



AGENDA

SELECT COMMITTEE - BUS TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC SUBSIDY

Friday, 30th September, 2016, at 10.00 am Ask for: Denise Fitch/Gaetano Romagnuolo
Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Telephone 03000 416090/ 416624
Maidstone

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting in the meeting room

Membership

Mr R A Marsh (Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr C W Caller,
Mr I S Chittenden, Mr M J Harrison, Mr G Lymer, Mr B E MacDowall and Mrs J Whittle

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

10.00 - Philip Norwell, Managing Director, Stagecoach South East
10.45am (Pages 3 - 6)

11.00 - Mike Bartram, Bus Policy Advisor, Transport Focus (Pages 7 -
11.45am 34)

12.00 - James Coe, Policy & Public Affairs Executive, Community
12.45pm Transport Association (Pages 35 - 74)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(03000 416647)

Thursday, 22 September 2016

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Bus Transport Select Committee

Biography

Philip Norwell

Managing Director, Stagecoach South East

As Managing Director, Philip is responsible to the Stagecoach UK Bus board for all elements of the business registered as East Kent Road Car Company Limited (Registered No. 144585).

Trading as Stagecoach South East - with depots in Herne Bay, Thanet, Dover, Folkestone, Ashford, Hastings and Eastbourne - the company operates 465 buses, covering 20.5m miles, carrying about 45m passengers on mainly commercial local bus services in the current financial year.

The company employs 1,400 staff across the business, in roles including drivers, engineers, cleaners, planning, administration and management. Eleven apprentices, from local communities, are currently employed on a structured scheme as mechanics and electricians.

Stagecoach has been a business, employer and active part of the local community in east Kent over the last 100 years.

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Bus Transport Select Committee

Hearing 2

Friday 30 September 2016

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

Themes and Questions

Philip Norwell, Managing Director, Stagecoach South East

- Please introduce yourself and provide an outline of the roles and responsibilities that your post involves.
- Please provide an overview of the operations of Stagecoach in Kent. What are the roles and responsibilities of Stagecoach in relation to the delivery of bus transport in Kent?
- Please discuss your design and coverage of commercial bus routes in Kent.
- In your view, what are the key themes around the provision of subsidised and tendered local bus services?
- What are your views on the reimbursement to bus operators for passengers carried under concessionary fares schemes?
- In your opinion, what are the key opportunities and challenges, if any, associated with the Kent Young Person's Travel Pass?
- What is your view on the effectiveness of local Quality Bus Partnerships? What are the key activities that, in your opinion, these partnerships should focus on?
- Please discuss the latest investment in new buses made by Stagecoach in Kent.
- What are the effects of traffic congestion on bus reliability? What can be done, if anything, to improve the situation?

- In what ways can public transport be promoted and maximised to cope with the growth of new housing developments?
- In your view, what are the main challenges and opportunities associated with the Bus Services Bill, if any?
- What can KCC do, if anything, to promote improved bus transport in Kent?
- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with the Committee?

Bus Transport Select Committee

Biography

Mike Bartram

Bus Policy Advisor, Transport Focus

Mike Bartram has been Bus Policy Advisor for Transport Focus (and its predecessor organisation Passenger Focus) since 2009. He helped to secure and define the statutory role of representing bus, coach and tram passengers for Passenger Focus and has contributed to many of the organisation's policy and research reports, including detailed reports on bus punctuality, demand responsive transport and consultation on bus service changes.

Mike was previously Head of Consultation for Transport for London and has advised on consultation on major projects such as High Speed 2, airport capacity in the South East and London 2012, and is helping a number of local transport authorities to develop and deliver their plans for involving local people in bus service improvements. Working for the World Bank he has also advised governments in North Africa on constitutional change. He is the lead Associate for the Consultation Institute on transport matters.

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Bus Transport Select Committee

Hearing 2

Friday 30 September 2016

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Themes and Questions

Mike Bartram, Bus Policy Advisor, Transport Focus

- Please introduce yourself and provide an outline of the roles and responsibilities of your post.
- What is Transport Focus? What are its objectives?
- Please discuss your investigation of bus passenger priorities for improvement.
- What were the findings of your research into non-users and their propensity to use buses?
- Please discuss your research into punctuality and disruption in relation to bus transport.
- To what extent, in your view, are passengers consulted when shaping delivery models of local bus transport?
- In your view, what are the main opportunities and challenges, if any, associated with the recent Bus Services Bill?
- In your opinion, to what extent do bus service-related agreements, partnerships and franchises meet the needs of bus users and of local communities in general?
- What should Kent County Council do, if anything, to improve bus transport in Kent?

- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with the Committee?



Bus passengers have their say

Trust, what to improve and using buses more
March 2016

Introduction

Nearly two thirds of all journeys made using public transport in Great Britain are by bus – making bus by far the most commonly used mode of public transport. Buses play a major part in getting people to work and to education as well as linking communities with shops and essential services.

However, the bus industry is facing serious challenges. The number of passenger journeys in England (outside London) continues to decline while spending pressures on local authorities have resulted in a significant reduction in local authority supported services¹. The intention of the Government's proposed 'Buses Bill' is to increase bus passenger numbers. The Bill will give local authorities a range of partnership working arrangements, including the option to franchise local bus services.

This makes it all the more important that services are built around the needs of passengers and that their views and aspirations are at the heart of decision-making. An essential part of this is to know what passengers think about existing services and what they want to see improved in the future.

This report is part of that process. It provides a number of pointers for local authorities and the bus industry to both provide a better experience for current passengers and also attract new ones. These should be at the heart of whatever agreement they enter into. The Bill should provide the framework to enable this happen.

We asked over 4500 bus passengers in England (outside London) what they most wanted to see improved, and about their relationship with, and trust in, their bus company. We also asked 2400 less frequent and non-users of bus services why they did not travel more by bus and what might make them do so.

This report confirms the importance of providing a good 'core product' – a frequent, punctual and reliable service that provides value for money. It also shows that there is real value in companies communicating and engaging with passengers and building up a relationship. Not only could this help in making better decisions but also generate trust and goodwill towards the company when things go wrong.

Transport Focus also carries out the Bus Passenger Survey (BPS²) which looks at how satisfied passengers are with their bus journey. Combining our work on satisfaction with this report, on priorities and trust, means that we have gathered the views of just under 45,000 people in the last year. This gives us a very comprehensive and powerful understanding of what passengers experience, want and expect from the bus industry.

We urge bus operators, local transport authorities and central Government to take note of the research findings and work collaboratively to advance the cause of buses and make them better for passengers.

Research methodology

There were two phases of the research work. The qualitative study (conducted by Illuminas) explored how passengers assess the trust they have in the bus companies they use and the level of relationship they have with the company. We carried out 12 focus groups, two each in: Maidstone, Sheffield, Bristol, Reading, Lincolnshire, and Manchester.

The quantitative study (conducted by Populus) asked over 4500 passengers across England their levels of trust in the bus companies they use, and to rank their priorities for improvement among 31 separate aspects of their journey. It also asked around 2400 infrequent/non-users about their views on buses and what might make them travel more. Further details on both research studies can be found at:

- **Qualitative:** www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-passengers-have-their-say-qualitative-report
- **Quantitative:** www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-passengers-have-their-say-quantitative-report

Bus passengers' priorities for improvement simulator tool

Our simulator tool allows you to choose different groups of passengers and see their priorities for improvement; for example you can select by passengers' journey purpose, their age group, or their frequency of bus use.

The simulator tool, along with instructions on how to use it, can be found on our website: www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-passengers-have-their-say-priorities-for-improvement-simulator

¹ Annual bus statistics: England 2014/15. Department for Transport

² BPS: <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/bus-passenger-survey>

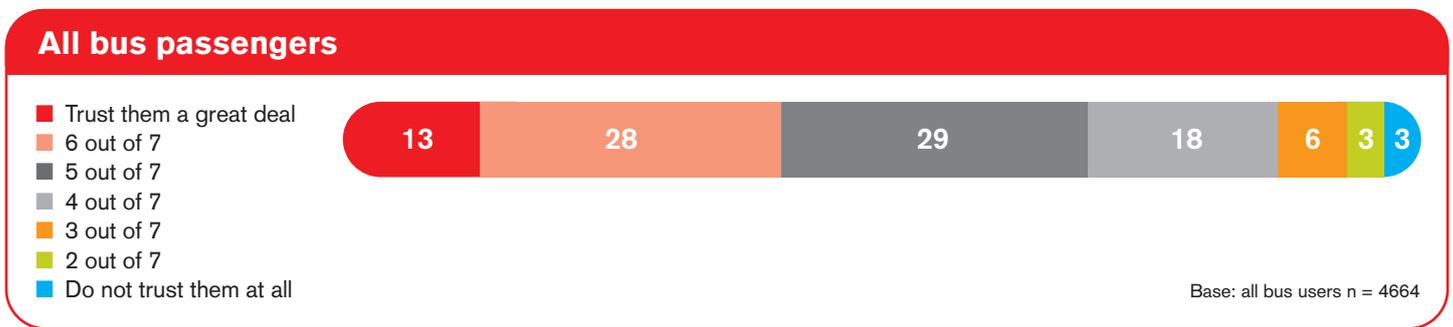
Bus passengers' trust in bus companies

Trust is an important concept in any business as it can bring loyalty and repeat purchase. Transport is no exception. We know from our work on rail that a more positive relationship with the operator can help to move rail travel from being a 'distress purchase' (especially amongst

commuters) to more of a conventional customer/supplier relationship. We wanted to mirror this 'trust' research with bus passengers.

We asked passengers how much they trusted their bus company. In doing so it became apparent that many passengers

have a limited understanding of how bus services are structured, particularly when it comes to what a bus operator is responsible for and what the local authority provides. So to some extent the scores expressed below are a comment on the overall package experienced by passengers.



41% have high trust in their bus company (score of 6 or 7 out of 7)

53% have medium levels of trust and most of this is the upper end of middle (score of 3-5)

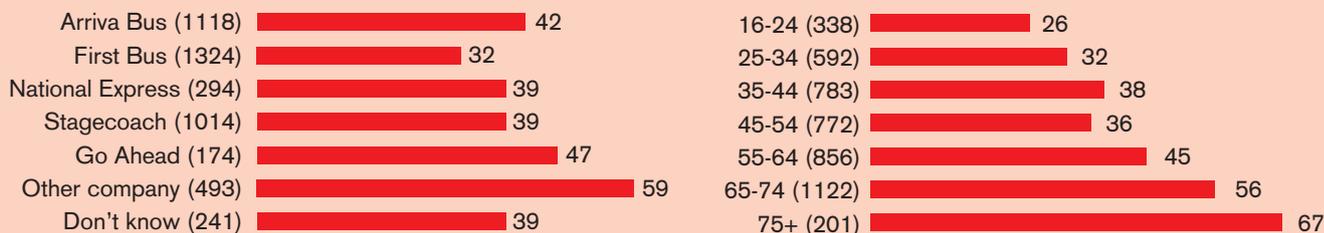
Very few have 'no trust at all' or very limited trust (score of 1-2)

Similar research we carried out among rail passengers³ showed the range of high-trust scores (score of 6 or 7) was from 52 per cent (Merseyrail) down to 22 per cent (First Capital Connect – now Thameslink). Generally users of long-distance and regional operators had higher levels of trust with users of

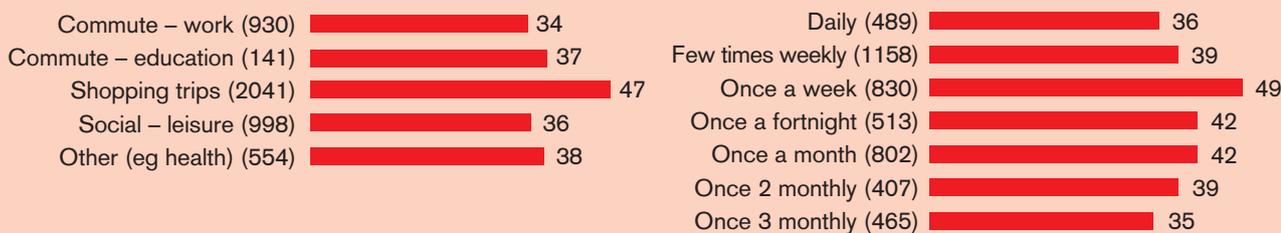
operators in London and the South East having the lowest levels of trust. But within each category (long-distance, regional, and London/South East) there was a substantial range of scores, showing that some companies are more successful than others at building trust.

³ Passengers' relationship with the rail industry: <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passengers-relationship-with-the-rail-industry>

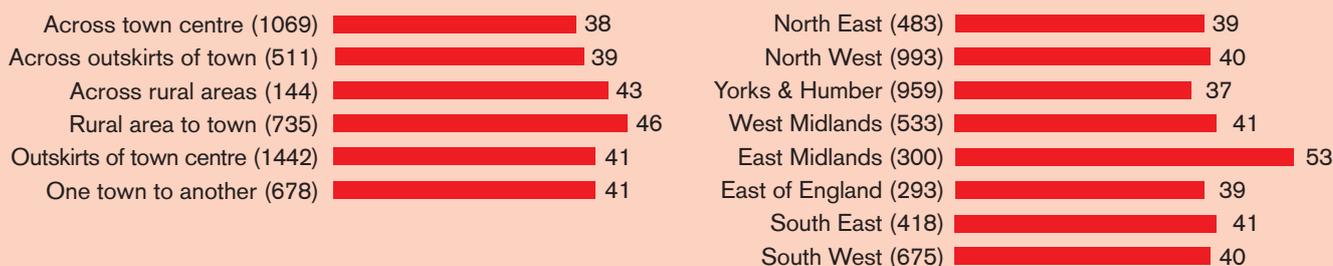
However, levels of high trust do vary. We see a difference amongst the five largest bus groups and more noticeably by age, with the older age groups having higher levels of trust.



It is also slightly higher for those making shopping trips and those travelling once a week but these could in part reflect the age profile of those travelling at these times.



Levels of high trust can also differ by location. Those travelling from rural areas into town display a higher degree of trust, as do those in the East Midlands.



Interestingly, levels of trust do not vary noticeably by social grade nor the length of time spent on the bus.

We wanted to dig a bit deeper into the issue of trust to see what really influences and drives levels of trust amongst passengers. So in the quantitative survey we asked passengers a series of questions about their attitudes to their bus company. We explored the importance these attributes had in building trust. The attributes were grouped into four main themes.

