contract.”

The full copy of the report can be found here:

[http://ectcharity.co.uk/files\\_uploads/ECT\\_Why\\_community\\_transport\\_matters\\_Final\\_version3.pdf](http://ectcharity.co.uk/files_uploads/ECT_Why_community_transport_matters_Final_version3.pdf)

## B. Why a Public Social Partnership and what is it?

While the public sector is under increased pressure to approach service delivery within an ethos of partnership and preventative spend (driven significantly by the Christie report), this also comes at a time when there is increasing uncertainty around public sector funds.

Consequently, the public sector is placing greater focus on establishing clear sustainable routes for the commissioning and procurement of service delivery contracts. In addition, however, the public sector is looking to maximise the potential for creating added value through the delivery of wider social benefits. Public Sector Partnership is a leading approach which is supportive of these aims.

A Public Social Partnership (PSP) is a model which focuses on involving the Third Sector earlier and more deeply in the commissioning and design process of a range of public services. It is based on the principle of the Third and Public Sectors working in partnership to design a new, or re-design a current service with the goal of delivering better outcomes for citizens, based on explicit feedback from those who use public services. Services are then piloted prior to a (potential) competitive tendering process. It is not, therefore, a model for funding third sector organisations to deliver services.

Whilst the definition provided above is broadly true for all PSPs, a number of differences have been observed in how the model has been implemented, but there are common themes throughout; that is:

- robust governance,
- public and third sector partnership working,
- service user contribution to service design,
- innovation in service delivery,
- pilot design and testing,
- the potential for a competitive procurement process and
- a focus on a sustainable service.

There is no mandated form for a PSP. It can be developed in response to availability of funding or can be grown “organically” but also in response to any project or programme that individual organisations are embarking upon. (e.g. grant funded model, contract funded model, own partner funded model and external provision model; but structures and forms are not limited to these examples).

Currently, the average PSP lifespan from conception to pilot completion is around 2 to 3 years. Ready for Business has significant experience in supporting the development of partnerships. As a result, they are able to provide guidance and support throughout the Creation, Development and Management of Public Social Partnerships. The recommendations in this section come from their experiences. They note that it is vital that stakeholders, especially those in a leadership role, are bought into the timescale and adjust their organisations workload accordingly.

They recommend a project manager who is full time (or near full time) to steer the PSP and author key documents such as the Baseline documentation, the Memorandum of Understanding and the Service Design documentation. Ready for Business is managing and leading the Scottish Government’s Developing Third Sector Markets programme. It has a broad range of experience in developing partnerships and is therefore able to provide support that is flexible, responsive, accessible and challenging to organisations currently involved in, or considering, Public Social Partnerships.

They also recommend that we define a small group of providers to undertake this work, as involving everyone all the time will slow the process, but the selection criteria needs to be open and transparent, and needs to fit with Community Transport provider’s availability and level of resource.

Early in the design process, it is crucial for a PSP team to start making links with key decision makers in the public sector who will ultimately fund and utilise the future service in the long term.

- By bringing on-board potential funders early in the process, the PSP will have the opportunity to help shape the design to meet their requirements and ensure that it is fundable in the long term.
- The outcomes of the above conversations should be reflected in a clearly defined end point, when all deliverables will have been completed, and sufficient evidence has been collated to facilitate funding decision-making.

Procurement is expected to be the end point of the PSP but:

- Although procurement is not an immediate pressure at the start of the process, it should be remembered that the end goal of a PSP is an open and transparent procurement process of the services in question. However, it is accepted that if a PSP is sustained through other routes this can also be considered a successful conclusion.

- It must also be noted that a PSP is not a mechanism for awarding work to the Third Sector out-with procurement regulations. The capacity and capability of Third Sector providers will be strengthened by the PSP process however opportunity must be given to any interested provider to tender for delivery of the service. This can include the private sector.
- Through a PSP model, the social or community benefit from the new service model should be evidenced to ensure that this can be captured within the procurement process.
- Any public authority who will be required to fund the delivery of a public service will not commit funding to do so, nor should they be expected to, until there is a strong evidence base that newly designed services are more effective, efficient and enhance outcomes for service users over and above previous delivery approaches. It is for the partnership, therefore, to investigate the future sustainability of service funding as early in the PSP process as possible. Engaging with key stakeholders and decision-makers who will ultimately fund the service is essential for understanding their future requirements. This will help shape the design process and promote future sustainability.

Further information can be found here: <http://readyforbusiness.org/programme-offering/public-social-partnerships/>

See also The Scottish Government's Guide to Forming and Operating Public Social Partnerships (PSPs), published in July 2011:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/48453/0119024.pdf>