Key themes

Delivering the essentials

Can be relied on to get you where you want to go on time

Can be relied on to turn up when they say they will

Try their best to make the journey a pleasant experience

Provide good value for money

Corporate values

Look like they are professionally managed

Are honest with passengers when there are problems

Give the impression of being good employers

Care about their place in the local community

Passenger engagement

Make it easy for you to stay up to date with timetables and fares

Care what passengers think of their service

Welcome contact from passengers

Use technology well for passengers benefit

Valuing passengers

Have drivers who keep an eye on what's happening on the bus

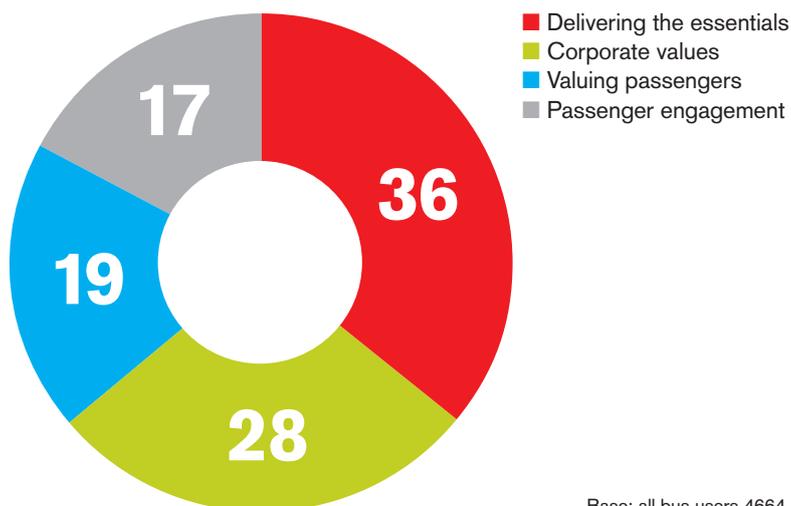
Have drivers who care about the standard of their driving

Have drivers who are considerate to passengers

Do their best for you when services don't run to plan

Show they appreciate you choosing to travel with them

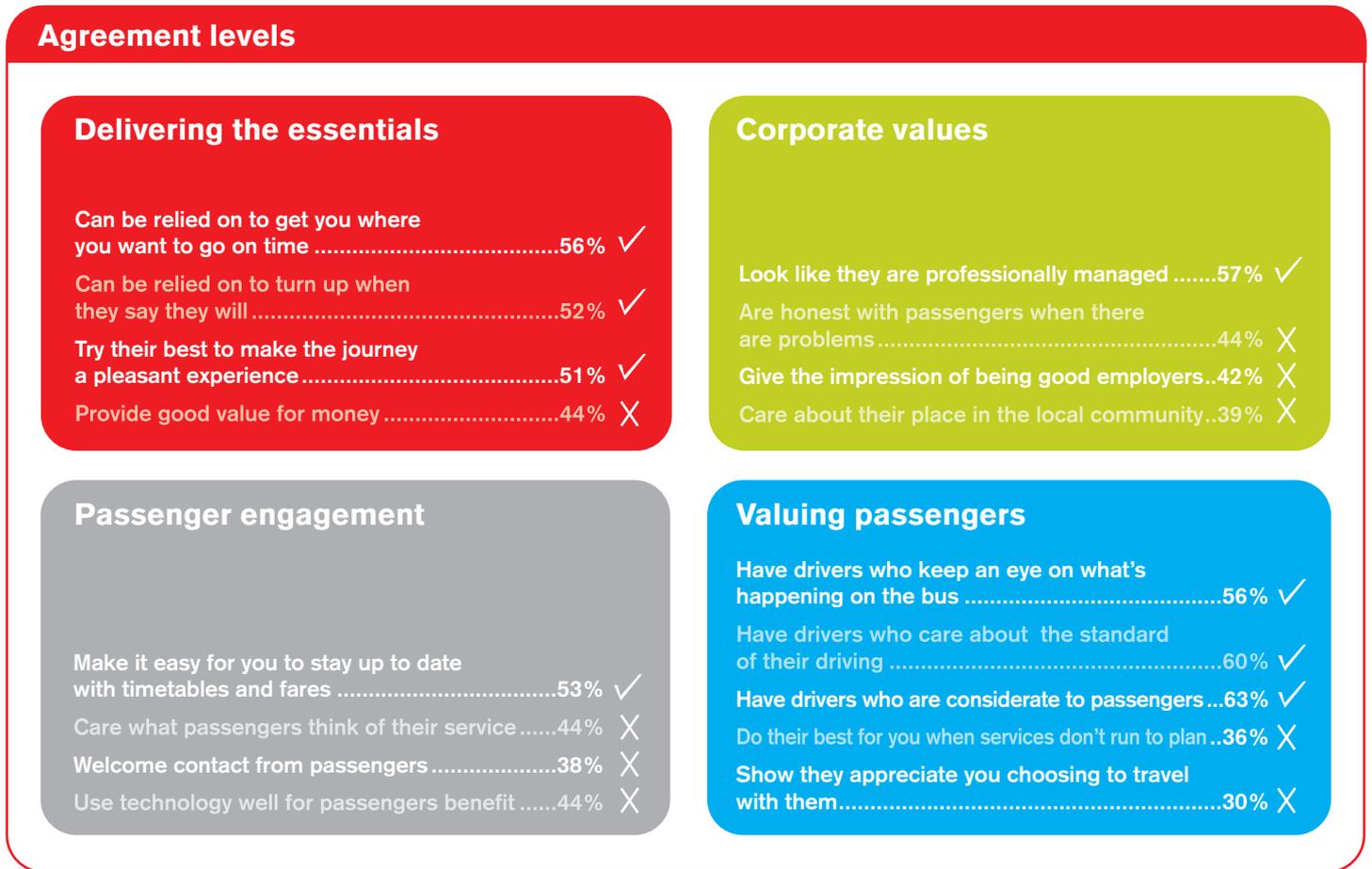
The drivers of trust (%)



Using statistical techniques we quantified the impact of each on levels of trust. We found that 'delivering the essentials' had the highest impact on trust (36 per cent – over a third) while delivering corporate values accounted for a quarter (28 per cent). These two combine to drive two thirds of passengers' trust rating.

We also asked passengers how well they thought their bus company did when it came to these 17 attributes – in other words how well it lived up to the statements made.

These are shown in the chart below. Average agreement levels were 48 per cent; those with a tick scored above average, while those with a cross were below average.



We can see that bus companies are seen to do better at delivering the essentials. However it is also noticeable that there is higher agreement when it comes to things that are within the control of the bus driver – such as being considerate and driving carefully. This shows the potential value of bus drivers in generating a sense of loyalty and engagement amongst passengers.

By bringing all this information together we are able to get a sense of what actions could have the biggest impact on levels of trust. These are set out in the chart on the next page. Those in the top left quadrant show areas that have a high impact on trust but where the bus company is not seen as doing well. Those in the top right also show actions that have a high impact on trust but where the company is seen as doing well.

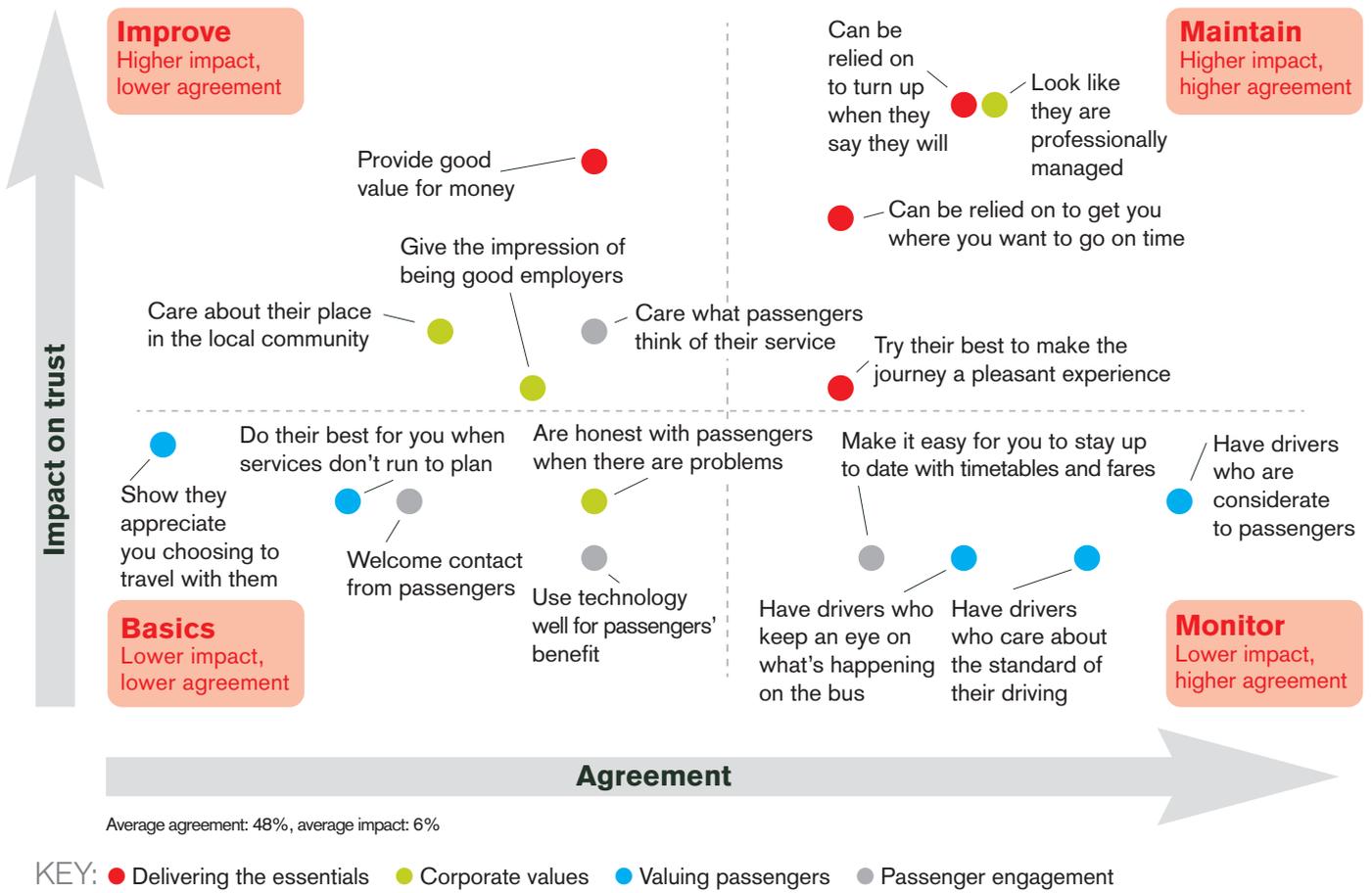
From this we get a picture that shows that reliability (in other words delivering the essentials) must be maintained but that there is much scope for improvement in how the bus company presents itself and engages with passengers.

We also explored the issue of trust in our qualitative research. This too showed a distinction between delivering the core service and the wider corporate/social values.

"The bus can basically arrive at any point, the timetable is irrelevant in the mornings. So I have to get up and get down there about 20 minutes before I really need to as I can't be late for work."

18-30, commuter, frequent

How to improve trust



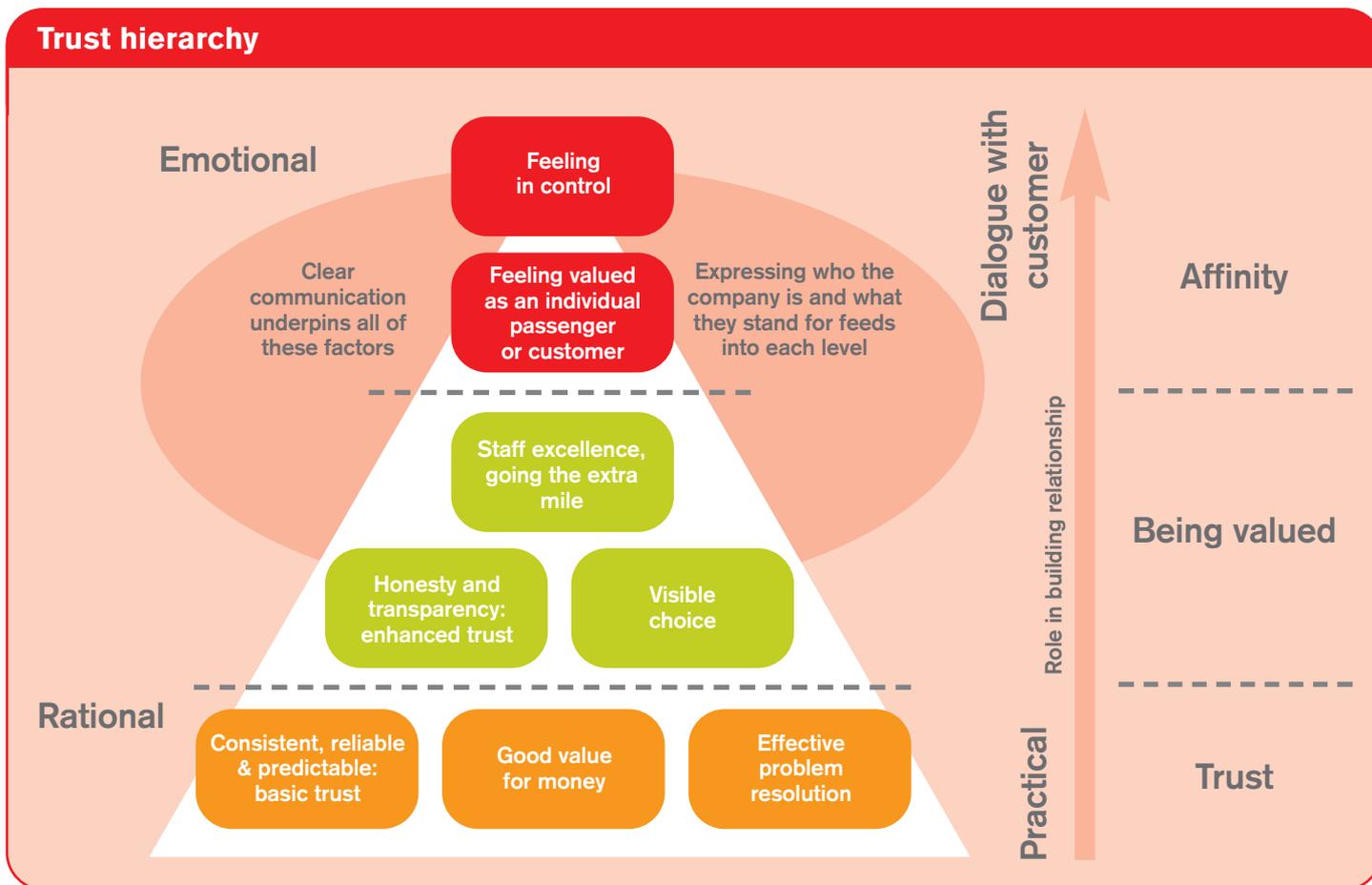
We found that building a relationship with passengers has both a rational and an emotional element. At the rational level it means running the buses on time, being reliable, coping with disruption, resolving problems and offering value for money. Service delivery (in other words delivering the essentials) is at the heart of this rational element.

The better the operator runs the service, the higher the levels of trust generated. Being unreliable or inconsistent has a large detrimental impact on levels of trust.

Trust is the base level that must be achieved before a relationship can be built up between passengers and operators. However, it is the more emotionally engaging factors that build real affinity. This includes things like staff going the extra mile, and feeling like the company really does care what happens to you.

"I did actually make a complaint because it got to the point where the bus was delayed more and more every day. The reply I got was ridiculous, they just said it was a one-off and not resolved- but that isn't the case - the whole point of writing and what I said is that it wasn't the case - they didn't even read it. I wouldn't bother again."

18-30, commuter, frequent



We found that bus travel at present is more focussed on the rational elements. There are currently few, if any, emotional benefits experienced by passengers. This occurs for a variety of reasons:

- Under 'business as usual' conditions bus companies show little desire to interact with passengers. Passengers believe that bus companies are not particularly interested in their views on the service – they make themselves remote and aloof. There seems no dialogue at the corporate level, no way to have a conversation (whether complaining or not) and a general view that complaints get 'fobbed off'. The on-bus environment does not make passengers feel like 'customers'.
- When things don't go to plan, bus companies don't communicate particularly well, either while on the bus or for passengers at the stop. Passengers realise a driver who is concentrating on the road will find it difficult to discuss alternatives, but ask why there isn't an alternative source of information (on-board PA, or sources of live information). The 'radio silence' approach leaves passengers unable to assess the alternatives, update work/family on amended arrival times and not feeling in control of the situation.

"You're just a number, they don't care what you think or if you're OK. The driver sees my disabled pass and then speeds away without even checking I've got to my seat. I've fallen over before now, and I don't even know who I would complain to about that. And drivers don't even have a number or anything to identify them even if I could!"

50+, frequent, leisure user, disabled

- Passengers speak of variable experiences from drivers, even from the same driver on different occasions. Many passengers feel there isn't a welcoming exchange when boarding the bus, or appreciation of their custom. Where drivers show empathy with passengers these are seen as 'magic moments' – not just by the passenger it relates to, but also by other people on the bus who see it too. Given the remoteness of the company, the bus driver is largely the only point of contact between the passenger and the operator.
- The value of the driver is also something that comes through our research on value for money (*Bus passenger views on value for money*, October 2013⁴) where drivers are seen as the main source of information on fares and ticketing. Our research suggests that smart ticketing offers opportunities to build trust, both in terms of its ability to offer a 'best fare' guarantee and by offering loyalty schemes that reward passengers. Smart ticketing could provide one of the 'bridges' between the rational and emotional levels of trust.

Building trust is made more difficult by it not being clear to passengers who runs which parts of the bus network, why bus routes run where they do, and at what time services choose to run. This has far-reaching implications:

- passengers don't know who to complain to if there are systemic failings in a bus service, which they find disempowering
- passengers make assumptions on how buses are set up, believing it to be run by a combination of an 'over-regulated' public sector with a 'profit imperative' private sector – arguably the worst possible stereotypes
- one outcome of this knowledge gap is that passengers don't know who they should be 'being valued by' if even they were to be valued. Any value felt is more ascribed to drivers acting as individuals rather than from the bus company itself. Whilst passengers don't want 'chapter and verse' on organisation and structure, they do want clear lines of sight, accountability and sanctions when there is consistent underperformance.

"The bus driver got out of his cabin and helped the disabled passenger into the bus, personally ensuring that they had enough space and were comfortable. I just thought that was great! It really cheered me up and restored my faith in humanity."

30-50, commuter, frequent

"My local bus service is quite unreliable, sometimes I have no way of telling when the next bus will be and it's stressful for me if I need to get to work."

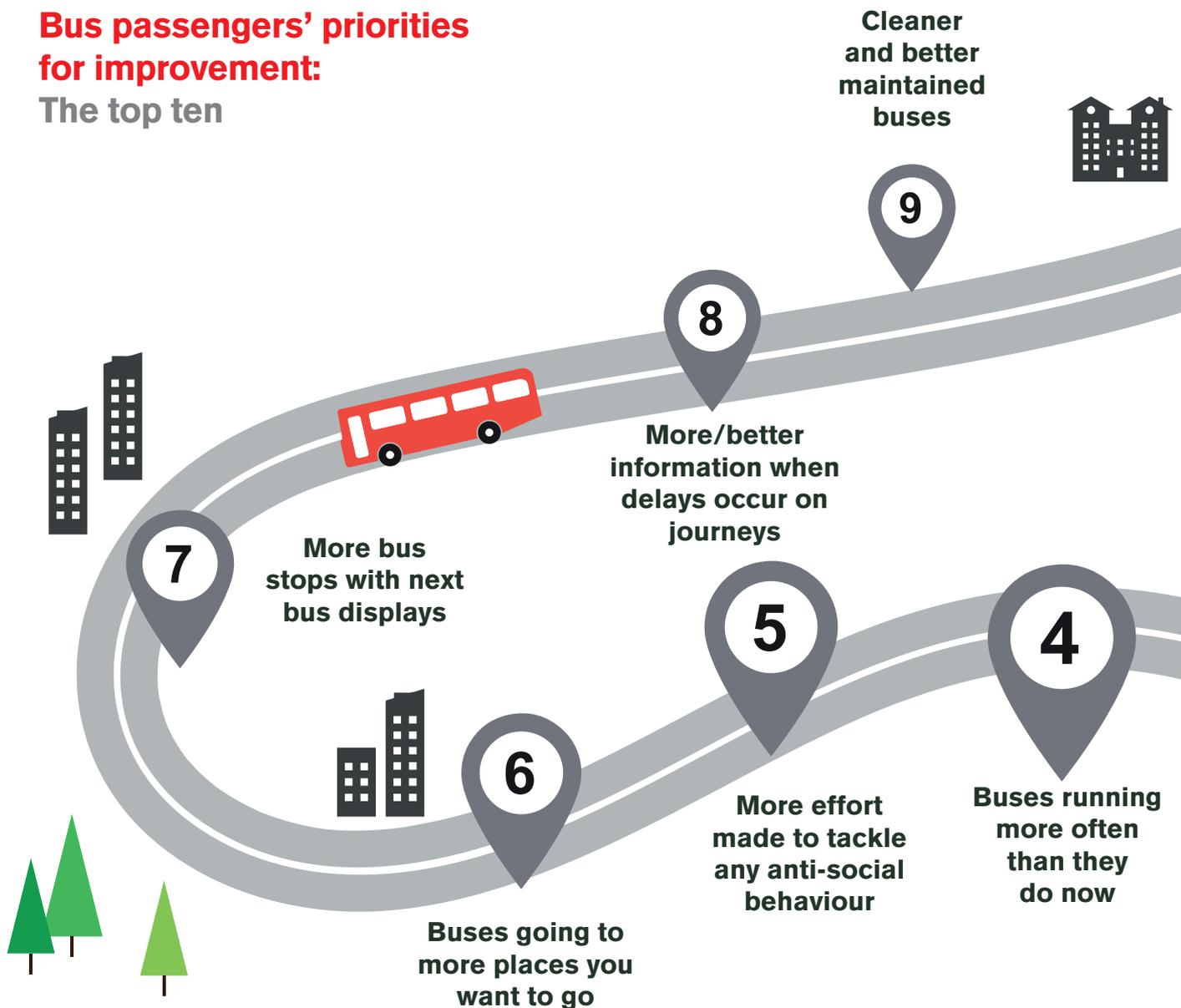
18-30, commuter, less frequent

⁴ *Bus passenger views on value for money*, October 2013: <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-passenger-views-on-value-for-money>

Bus passengers' priorities for improvement

Over 4500 passengers across the country were asked to rank a series of possible improvements to their bus service in order of priority. We can see from the graphic below that the highest priority for improvement is value for money, followed by reliability and punctuality. Interestingly, efforts made in tackling anti-social behaviour came in as the fifth highest priority nationally.

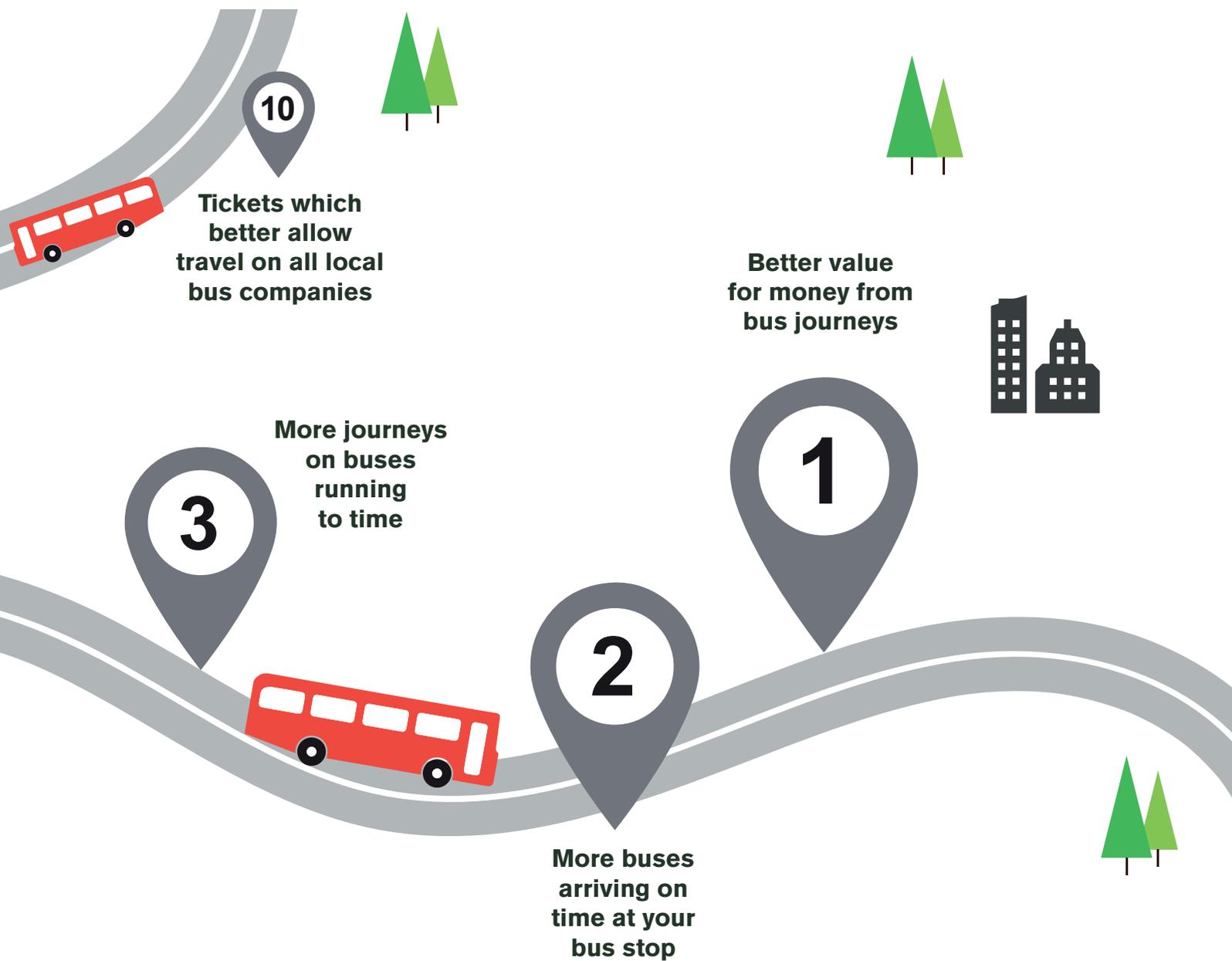
Bus passengers' priorities for improvement: The top ten



Top priorities for improvement – top ten priorities: all bus users

As well as getting the rank order of priorities, the research also gives a sense of relative – in other words how much more, or less, important is one factor compared to another. The table on the next page shows the relative scores for each of the 31 different aspects of service we used and their order of importance.

From this we can see that value for money, punctuality and frequency are particularly high priorities.



Bus passenger priorities for improvement

	What to improve	Rank	Index
	Better value for money from bus journeys	1	258
	More buses arriving on time at your bus stop	2	247
	More journeys on buses running to time	3	228
	Buses running more often than they do now	4	224
	More effort made to tackle any anti-social behaviour	5	174
	Buses going to more places you want to go	6	158
	More bus stops with next bus displays	7	121
	Being given more/better information when delays occur on journeys	8	110
	Cleaner and better maintained buses	9	107
	Tickets which better allow travel on all local bus companies	10	107
	Better security at bus stops so people feel safer waiting for buses	11	104
	Drivers allowing more time for passengers to get to their seats	12	103
	Better quality information at bus stops	13	87
	Drivers showing more consideration to passengers	14	86
	A smoother ride with less sudden braking or jolting	15	86
	A more suitable range of tickets for how and when you use buses	16	78
	More buses having next stop announcements/displays	17	74
	More personal space on buses (whether seated or standing)	18	74
	Free Wi-Fi being more widely available	19	72
	Seats being more comfortable	20	69
	Shorter journey times on buses	21	66
	More seating being made available	22	61
	Improved ventilation and temperature control	23	61
	Being able to pay for bus travel with smartcards/contactless cards/mobile/apps	24	53
	Improved display of route numbers and destinations on the outside of buses	25	52
	Drivers communicating better with passengers	26	50
	Improved information via apps/online on bus arrival/running times	27	48
	Making it easier to step on and off buses	28	46
	More space for wheelchairs and buggies	29	44
	Better maintained bus stops	30	29
	Being able to buy tickets from more places	31	23

Grouped into four ranges: over 150, 100-149, 50-99, up to 49. Base: all bus users 4664



Better value for money from bus journeys

The priorities are shown as an index averaged on 100. So anything ranked over 100 has above average importance and anything below 100 has less than average importance. So for example 150 = 50 per cent more important than average, 300 = three times as important as average, 50 = half as important as average.



Priorities for improvement are reasonably consistent across the major Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) areas with value for money and reliability still scoring highly. However, efforts to tackle any anti-social behaviour was a little higher in Manchester and the West Midlands.

Priorities for improvement by PTE area

	Overall	Merseyside	Greater Manchester	South Yorkshire	Tyne and Wear	West Midlands	West Yorkshire
	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Better value for money from bus journeys	258 (1st)	285 (1st)	269 (1st)	290 (1st)	287 (1st)	256 (1st)	287 (1st)
More buses arriving on time at your bus stop	247 (2nd)	215 (2nd)	233 (2nd)	249 (2nd)	233 (2nd)	229 (2nd)	249 (2nd)
More journeys on buses running to time	228 (3rd)	202 (3rd)	218 (3rd)	233 (4th)	218 (3rd)	211 (4th)	231 (4th)
Buses running more often than they do now	224 (4th)	193 (4th)	205 (4th)	233 (3th)	215 (4th)	204 (5th)	233 (3rd)
More effort made to tackle any anti-social behaviour	174 (5th)	171 (5th)	197 (5th)	180 (5th)	168 (5th)	221 (3th)	169 (5th)
Buses going to more places you want to go	158 (6th)	149 (6th)	153 (6th)	164 (6th)	157 (6th)	150 (6th)	162 (6th)
More bus stops with next bus display	121 (1st)	131 (7th)	117 (8th)	109 (8th)	107 (8th)	103 (10th)	115 (8th)
Being given more/better information when delays occur on journeys	110 (8th)	110 (7th)	111 (10th)	106 (9th)	106 (9th)	106 (9th)	108 (9th)
Cleaner and better maintained buses	107 (9th)	106 (11th)	107 (11th)	102 (11th)	104 (11th)	114 (8th)	100 (11th)
Tickets which better allow travel on all local bus companies	107 (10th)	127 (8th)	111 (9th)	117 (7th)	118 (7th)	101 (11th)	120 (7th)

Base: PTE base sizes between 435 and 441

There are a significant number of passengers who have a concessionary pass that allows free travel. When we split priorities according to those with a free pass and those without, we see that value for money assumes even higher importance as a priority for improvement among those who pay for their ticket.

Priorities for improvement by ticket type

	Overall	No free pass	Have free pass
	Rank	Rank	Rank
Better value for money from bus journeys	258 (1st)	313 (1st)	142 (8th)
More buses arriving on time at your bus stop	247 (2nd)	235 (2nd)	271 (1st)
More journeys on buses running to time	228 (3rd)	223 (3rd)	238 (2nd)
Buses running more often than they do now	224 (4th)	219 (4th)	233 (3rd)
More effort made to tackle any anti-social behaviour	174 (5th)	176 (5th)	170 (4th)
Buses going to more places you want to go	158 (6th)	162 (6th)	150 (6th)
More bus stops with next bus displays	121 (7th)	104 (10th)	156 (5th)
Being given more/better information when delays occur on journeys	110 (8th)	106 (9th)	120 (11th)
Cleaner and better maintained buses	107 (9th)	100 (11th)	121 (10th)
Tickets which better allow travel on all local bus companies	107 (10th)	131 (7th)	56 (23rd)

Base: all bus users 4664, free pass 1685, not free pass 2962

Priorities also differ according to whether passengers have a disability and the impact of that disability. Dealing with anti-social behaviour becomes the highest priority for improvement among passengers whose disability has a big impact on their ability to travel.

Priorities for improvement by impact of disability

	Overall	High impact	Low impact	No impact
	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Better value for money from bus journeys	258 (1st)	183 (4th)	212 (4th)	269 (1st)
More buses arriving on time at your bus stop	247 (2nd)	204 (2nd)	245 (1st)	248 (2nd)
More journeys on buses running to time	228 (3rd)	187 (3rd)	221 (2nd)	229 (3rd)
Buses running more often than they do now	224 (4th)	163 (5th)	217 (3rd)	226 (4th)
More effort made to tackle any anti-social behaviour	174 (5th)	230 (1st)	190 (5th)	171 (5th)
Buses going to more places you want to go	158 (6th)	128 (9th)	150 (6th)	160 (6th)
More bus stops with next bus displays	121 (7th)	116 (11th)	113 (10th)	121 (7th)
Being given more/better information when delays occur on journeys	110 (8th)	108 (13th)	105 (13th)	111 (9th)
Cleaner and better maintained buses	107 (9th)	135 (8th)	119 (8th)	104 (10th)
Tickets which better allow travel on all local bus companies	107 (10th)	74 (20th)	85 (15th)	112 (8th)

Base: all bus uses 4664, high impact 142, low impact 495, no impact 489

Priorities for improvement by frequency of bus use

	Overall	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly
	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Better value for money from bus journeys	258 (1st)	268 (1st)	257 (1st)	244 (2nd)	275 (1st)
More buses arriving on time at your bus stop	247 (2nd)	262 (2nd)	246 (2nd)	248 (1st)	239 (2nd)
More journeys on buses running to time	228 (3rd)	242 (4th)	226 (3rd)	228 (3rd)	222 (3rd)
Buses running more often than they do now	224 (4th)	246 (3rd)	221 (4th)	225 (4th)	217 (4th)
More effort made to tackle any anti-social behaviour	174 (5th)	155 (6th)	167 (5th)	179 (5th)	192 (5th)
Buses going to more places you want to go	158 (6th)	166 (5th)	157 (6th)	156 (6th)	158 (6th)
More bus stops with next bus displays	121 (7th)	110 (8th)	120 (7th)	125 (7th)	122 (7th)
Being given more/better information when delays occur on journeys	110 (8th)	111 (7th)	110 (8th)	111 (8th)	110 (9th)
Cleaner and better maintained buses	107 (9th)	102 (10th)	108 (10th)	107 (9th)	106 (10th)
Tickets which better allow travel on all local bus companies	107 (10th)	106 (9th)	108 (9th)	99 (10th)	115 (8th)

Base: daily = 489, weekly = 1988, monthly = 1315, quarterly = 872

2

More buses arriving on time at your bus stop

It is also possible to look at the ranking of priorities according to the levels of trust outlined earlier. Those who recorded low levels of trust placed significantly more importance on service delivery (in other words running a reliable, punctual, frequent service) than did those who recorded high levels of trust. This again reinforces the importance of getting the core product right.

Priorities for improvement by level of trust

	Overall	Trust (6-7)	Don't trust (1-2)
	Rank	Rank	Rank
Better value for money from bus journeys	258 (1st)	229 (1st)	296 (3rd)
More buses arriving on time at your bus stop	247 (2nd)	221 (2nd)	310 (2nd)
More journeys on buses running to time	228 (3rd)	203 (3rd)	284 (4th)
Buses running more often than they do now	224 (4th)	191 (4th)	311 (1st)
More effort made to tackle any anti-social behaviour	174 (5th)	190 (5th)	150 (6th)
Buses going to more places you want to go	158 (6th)	144 (6th)	187 (5th)
More bus stops with next bus displays	121 (7th)	126 (7th)	95 (10th)
Being given more/better information when delays occur on journeys	110 (8th)	110 (11th)	102 (8th)
Cleaner and better maintained buses	107 (9th)	117 (8th)	92 (11th)
Tickets which better allow travel on all local bus companies	107 (10th)	98 (12th)	113 (7th)

Base: all bus users n = 4664; high trust = 1913; low trust = 283

Using buses more – users and non-users

Surveying those who use buses gives an important sense of what they think about services and what can improve their journey. But it is just as important to look at people who do not or infrequently travel by bus and, more importantly, why not?

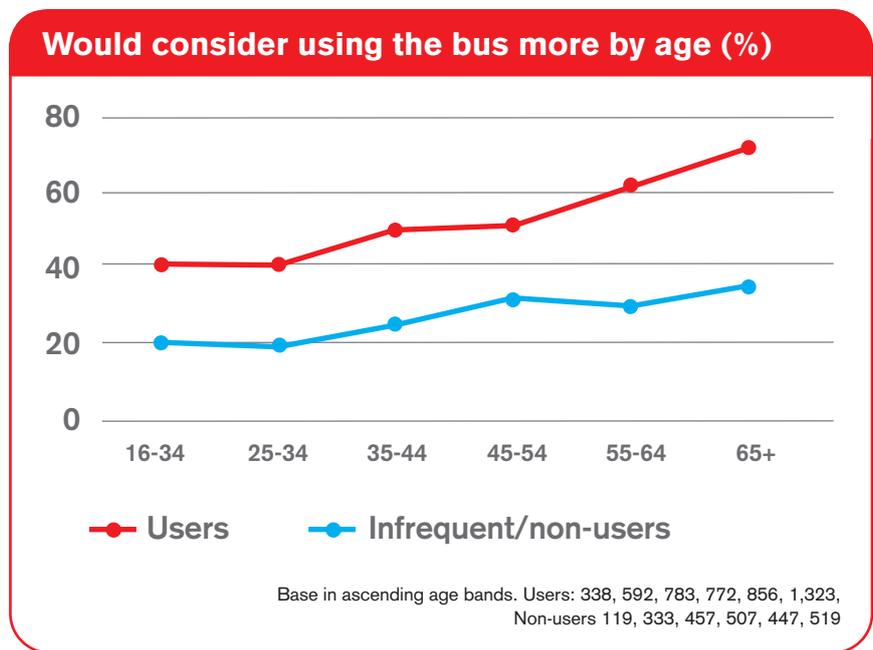
We asked nearly 2400 'infrequent/non-users' about their attitudes to local bus services. Reassuringly 85 per cent of them agreed that



having a good bus network is important to the local area, and nearly half (45 per cent) that travelling by bus is a good way to get about. The research also helps to dispel the perception of bus travel being looked down upon – only a quarter of infrequent/non-users (26 per cent) agreed with the statement that ‘people like me do not use buses’. So the value of, and need for, bus services is acknowledged by users and infrequent/non-users alike.

This support for buses does not always translate into a willingness to actually use them. 72 per cent of infrequent/non-users in our survey would not consider making more journeys by bus. However, this still leaves 28 per cent who would and, when coupled with existing bus users who said that they wouldn’t mind making more journeys by bus (54 per cent), suggests a reasonable market for growth exists.

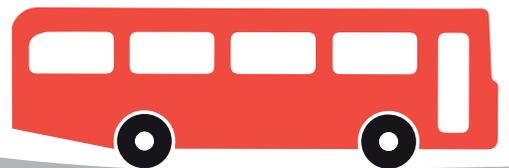
We can see that the willingness to use buses more increases with age.



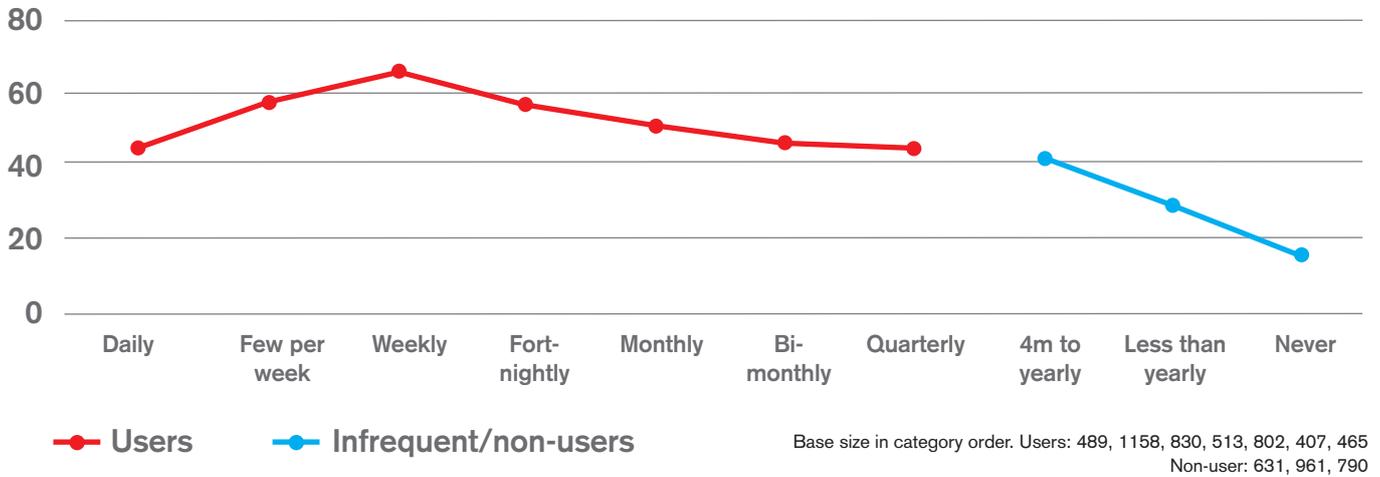
It is also highest among users who currently only use the bus once a week, and the more frequent of the infrequent users.

4

Buses running more often than they do now

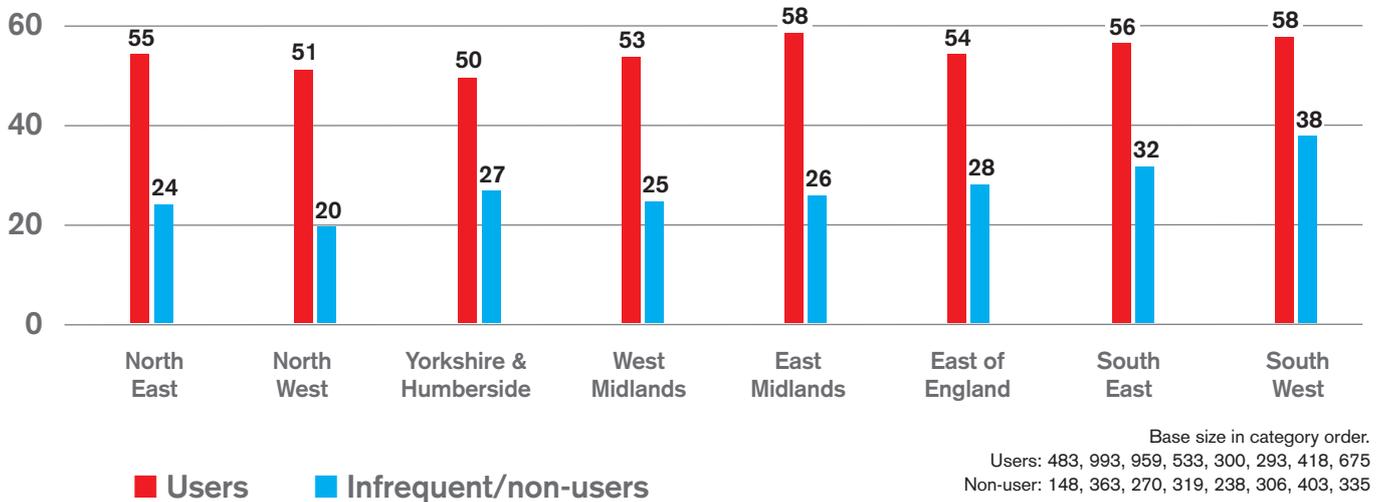


Would consider using bus more by frequency of bus use (%)



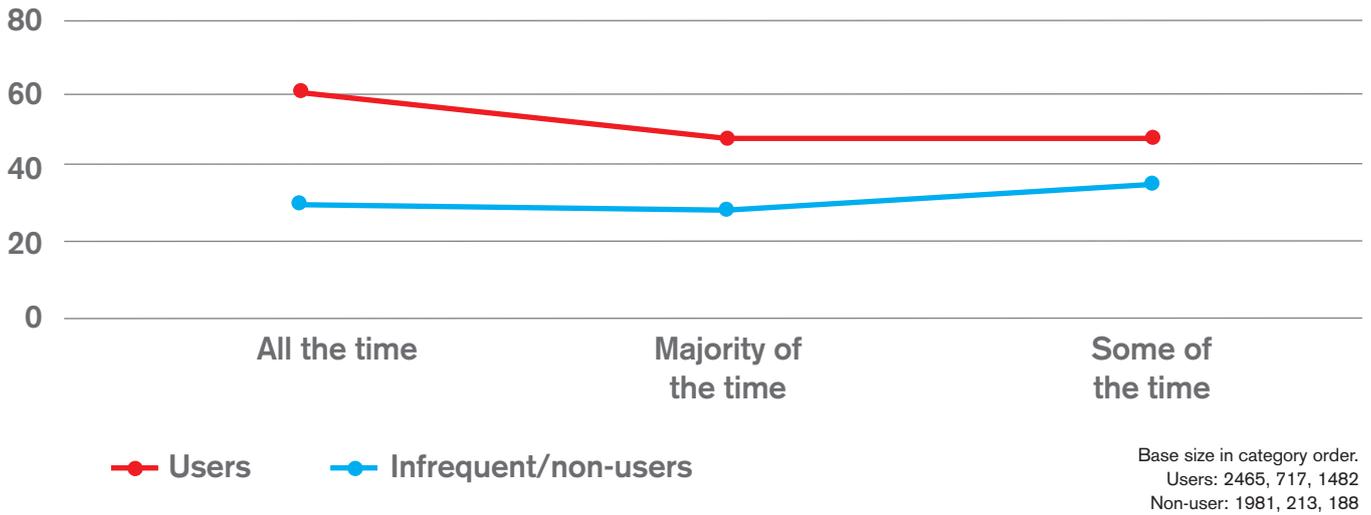
Among users there is limited difference across the regions in willingness to use buses more, ranging from 50 per cent to 58 per cent. However among infrequent/non-users the range varies more widely from 20 per cent to 38 per cent with the South West having most interest.

Would consider using buses more by region (%)



Ownership or access to car clearly has an impact on whether there is interest in using buses more. Availability of a car does not appear to be an unsurmountable barrier. Among bus users the willingness to use buses more peaks for those with a car available all the time (60 per cent). However among infrequent/non-users how often a car is available has a more limited difference.

Would consider using buses more by availability of a car (%)

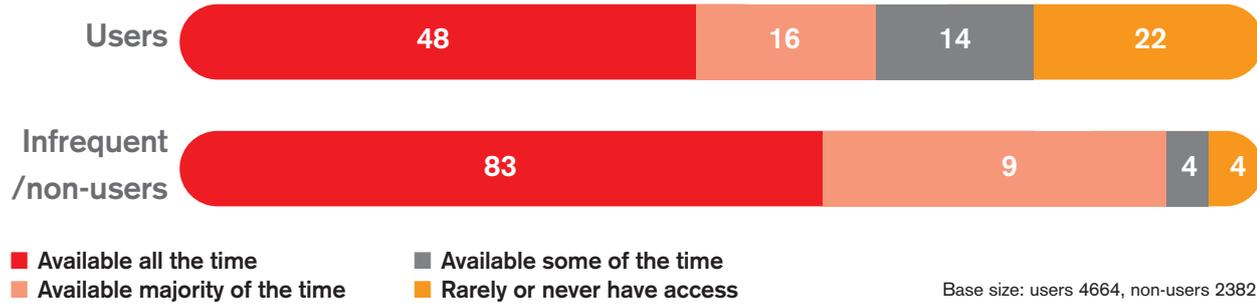


Among infrequent/non-users, 83 per cent always had access to a car while it is only 48 per cent among users.

More effort made to tackle any anti-social behaviour

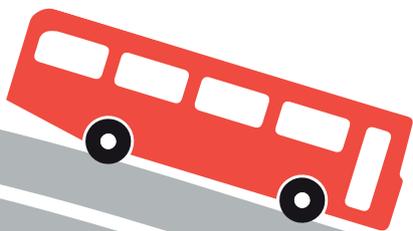


Availability of a car/motorbike (%)



All of this makes it even more important to understand the barriers to making more journeys by bus – what is it that actually prevents people from doing so? For infrequent/non-users in general the main reasons were very practical; they don't run where or when people want them to (36 per cent), journeys take too long (34 per cent), and cost (23 per cent).

Those practical reasons assume even more significance for those infrequent/non-users who would consider using buses more. Exactly half of them put this mainly down to buses not running where and when they wanted and 38 per cent said that door-to-door journeys take too long. They still feature most for infrequent/non-users who were not minded to use bus more, but notably things to do with the 'on-bus experience', although still secondary, do feature more prominently for this group of people.



Buses going to more places you want to go



Reasons for not using the bus

		Would consider %	Would not consider %
Don't run where or when I want them to go	36	50	30
Door-to-door journeys would take too long by bus	34	38	32
The cost compared to the alternatives	23	24	23
I do not enjoy time spent on buses	20	8	25
I don't think they are reliable enough	12	9	13
I prefer to travel by car	11	8	12
I am concerned by other passengers' behaviour	7	5	8
I am unable to use buses due to disability	6	4	7
I feel there is insufficient space/comfort on board	6	2	7
No buses/ bus stops in my area	2	4	2
Prefer other forms of transport	1	1	1
Other	5	5	5

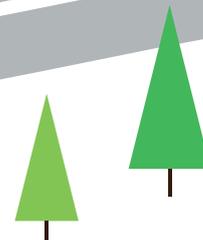
Q9. What are your top two reasons for not using buses? Please select up to 2 answers.
Base: all non-users n = 2382. All non-users who would consider n = 671, would not consider n = 1711

So what does all this mean and what needs to happen?

This research sets out what bus passengers want to see improved and how they would like to be treated. This sends a very clear message to bus companies and local authorities when determining local services. It is also highly relevant to the Government as it develops its Buses Bill – it is essential that passengers' needs are at the heart of this legislation.



More bus stops with next bus displays



We have four key recommendations:

1 Deliver the essentials, and do so consistently and professionally

Performance (frequency, reliability and punctuality) is a core requirement.

This research shows that it is a high priority for improvement in its own right but is also the bedrock of trust. Passengers trust bus services when there is consistency in delivering the essentials; inconsistent service delivery adversely impacts trust ratings.

Our previous research (*What's the holdup? Exploring bus service punctuality*, December 2014⁵) looked at when, where and why buses are delayed and what can be done to help them run on time. It identified systemic reasons for lateness (adverse traffic patterns, unhelpful parking, unrealistic timetables, driver-changeover times being too tight to be reliable) and variable issues (coping with driver absences, scheduling road works, coping with vehicles going out of service).

We believe there is real benefit in bus operators listening to passengers and, in particular, to drivers, to help identify specific causes of delay. We also want to see better and more consistent use of performance data to identify problem areas.

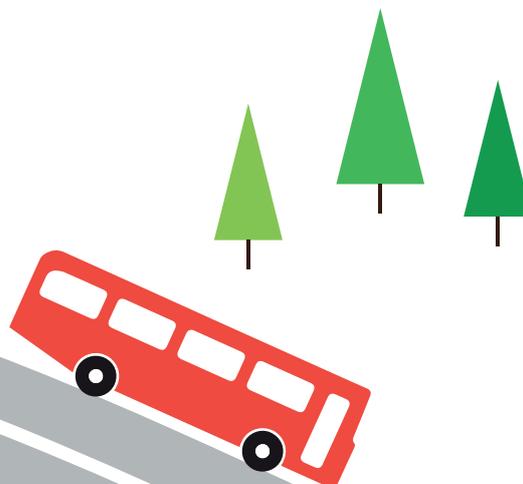
Value for money is the highest priority for improvement. Cost is also something that represents a barrier to use for infrequent/non-users. This is also something that we have looked at in previous research (*Bus passenger views on value for money*, October 2013).

While better performance will naturally improve perceptions of value for money we found that much more could be done to improve passengers' awareness of fares. Passengers didn't realise what ticket types existed, how they could buy them or where they could find out the information they needed. They relied mainly on word of mouth and the bus driver for information and risked missing out on the best deal. It also begs the question of how much business is lost because potential passengers simply don't know how to use the bus or because people can't find the ideal ticket for their needs.

Our research also shows that smart ticketing can be an enabler of trust. The ability to cap fares helps passengers trust that they have been sold the correct, best-value fare available. It also provides a mechanism on which to bolt some form of loyalty scheme that recognises and rewards passengers for travelling.



**More/better
information when
delays occur on
journeys**



⁵ *What's the holdup? Exploring bus service punctuality*, December 2014:
<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/whats-the-holdup-exploring-bus-service-punctuality>

Tackling anti-social behaviour was the fifth highest priority for improvement overall, and even higher among those with a disability. It is also something that features in our Bus Passenger Survey which measures satisfaction with bus journeys. This is a complex issue and something that is a wider social issue rather than just a 'bus problem'.

Our initial analysis shows that staff (including drivers) and technology can help provide reassurance but it is something that we hope to investigate further in the coming year.

2 Treat me like a customer

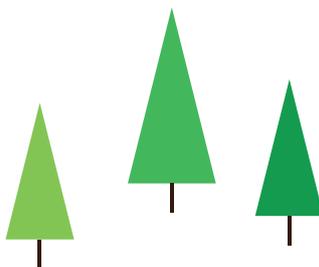
Passengers want providers to be more 'open to a conversation'. It means not being kept in the dark when services don't run to plan (on-bus or before boarding). They want operators to listen to their experiences, they want someone to be accessible for general queries, and they want to know who to complain to. Our research shows that this is a key part to building a good relationship with customers.

Our research (*Bus passengers' experience of delays and disruption*, April 2013⁶) showed that technology was part of the solution. For example fitting public address systems on buses, providing live bus information or even live-chat facilities for passengers to ask questions in the moment.

But it also showed that there is a cultural issue; for example recognising that there are real benefits to the business from engaging with customers. In particular this means making it much clearer and easier to contact the company, either to ask a question or to make a formal complaint, and then to handle that complaint well.



**Cleaner
and better
maintained
buses**



3 Unlock the potential of the driver

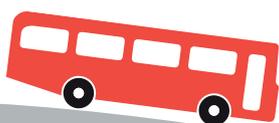
Drivers are the face of the bus company. Our research (*Bus driver training – What works? What next?*, July 2015⁷) describes how drivers were seen by passengers as the chief source of information on delays and disruption, as well as the main source of information on the range and price of tickets available. In short, they do much more than just drive the bus.

This new research confirms this feeling. Passengers value drivers who are considerate to passengers and who care about the way they drive. Drivers are also seen as having the potential to provide ‘magic moments’ – examples of great customer service that passengers notice and which can change attitudes. All of which means that driver recruitment, training and retention assumes even more significance.

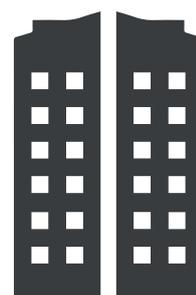
4 Boosting demand

This research suggests that there is potential to gain extra business by encouraging occasional users to travel more often by bus. The report also identifies the barriers to this – the need for more buses to more places at the time that passengers want to travel.

We do not underestimate the difficulties in doing this – such services have to be paid for and commercial operators will need to demonstrate a business case, while local authority budgets are also stretched. Nonetheless it is something that bus companies and local authorities must bear in mind when reviewing services.

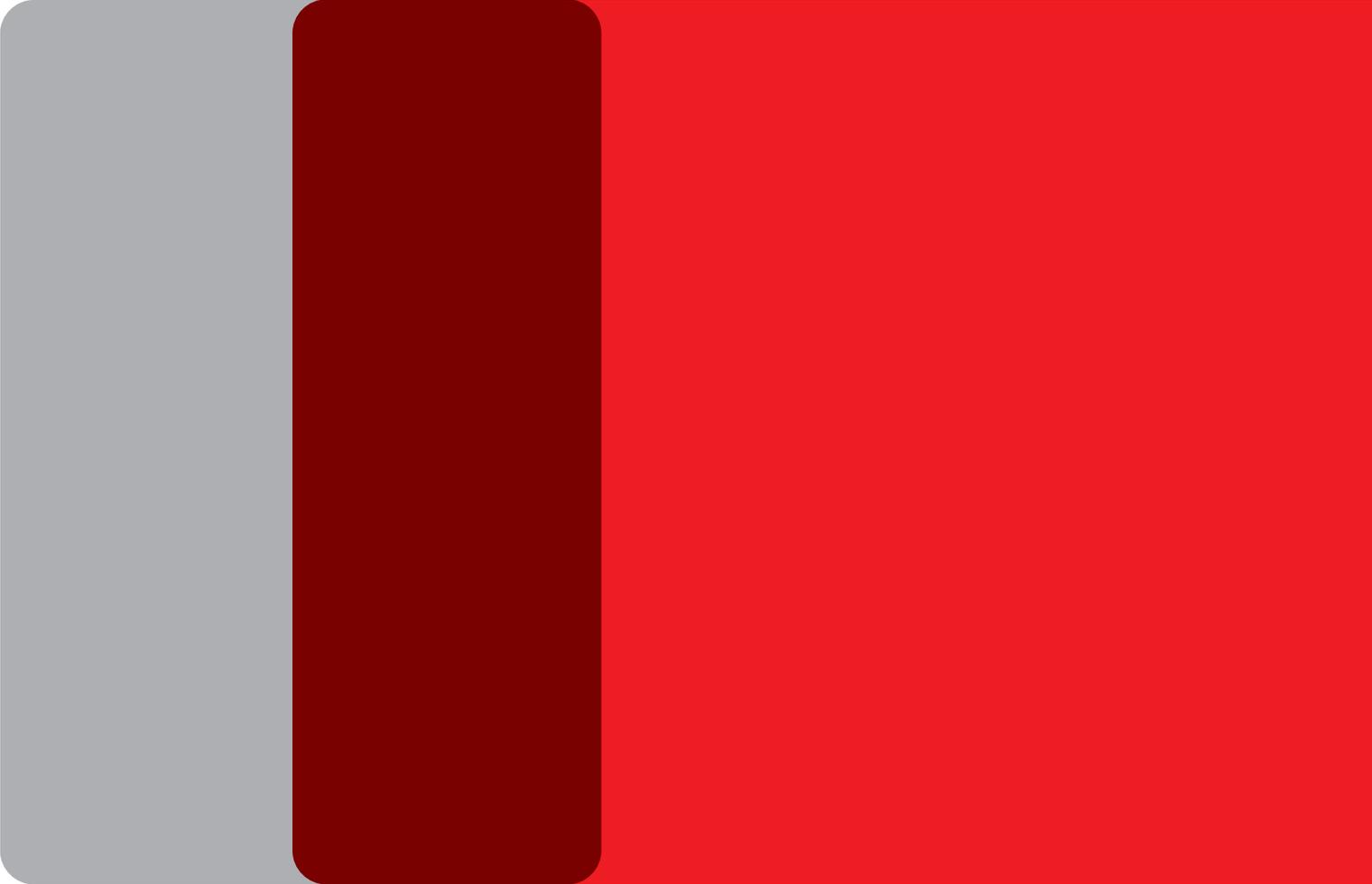


Tickets which better allow travel on all local bus companies



⁶ *Bus passengers' experience of delays and disruption*, April 2013:
<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-passengers-experience-of-delays-and-disruption-research-report-april-2013>

⁷ *Bus driver training – What works? What next?* July 2015:
<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-driver-training-what-works-what-next>



Contact Transport Focus

Any enquiries regarding this research should be addressed to:

Murray Leader
Senior Insight Advisor
Transport Focus
t 0300 123 0843
e murray.leader@transportfocus.org.uk
w www.transportfocus.org.uk

Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
London
EC4Y 8JX

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Bus Transport Select Committee

Biography

James Coe

Policy and Public Affairs Executive, Community Transport Association

James Coe is Policy and Public Affairs Executive at the Community Transport Association (CTA). In his role James works on the strategic planning and development of CTA's policy and public affairs work. This involves working across the UK to develop information and ideas about issues affecting community transport operators and advance CTA's broader interest in making transport accessible and inclusive for all.

The CTA is a national charity working with several other charities and community groups across the UK in an effort to provide local transport services that fulfil a social purpose and community benefit.

The CTA is for, and about, accessible and inclusive transport. The CTA's vision is of a world where people can shape and create their own accessible and inclusive transport solutions.

The main activities of the CTA include:

- contributing to public policy and service development where community-led transport solutions can improve access and inclusion
- gathering and sharing data on the practice, performance and impact of community transport
- strengthening the transport sector and raising standards.

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Bus Transport Select Committee

Hearing 2

Friday 30 September 2016

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

Themes and Questions

James Coe, Policy and Public Affairs Executive, Community Transport Association

- Please introduce yourself and provide an outline of the roles and responsibilities of your post.
- Please provide an outline of the main services offered by the Community Transport Association.
- In your opinion, what are the main issues associated with the provision and delivery of community transport?
- In your view, in what ways – if any - can the provision of community transport be improved?
- In your view, what are the main opportunities and challenges, if any, associated with the recent Bus Services Bill?
- Please expand on the theme of community consultation in relation to the Bus Services Bill.
- Please discuss the role of access, inclusion and social value in bus transport delivery models.
- Please can you share with the Committee good practice examples of community transport provision in the country?
- What should KCC do, if anything, to promote improved bus transport in Kent?

- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with the Committee?

2014

**Community
Transport
Association**



What next for
Community Transport?
Insights and ideas for action



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INTRODUCTION

FROM BILL FREEMAN



Chief Executive, Community Transport Association

When asked to explain where community transport fits in, I often find it helpful to talk about a diagram with two overlapping circles: one circle is the passenger transport industry and the other is the voluntary sector. In the space where those circles intersect you will find community transport. Even though we are in the middle of the picture in our minds, to others we can appear to be at the outer edge of each circle and therefore at the centre of neither.

I use this diagram to illustrate a concern we share with our members that community transport could and should be more central to discussions about developments in both transport policy and social policy. If we are to make sure community transport is not on the margins of these conversations then we have to do two things.

Firstly, recognising that people often only value what they understand, we have to create and share knowledge about what community transport is and how it works. Secondly, we need to make a much greater link between what policy makers are trying to achieve and how community transport is well placed to help.

Our 'State of the Sector' reports aim to do both of these things, by providing an accurate and intelligent picture of our sector at work and illustrating what we think needs to be done to enable community transport to make a bigger contribution to important policy agendas.

This report is designed to raise the profile of the community transport sector in the minds of policy-makers and practitioners in local and central government and present some ideas for action. It could never contain every issue and every idea, but we think it illustrates a handful of the biggest issues that we all need to focus on in the next few months and years.



THE AUTHORS

Victoria Shortland is the CTA's Policy Manager. She has worked for the CTA since 2010 and has a background in consultancy and policy development. Victoria led the research for this project and the production of this report.



Helena Redman is the CTA's Policy and Communications Assistant. She is a recent graduate of Durham University and joined the CTA in September 2014 as part of Charityworks, the UK non-profit sector's graduate programme. Helena analysed the data and helped to write the report.



Susan Wildman is the CTA's Communications Manager. Susan has a background in journalism and has spent her career managing communications and related disciplines, mainly in large public sector organisations. Susan has edited and helped to write the report.



...community transport could and should be more central to discussions about developments in both transport policy and social policy



BACKGROUND

About the Community Transport Association

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

The CTA's vision is *"To see community transport thriving across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, enabling people to live independently, participate in their community and access education, employment, health and other services"*.

The CTA's mission is to lead and support community transport to be successful and sustainable in all parts of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through:

- **Political leadership:** Promoting community transport and influencing the development of better strategy, policy, regulations and investment at all levels of government.
- **Practical support:** Advocating high standards of practice and providing advice, information, training and hands-on support that assists community transport in working to these standards.

We therefore aim to strengthen the work of our members, which include voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises and co-operatives, enabling them to deliver high quality services to those who depend on community transport for many reasons.

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.

As community transport is regulated differently from conventional bus services, it is particularly well-placed to step in where conventional services are not viable or available. It can use or adapt any passenger-carrying vehicle to do exceptional things, always for a social purpose and community benefit, never for a profit.



**Community
Transport
Association**

METHODOLOGY



The CTA keeps up to date with key information on the organisations which make up the community transport sector; in order to do this we collect a range of data from our members and other contacts.

The CTA has used a variety of sources to help inform this report. They include the following:

State of the Sector survey

This survey was designed and distributed to community transport operators in England via an online survey tool. It targeted all community transport organisations in England, including the key organisations in each local authority area.

Community transport operators were classed as either primary or secondary providers.

- **Primary providers:** where community transport is the operator's main purpose.
- **Secondary providers:** where organisations provide some kind of community transport but it is not their main purpose, examples being the British Red Cross and RVS.
- **Other providers:** where operating community transport is a minor component of the organisation's overall activities and is intended to support other functions. This can include schools, Scout groups and care homes.

The questions focused on the following key areas:

- **Staff & volunteers** – the number of paid full-time and part-time staff, number of volunteers, information such as length of service for the most senior member of staff in their organisation.
- **Income & expenditure** – total annual income and expenditure for the last completed financial year, reserves position and details of where income came from.
- **Reduction in public spending**
- **Services & members** – the number of beneficiaries that had used their services in the previous 12 months.
- **Vehicles & journeys** – the type and number of vehicles they own or lease and the number of trips they completed in 2013/14.
- **Local relationships** – information on their local relationships.
- **Health** – the number of health-related trips their organisation made within the previous 12 months.
- **Challenges** – the challenges their organisation faced.

As in previous years the CTA State of the Sector survey sought to capture the size, scope and scale of community transport operation in England. The information gathered helps us to influence policy makers, key stakeholders and funders on the importance and capabilities of the community transport sector.



CTA Roadshow feedback

The 2014 CTA roadshows, which all followed a similar format, were attended by CTA members and other interested participants. They sought to promote discussion between attendees; the outcomes of those discussions have been used to help take forward the CTA's policy development work on behalf of the community transport sector.

The following exercises were used to identify clear outcomes for the CTA:

Exercise 1: Issues and priorities for the CTA's policy development and campaigning

The first exercise asked participants to consider the issues and priorities for the CTA's policy development and campaigning.

Groups were asked to identify the big issues affecting them and the people and communities they work with, thinking about making the most of new and emerging opportunities as well as highlighting threats. They were asked to think about issues in which community transport can make a greater contribution than at present or things that are getting in the way of making the biggest difference they can in their communities.

Exercise 2: Practical support – ideas and initiatives for staying in good shape

The second exercise asked participants to reflect on the practical support the CTA might offer, suggesting ideas and initiatives for staying in good shape.

Groups were asked to discuss their biggest challenges, opportunities and aspirations.

Case studies

This report has been enhanced through the use of case studies. These are included within the text of the document and are based on the findings from the State of the Sector survey.

Groups were asked to identify the big issues affecting them and the people and communities they work with

KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This latest State of the Sector report highlights a number of key themes; each of these raises issues for the CTA and its members to take forward when engaging with policy makers and practitioners across local and central government. Each theme also carries a recommendation based on the issues identified as priority areas for action.

We have examined all the evidence and statistics we hold to determine how best to help and support community transport and we have asked ourselves: what's next for community transport?

It is clear that the status quo presents many challenges and risks which have the potential to destabilise the long-term health and viability of many organisations which make up the community transport sector. This report will serve as a tool to highlight areas where policy change is needed, and where extra funding might support the sector to deliver services to the most vulnerable and isolated communities.

Many issues in this report will be familiar to its readers. These are the issues which occupy the CTA and which we continue to address on behalf of our members. They are the issues which we raise with government at every level, and which we seek to take forward across the community transport and wider voluntary sectors.

However, this recently gathered evidence puts everyone in a position to make a much stronger case for investment and improvements to regulations, to enable community transport organisations to make the biggest difference they can for those who rely on their services.

GENERAL INFORMATION FROM OUR STATE OF THE SECTOR SURVEY

The following information has been drawn from our State of the Sector survey and gives an idea of the size, scale and scope of the community transport sector in England. We have included this overview to provide a summary of operations and to demonstrate the diversity of community transport in England.

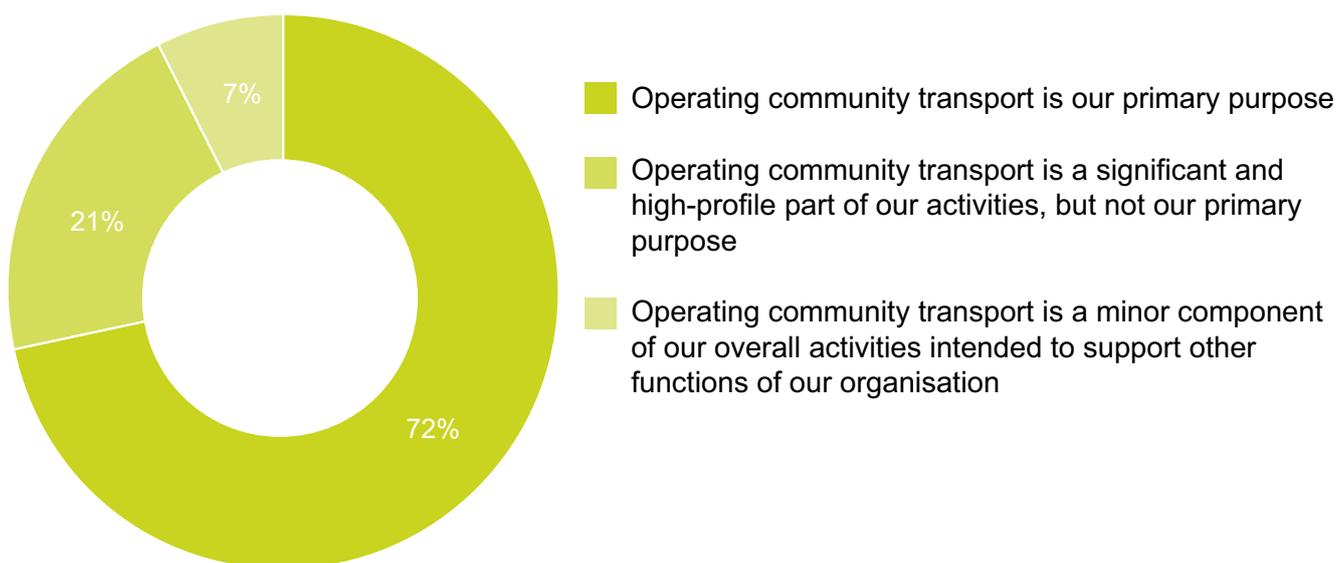
Types of providers

Community transport is not exclusive to organisations that run these services as their primary function; for many groups, it is part of a much bigger picture. We asked in our survey how organisations would class their community transport operations, and the results are shown below.

It is clear from the statistics that the majority of respondents provide community transport services as their primary function. The CTA works closely with primary organisations to understand their needs and aspirations.

However, we also wish to focus on those organisations that have a wider purpose yet still deliver community transport. Opposite is an example of an organisation which supports community transport as a secondary function.

Which of these categories best describes your organisation's activity in community transport?





CASE STUDY

Community First, a secondary function community transport operator

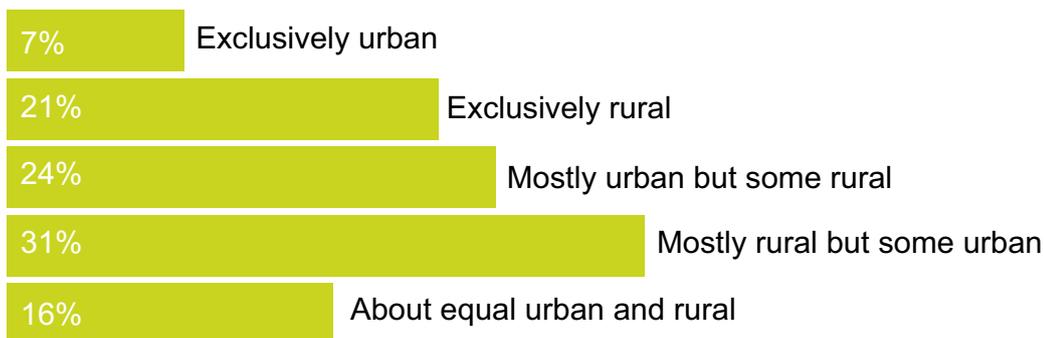
Community First, Wiltshire’s Rural Community Council, is one example of an organisation that provides community transport alongside several other services. Its objective is “to enable communities in Wiltshire and Swindon to determine and develop thriving places in which to live and work”. As a Rural Community Council, its roles are many and varied and include wellbeing support, community development and, of course, community transport. There are two small community transport teams at Community First, one of which supports a network of minibus groups while the other supports voluntary car schemes in the area. As well as supporting these external services, Community First also runs a Wheels to Work scheme, enabling young people to access employment by lending scooters at an affordable rate, and directly provides school transport, day care transport and vehicle hire. According to the charity’s community transport manager, the role of transport within its wider functions is becoming more and more important “due to pressures on local bus services”, a problem that has been increasingly highlighted in CTA research and correspondence, especially by rural operators.

The distribution of urban and rural community transport organisations

We asked our respondents how they would classify the local areas they serve, as the way people benefit from community transport can vary greatly between rural and urban localities.

31%
of community transport is mostly rural

The rural/urban mix in community transport



FAST FACT: The Office of the Traffic Commissioner states that there are in the region of **500** section 22 local bus service registrations operated by approximately **200** different organisations



Permits and licences used to operate community transport vehicles

As is evident from the figures below, collected from our State of the Sector survey, the vast majority of community transport organisations operate their vehicles under permits.

Section 19 and 22 permits exist to exempt organisations operating without a view to profit in England, Scotland and Wales from the need to hold PSV 'O' licences (public service vehicle operator licences) when providing transport for a charge. Section 19 permits allow the operator to carry members of their organisation, whereas section 22 permits allow the operator to carry the general public.

It is clear that the most common permit by far is the section 19 standard bus permit. This signifies that minibuses operated for members only are the most common form of bus transportation in the community transport sector. The small number of section 22 large bus permits in operation in community transport reflects the fact that large bus services run for the general public are more commonly provided by private operators.

- **79.2%** are section 19 standard bus permits
- **4.4%** are section 19 large bus permits
- **14%** are section 22 community bus permits
- **0.2%** are section 22 large bus permits
- **2.2%** are PSV 'O' licences.

Services provided by community transport

As community transport caters for such a diverse set of needs, the types of service it provides vary greatly between organisations. Opposite is a breakdown of the main types of service offered and the percentage of community transport organisations offering them, drawn from responses to our State of the Sector survey.

...minibuses operated for members only are the most common form of bus transportation in the community transport sector

1/5 of organisations were founded within the last ten years



- For operators based in exclusively or mainly urban areas, the most common service is door-to-door accessible minibuses
- For those based rurally, the most common service is a group transport minibus hire with the driver provided by the community transport organisation

Length of operation

We know that there is a constant demand for community transport, and our data tells us that new organisations are set up in response to this demand. When asked about their length of operation, one fifth of our respondents said that their organisations had been founded within the last ten years. However, responses ranged from just two years to 50 years. We spoke to Colin Waller of the Harting Minibus (see over), which has been running for 41 years, to give us an insight into the operations and history of a long-running enterprise.

Ratio of male to female volunteers is 7:3

CASE STUDY

Harting Minibus, a long-running organisation

.....

The Harting Minibus is a prime example of a long-running community transport scheme that has been an ongoing success. The scheme started operating in 1973, in response to the withdrawal of local bus services and the need for residents, many of whom were retired and with decreased mobility, to reach healthcare and shopping facilities. The scheme now has two minibuses that serve the rural community of Harting parish, running licensed routes to nearby towns six times a week and also hiring its vehicles out to serve groups such as youth clubs, churches and parent groups for school runs.

So how does an organisation keep running successfully for such a long period of time? According to Colin Waller, the answer is simple: need. The village of Harting in Hampshire is relatively remote and has had consistently poor public transport links since the scheme was set up. For this reason, there are high levels of enthusiasm among the volunteers staffing the scheme, which include “41 drivers, a dozen or more fundraisers, an expert in traffic law, a professional accountant and a professional administrator”.



Gender

According to our State of the Sector survey:

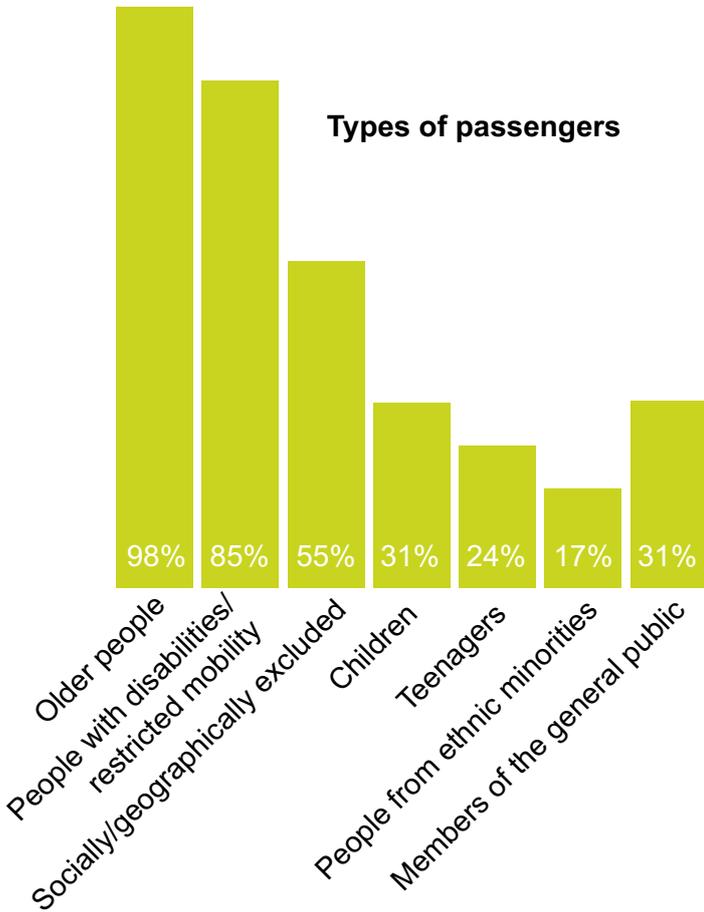
- The ratio of male to female volunteers is 7:3. This does not reflect the general trend of volunteers in the UK, which shows that male volunteers exceed women by only 1%¹. The gender of volunteer drivers may simply reflect the gender of drivers in the wider community: according to government statistics, men still outnumber women behind the wheel and professional driving remains a male-dominated activity.
- The ratio of male to female heads of community transport organisations is 3:2. This compares favourably with the gender balance for managerial positions across the passenger transport sector, in which only 24% of managers are women, a ratio of 3:1².

Who uses community transport?

In our survey, we asked who the main beneficiaries of community transport passenger services are. The graph opposite shows the percentage of respondents who provide transport to a number of different user groups. The diversity of these user groups is evident, but those who benefit most widely are older people and people with restricted mobility, with 98% and 85% respectively of community transport operators serving these groups.

¹ Source: The New Alchemy report, released on 5 September 2014 by not-for-profit consultancy nfpSynergy.

² Source: People 1st analysis of the Labour Force Survey 2010, Office for National Statistics.



These are the purposes for which community transport operators make their journeys, from most to least common:

- **78%** take people to social outings
- **73%** carry out health-related trips
- **68%** carry out trips involving food or shopping
- **65%** help people to get to community activities
- **64%** take people to day centres
- **35%** provide journeys to recreational or sports facilities/activities
- **34%** help people to access education
- **11%** help people to access work
- **1%** take people to vote.

The fact that 78% of organisations take people to social outings is extremely significant as it demonstrates the impact that community transport can have on improving the lives of a great many people. A good social life and community interaction can have a strongly positive effect on general wellbeing, particularly among those who are otherwise isolated due to age, mobility or location.

78% of organisations take people to social outings

KEY THEMES AND THE CTA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea that there is a group of organisations and services designed in such a way as to offer a more reliable and resilient model of meeting a diverse range of transport needs than commercial or subsidised bus services makes sense to many members of the public.

The idea that this infrastructure must be enabled to work effectively through an appropriate and proportionate regulatory framework, which recognises the unique nature and value of not-for-profit services with high levels of volunteer involvement, should not be a point of contention.

The idea that government would also want to invest in making sure this infrastructure is in good enough shape to help policy-makers address many of the challenges they face is not so fanciful either.

And yet constant attacks on the regulatory framework within which the community transport sector works, coupled with a challenging funding environment, are making it harder for many organisations to make the biggest difference they can for the communities and people they serve. Community transport cannot reach its full potential if it is kept in a box which gets opened only when there's no money available and when everyone else has had a chance to show they can't make it work.

Without action to address this, thousands of vulnerable and isolated people could see a marked downturn in their quality of life, which would place an even bigger burden on the public purse. We know of no mainstream politician who would wish to sign up for this. We call on politicians of all parties to ensure the affordability, accessibility and connectivity created through community-led transport solutions features more prominently in both transport policy and social policy.

We also want politicians to stand up to those interest groups who believe there is something to be gained for themselves from the unfair and unwarranted attacks on community transport.

Reaching a settlement on regulation

The permit system for community transport has worked well for over 30 years, enabling community transport operators to create amazing outcomes for the users and commissioners of their services. The section 19 permit allows community-based organisations to operate non-profit services for public benefit whilst ensuring that transport remains both safe and legal. The current section 19 permit has evolved via the Local Transport Act 1985; more recently the Local Transport Act 2008 has ensured it remains fit for purpose. Derogations with certain EU legislation enable these arrangements for not-for-profit services to be maintained as the default set of regulations for the community transport sector in the UK.



Whilst some argue this means the sector is unregulated, this is far from the case. There are strict requirements and sanctions for non-compliance and the CTA ensures operators have access to high-quality advice and information so they can work effectively within the rules. The CTA has also led the sector in developing our own standards for driver training and managing a transport operation, all designed to maintain the credibility of, and confidence in, the UK's community transport sector.

Despite all this, the European Commission has recently taken an interest in the legislation that relates to the UK's community transport sector, based on complaints made by a very small group of commercial operators, largely led by one or two individuals who mistakenly believe that community transport represents a significant risk to the business of commercial operators.

It is true that some small commercial operators feel the financial burden of compliance with regulations is too high for them, but their grievances are misplaced if they think this is solved by bringing down the community transport sector. Indeed, the CTA itself has taken the lead in assisting the DfT and Defra to seek out ways in which community and commercial operators can develop complementary services which would benefit both sectors.

It's been easy to see this small, but very aggressive and vocal, anti-CT lobby as an English phenomenon whose ire is only aimed at those that compete with them for contracts, but their actions have the ability to do damage to all

types of organisations and services across the UK, especially as they seem to have found an audience in the European Commission.

We have seen evidence of the misinformation and oppressive tactics used in letters to ourselves, community transport operators, the DfT and the Traffic Commissioner. It is hard to see why the European Commission would be minded to act on this. However, we understand that once complaints have been raised through the formal channels, they have to investigate them and seek out the facts as they exist, not merely as they are presented to them.

State aid

The original challenges were around state aid. The anti-CT narrative opines that some operators win contracts to deliver services and some have grants from public bodies, which must mean these grants have been used to create unfair competition for contracts. They believe they have 'lost' contracts to community transport organisations because of this.

It is puzzling to see how charities and community groups seeking to address market failure in a neighbourhood, town or city in England could be accused of affecting trade between member states of the European Union or distorting any market – which is what the rules on state aid are intended to prevent. Nevertheless there are clear rules about the funding that can be given and which the EU believes would not have an impact on trade and competition; we would never advocate that anyone should work outside of these.



We also know that there have been further challenges related to the domestic application of Directive 2003/59/EC (on training requirements for professional bus/coach drivers) and Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 (concerning the conditions to be complied with to pursue the occupation of road transport operator).

Put simply, this would mean having to accept an EU definition of 'commercial' which means that community transport organisations delivering public sector contracts are engaged in commercial activity and will have to do so under an 'O' licence. This means they would need to comply with managers' and drivers' Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) requirements, the rule on good financial standing and drivers' hours records (with the cost of installing tachographs). Some operators already choose to do this in addition to having section 19 services, but the majority of operators do not.

The Department for Transport agreed to review the scope of relevant EU legislation in relation to the community transport sector to avoid infraction proceedings being taken against the UK government.

At the time of writing this report, it is difficult to give clarity on this matter, but it remains a worrying development.

If enacted, this could be a massive blow for all types of operators, not just those delivering public sector contracts using section 19 permits. Some would say a line can be drawn between those operators who would need to comply (those wishing to deliver public sector contracts) and those who could continue to work under the current derogations (everyone else). It is doubtful whether such a line can be drawn.

Even if it were true that such a demarcation could be made, the CTA could not support an assurance that it might be possible to allow a certain number of community transport operators to continue with the current derogations in order to sweeten what might be a damaging, and ultimately existence-threatening, outcome for many others. We know that some within our own family of organisations do not wish to deliver services via contracts, but we do need a consensus that, for others, this is just another way of bringing to life our values and unique approach.

These developments affect community transport directly, but if public sector contracts are deemed to be 'commercial' and organisations with a not-for-profit legal status are inhibited from bidding for them, this could potentially have implications for other parts of the charity sector. It would certainly run counter to the UK Government's agenda of encouraging charities to get more involved in delivering contracts and relying less on grant.

Even if none of these challenges result in significant changes to any rules, the danger is that mainstream opinion on the nature and value of community transport will have shifted to a more sceptical and cautious position.

The current rules don't always feel like they are on the side of a community transport organisation

Even if this does not result in operators being unable to deliver a contract using vehicles with section 19 permits, commissioners may decide to stop allowing this anyway.

Even if a small grant goes nowhere near contravening state aid rules, public funders may choose not to give any grants for fear of falling foul of the rules.

Ultimately we have to decide where we stand as a sector on these matters, and it's important that we stand together.



A new settlement?

We have considered the possibility of a new settlement for community transport and what it might look like. The current rules don't always feel like they are on the side of a community transport organisation, nor are they designed to enable organisations to do their best for the communities they serve, but there may be significant risks associated with starting again with a blank sheet of paper.

Do we accept that many community transport organisations are going to have to become indistinguishable from the commercial sector to which they are often called upon to provide a contrast? This seems counterintuitive – erasing the very benefits derived from the unique way community transport is organised. If such a development occurred, would we be able to build back into the system some recognition and reward for delivering immense social value and community benefit on a not-for-profit basis?

Whilst we are having these debates, the CTA's strategy must be to defend the current regulations and to make the case for the unique approach we have here in the UK. It must be cherished, nurtured and protected by all those who want the very best for their communities and see community transport as being integral to that.

We must continue to defend the use of section 19 permits in delivering public sector contracts and build a wider coalition of support for defending community transport in the UK.

42% of organisations have competitively tendered for contracts

We need to improve the way in which we describe the facts about section 19 permits in order to challenge some of the myths and arguments we read and hear. We also need to be clear that it is perfectly possible to grant-aid community transport without distorting competition or contravening legislation. We must be prepared to argue that in many instances traditional grant-making will be the best way of achieving the public benefit which government at all levels wishes to see.

We have a unique community transport sector in the UK, the like of which is not known anywhere else in the European Union. It's easy to see how the European Commission might not value something they do not understand; this argues that we need to step up our efforts to generate support beyond these shores for what we have.

RECOMMENDATION 1

.....
We urge the UK Government to work with national governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the representatives of local government to defend the UK's unique arrangements for enabling a thriving community transport sector.

2. RESPONDING TO A CHALLENGING FUNDING ENVIRONMENT

The current economic climate and this Government's programme of reduction in public expenditure are also impacting on community transport operations.

Community transport has received financial support from local authorities in many areas of the country, in some cases over a long period of time.

As local authorities face increasingly difficult decisions on spending priorities, community transport funding has come under closer scrutiny. Many areas have seen funding reduced or cut completely. There are examples of growth, however, and areas in which community transport is seen as a solution to transport problems, for example reductions in subsidised services. It has proved itself a very cost-effective solution in such circumstances.

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 one of its most significant and complex challenges.

The CTA works continually with its members to understand the strains which are placed on their organisations. The funding issues faced by members vary according to the size, scope and scale of the organisation.

During the 2014 roadshows the top concern for community transport providers was the future sustainability of their operations.



There is a perception that community transport operators should become less reliant on grant funding and move towards delivering more contracts.

The evidence is clear from our State of the Sector research that 42% of organisations have competitively tendered for contracts at some point. We asked community transport providers to whom they provide contracted/tendered services; the following commissioning bodies had the most significant overall response:

- Local authority – public transport 66%
- Local authority – adult social care 61%
- Local authority – home to school 40%.

It is our view, however, that there should be a diverse mix of funding available to community transport organisations. Every form of funding has a potential drawback, but traditional grant funding may be the best way of achieving the public benefit that funders want to see.

Where organisations have tendered for contracts the majority of respondents stated that no social value considerations were involved in the process. This is disappointing as the Social Value Act was introduced in January 2013 for public bodies to consider social value during procurement. Our feedback from members states that provisions for social value are so far not evident in the procurement and commissioning process, nor is an explanation on how to measure the social value aspect of the work being tendered for.

The government should therefore encourage local authorities to ensure that their procurement and commissioning processes take account of social value, issuing guidance on how to measure it. The CTA and ATCO could usefully work together on defining appropriate social value criteria around the commissioning of transport services. This will ensure that some of the broader social and community benefits beyond the specific deliverables of a contract are recognised and valued in the commissioning process.

RECOMMENDATION 2

We urge those commissioning transport to actively consider community transport when developing proposals for socially necessary services.

The CTA and ATCO should work together to recommend appropriate social value criteria around the commissioning of transport services.

71% of vehicles are wheelchair accessible minibuses

Concessionary travel

The concessionary fares scheme offers free local bus travel for older and disabled people in England after 9:30am.

It is mandatory for local authorities to reimburse registered local bus services (including section 22 services) for concessionary passengers. However, it is not mandatory for them to reimburse other community transport operations. We know that since 2012/13 the CTA has issued 3,333 section 19 permits; these are used by community transport organisations to run services. In the majority of cases these permits will be used on services which transport those who are eligible for concessionary travel. For many of these users the section 19 services are the only means of people getting from A to B due to bus cuts in their area. Whether an organisation runs a service is very much dependent on whether they receive reimbursement, with the local authorities creating a 'postcode lottery' across England.

We would ask central government for increased funding of community transport via local government funding streams, which can in turn allow operators to offer free travel to eligible passengers and be reimbursed accordingly. It is imperative that concessionary travel schemes do not discriminate against any of the intended beneficiaries.

All public and community transport services should be entitled to reimbursement of the concessions they offer to passengers. Such provision should apply whether the service in question is available to the general public as a whole (as with scheduled commercial or section 22 services) or available to a specific sector of the public (as with section 19 Dial-a-Ride services in Great Britain or section 10B permit services in Northern Ireland).

For community transport to be a key link in the transport network, this needs to be reviewed to ensure a level playing field.

Therefore raising the profile of community transport is key to ensuring not only the future sustainability of organisations but also ensuring that an integrated approach to transport is taken forward by commissioners.

RECOMMENDATION 3

We urge Government to ensure that all passengers are able to use their concessionary pass on agreed forms of community transport, e.g. Dial-a-Ride, regardless of where they live.





Funding vehicle replacement

Community transport organisations use a wide variety of vehicles to provide transport to the communities they serve. By far the most popular form of transport, as stated by 71% of respondents, is the wheelchair accessible minibus – the most expensive vehicle a charity can own, costing in excess of £40,000.

In terms of the type of vehicles³ used to deliver community transport, according to our survey:

- **71%** are wheelchair accessible minibuses
- **9%** are standard minibuses
- **5%** are wheelchair accessible cars
- **6%** are standard cars
- **6%** are wheelchair accessible MPVs
- **1%** are standard MPVs
- **1%** are wheelchair accessible large buses
- **0%*** are standard large buses – **2 vehicles of a sample of 2021*
- **1%** are mopeds or motorcycles.

Our survey data tells us that of the vehicles operated in community transport:

- **91%** are owned and 97% of organisations own vehicles
- **7%** are leased and 30% of organisations lease vehicles
- **2%** are hired and 25% of organisations hire vehicles.

³ Definitions:

MPV (multi-purpose vehicle): up to 8 passenger seats

Minibus: 8-16 passenger seats

Large bus: more than 16 passenger seats

Whilst there is a variation in terms of the size of vehicle fleets, the majority of community transport organisations have only a small number of vehicles, typically fewer than ten.

Of the organisations that own vehicles:

- **56%** own 1-5 vehicles
- **25%** own 6-10 vehicles
- **9%** own 11-20 vehicles
- **7%** own 21-50 vehicles
- **2%** own 51-100 vehicles
- **0%** own 101-1000 vehicles
- **1%** own 1000+ vehicles (a large national charity).

Backed up by evidence from our roadshow consultations, our members stated that with the reduction in local government funding comes the threat of being unable to replace ageing vehicle fleets. This results in higher running costs, vehicle unreliability and an uncomfortable experience for the passenger.

Organisations could cover the depreciation costs of their vehicles through the charges they make on fares. However, including unrealistic depreciation costs when charging members could go against the aims and objectives of the organisation.

An organisation may choose to use its reserves to help support the purchase of a new vehicle; however, as our survey suggests, fewer than half of our members are in a position to do this. Ensuring a healthy reserve fund is best practice for any community transport organisation; however, this fund must also cover staff costs if an organisation were to cease operating.

Average cost of an accessible minibus = £40,000

On average the organisations which responded to the State of the Sector survey had £93,131 of reserves at the start of the financial year. However, 36% of the respondents had under £10,000. For some this may represent three months' running costs, which may cover the organisation in the event they had to cease operating. However, with the average cost of an accessible minibus standing at around £40,000, this level of reserves clearly makes no provision for vehicle replacement.

At the end of the financial year, the amount community transport organisations had in reserves had neither increased nor decreased, demonstrating that building a reserves position is challenging for these organisations.

Funding vehicle replacement is increasingly becoming a major issue for the future sustainability of community transport organisations.

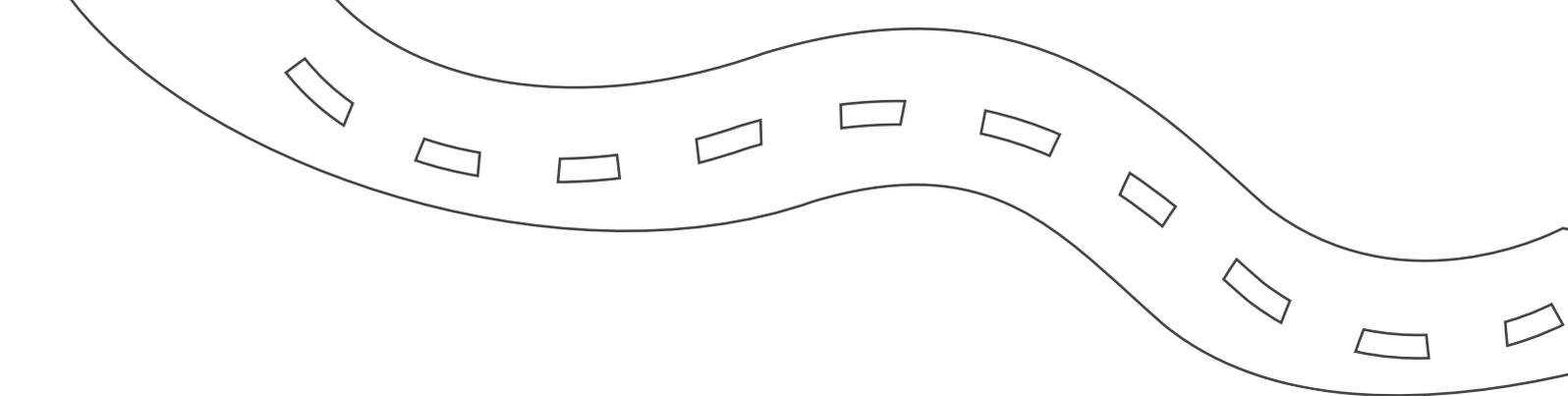
From our work in Scotland, we are aware of a successful innovation introduced by the Scottish Government, which provided a vehicle fund to which community groups could apply. This is a model which could be easily replicated in other parts of the UK.

We urge central government to look further into this model and to roll out a similar initiative into England, Wales and Northern Ireland. By doing so, the Government would be making a significant contribution to the sustainability of the community transport sector. It would enable the upgrading of outdated and unreliable fleets, making them cheaper to run, greener and more reliable for those who depend on the services, often the most isolated in society.

The initiative would also have a positive knock-on effect on businesses which support community transport, such as vehicle manufacturers and vehicle converters, supporting the sustained and all-round financial viability not only of the voluntary sector but also those that support it.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Government should heed the ongoing concerns expressed by community transport operators and note that, as non-profit-making organisations, they are less likely to generate sufficient surplus to enable them to build up reserves; it should consider occasional capital investment as a means of support to the sector in all parts of the UK.



CASE STUDY

The Scottish Government Vehicle Fund

- In 2013 the Scottish Government set up a Vehicle Fund to support the community transport sector in the purchase of replacement vehicles. The Fund was for grants to cover the capital costs of purchasing a new vehicle; there was no restriction on the type of vehicle but the guidance made clear that most of the funding would go towards minibuses, although smaller vehicles could be considered if a good case was made with an application which showed impact. The CTA was the first point of contact and was available to help people with their applications.
- The maximum grant available was £50k with start-ups not eligible – applicants had to have experience of providing transport. It was possible to receive 100% of costs but a matched contribution scored higher in the application assessment; many applicants showed that they were able to put some funds towards the costs. In terms of State Aid issues, the vehicle could not be used for work where the operator was in competition with other transport providers and had won contracts.
- The Fund received 130 applications, which totalled £4.1m in grant requests. The Fund made 29 awards, with grants totalling just over £1m. The average grant was £35,000. The maximum grant available was £50,000 and a few were awarded at this level. The smallest award was around £8,000 to a group who had most of the funds for a new vehicle but needed the last piece in the jigsaw.
- Of the 29 new vehicles, all were 9-16 seaters apart from one 7-seater MPV in a sparsely populated island where a smaller vehicle was more appropriate. In all, 27 of the 29 grant awards were for replacement of vehicles, and two were for new services, though from organisations already providing transport.
- All the vehicles in need of replacement were at least eight years old and most had mileages of over 100,000 miles. Green vehicles scored higher in the assessment process.





3. VALUING VOLUNTEERS

What are the facts?

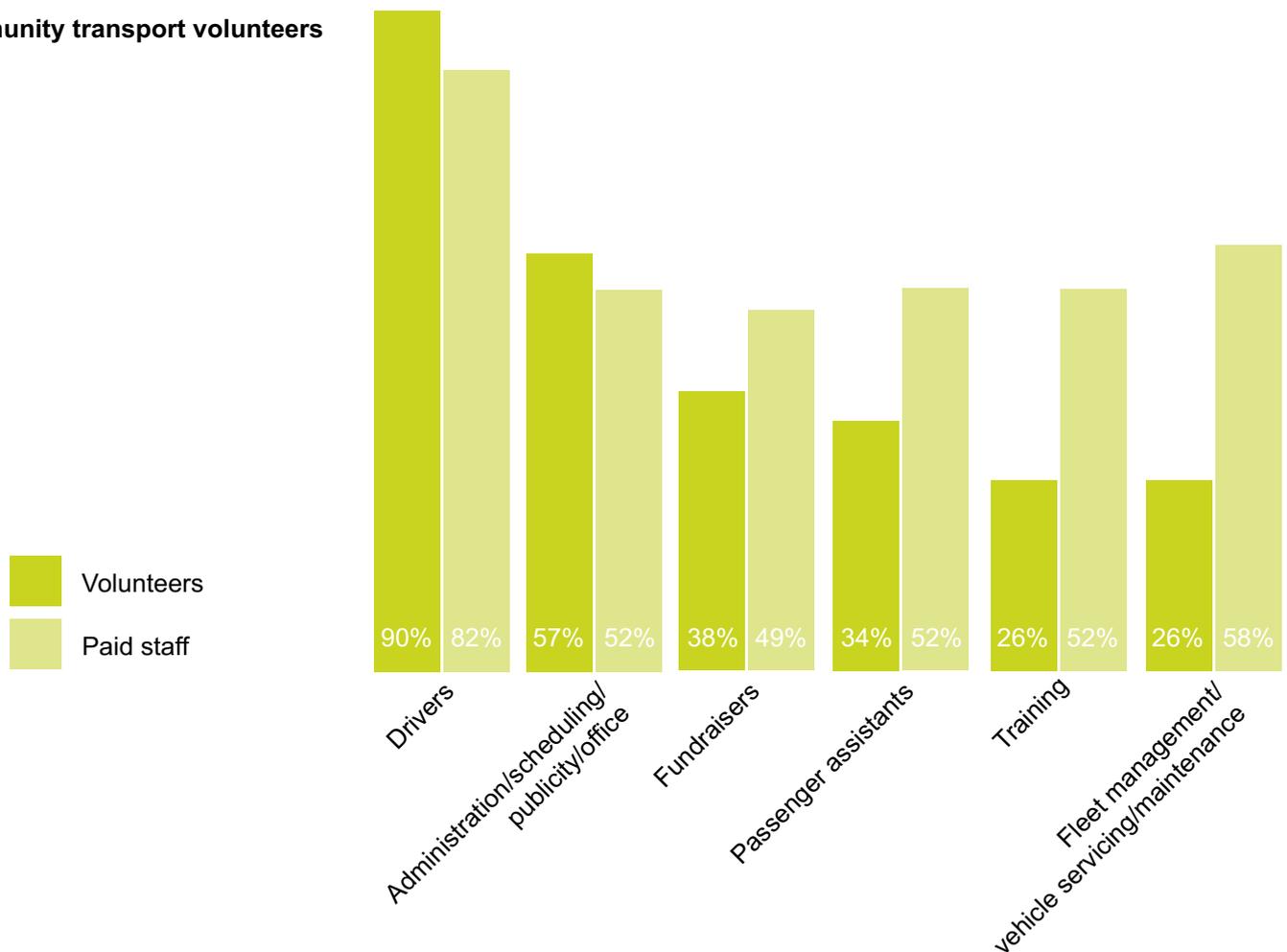
The work carried out by the thousands of volunteers in the community transport sector is as varied as it is vital. Without these volunteers, whose roles range from frontline service provision to essential work behind the scenes, many organisations would find it impossible to meet the needs of their service users. According to the State of the Sector survey the average number of volunteers working on transport services in a CT organisation is **32**, but responses ranged

from none at all (in the case of a small number of organisations with only paid drivers) to 8,500 (in the case of a large national charity).

As is evident from the graph below, community transport volunteers are heavily involved in all areas, and even exceed the number of paid staff when it comes to drivers.

In addition, volunteers give up their time and talents to serve as trustees, making a vital contribution to the governance of community transport organisations.

Community transport volunteers



45% of respondents benefit from over 50 volunteer hours per week

The figures below show the number of hours' work that community transport organisations receive from their total number of volunteers in an average week. Despite the wide range of responses, the fact that 45% of respondents declared that they benefit from over 50 volunteer hours per week demonstrates the considerable impact and value of volunteers in community transport.

Number of hours	% of organisations ⁴
Fewer than 10	15%
10-25	19%
25-50	17%
50-100	14%
100-500	24%
More than 500	6%

Volunteering: a supply and demand issue

According to all of our evidence, the recruitment of volunteers is becoming one of the biggest challenges in community transport across the country. Our survey data tells us that:

- **60%** of our respondents had seen an increase in passenger trips in 2013/14
- **78%** experienced an increase in demand since 2010
- **71%** expect further increase in demand.

⁴ 5% said they were unsure

CASE STUDY

Jonathan, office and administration volunteer with CT Home Salford

Community Transport is a national operator which serves three different areas of the country. Jonathan is a volunteer who works five days a week in their Salford branch, which provides collection and delivery services to reuse and recycle furniture in Greater Manchester. The offices are attached to a large warehouse, which holds a wide range of affordable second-hand furniture that can be delivered by *Community Transport* drivers to members of the community. Jonathan, whose responsibilities include serving customers at the warehouse, organising furniture collections with the drivers and carrying out administrative tasks in the office, first started volunteering in 2013 as a van crew member on a work programme, but changed roles: "the manager at the time mentioned needing help in the office so I made the change". The work Jonathan does is not only an excellent example of the diversity in community transport volunteering – many organisations benefit greatly from those who give up their time to ensure that operations run smoothly – but also of the variety of transport services spanned by the community transport sector.

...the biggest obstacle to meeting increased demand is the difficulty in recruiting new volunteers

Yet despite the incontrovertible evidence of growth in the community transport sector, the highest proportion of respondents – **43%** – stated that the number of transport volunteers in their organisation has not changed in the past year. It comes as no surprise, then, that according to respondents' comments, the biggest obstacle to meeting increased demand is the difficulty in recruiting new volunteers. Combining these comments with feedback at the CTA's 2014 roadshows, the most prominent issues raised were:

- An ageing volunteer workforce, which is largely made up of retired individuals
- The rising retirement age, which is creating a decrease in the number of people available to volunteer
- Restrictions on the entitlement to drive minibuses for individuals who passed their driving test after 1 January 1997.

To summarise, age is a major factor in the profile of volunteers in community transport, especially in terms of drivers. According to our survey comments and roadshow feedback, many volunteers are forced or choose to stop driving as a volunteer when they reach the age of 70 (at which point a medical check is necessary to continue driving). With people retiring later and later, the effect is that a potential volunteer may only be available for up to five years from 65+ to 70, reducing the pool of available volunteers; by comparison, some current volunteers have served for more than 20 years.

The solution of seeking out younger volunteer drivers, one that many organisations would like to adopt, is severely inhibited by current EU legislation. While 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 and only hold the B category on their licence can only drive a permit minibus so long as they 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; 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.



These conditions make it problematic for younger people to volunteer in community transport as it is not always possible for both the driver and the operator to meet all of the conditions. A recurring difficulty among CT providers is the weight restriction on vehicles, which appears to have no correlation with many of the vehicles used.

The number of volunteers with automatic D1 entitlement is dwindling, but the cost of obtaining a D1 licence for those without it is between £1,000 and £1,200, including training and test fees. This is simply impossible for most community transport providers to afford.

The CTA is helping to address the issue of volunteer recruitment in a number of ways. It has stepped up its communications activity and is seeking to raise the wider profile of community transport, making it more visible and attractive to potential volunteers.

This is also a challenge faced by the wider voluntary sector. Organisations such as NCVO are campaigning on general volunteer issues which also affect community transport providers, such as the rising age of retirement creating difficulties in recruiting new volunteers.

However, there are problems specific to community transport that need to be addressed if a severe shortage of eligible volunteers in the near future is to be avoided. For example, discussion needs to take place around funding options to make D1 licensing more attainable for community transport organisations with limited resources, as well as a review of unnecessary restrictions in the relevant legislation.

For example, younger unemployed people with time to volunteer would have an opportunity to gain useful driving experience as a community transport volunteer if the barrier to funding D1 training could be overcome. This may lead to a professional driving opportunity, as well as equipping them with useful interpersonal skills.

RECOMMENDATION 5

.....
The Government should support community transport to enable more young and willing volunteers to become D1 compliant.

56% said passenger trips had increased over the past 12 months



4. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT AND HEALTH

Community transport plays an important role in enabling people to access health services. For many it is their only means of getting to and from a medical appointment. Yet community transport is often not recognised as a key link in the transport network. The lack of engagement with community transport on the part of the health service is increasingly becoming a problem for our sector. This is backed up by the findings from the CTA's 2014 roadshow where health was identified as a priority issue.

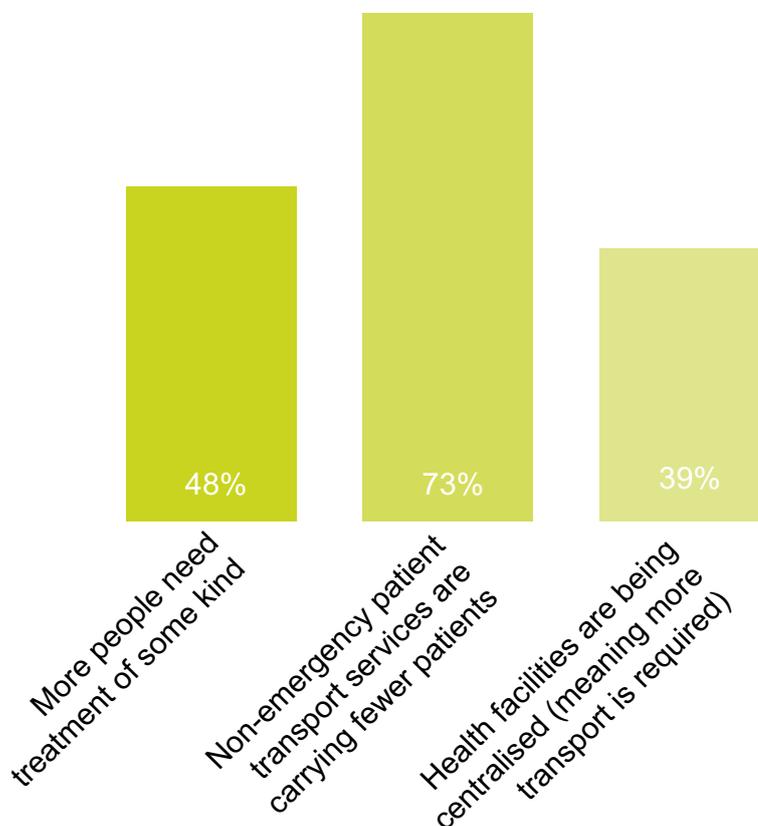
We have also identified though our State of the Sector survey that a health-related journey was the second most common trip purpose, with 74% of respondents saying that they did this. This overwhelming fact clearly shows the sector is able and willing to deliver health transport. And yet the role which community transport plays in helping patients access services appears largely unseen and unsung as far as the health service is concerned; data from our 2014 survey, 'The impact of health transport on CT', tells us that only 24% of community transport organisations that provide health transport receive any funding from the health service.

It is also clear that the number of trips to health services that community transport delivers over a 12-month period is increasing. Over 56% of respondents stated that passenger trips had increased over the past 12 months. The reason for this increase is a reduction in the number of patients carried by non-emergency patient transport services. The graph opposite illustrates this clearly.

FAST FACT: Respondents to our recent survey recorded that they had carried out over **2,125,720** health-related journeys by community transport in the last 12 months.



If there has been a change in the number of health trips you undertake, do you think this is because...?



This increase in passenger trips can be linked to the Department for Health's 2007 eligibility criteria for non-emergency patient transport which is widely used by local authorities. However, there are inconsistencies in how it is applied, creating a 'postcode lottery' for potential users. If a patient is not eligible they have to find alternative means of getting to their medical appointment.

We asked our members: *'Do you have experience of people being referred to your services as they don't meet Non-Emergency Patient Transport policy?'* A total of 51% of community transport organisations stated this was the case, offering the following explanations:

- NHS patient transport service (PTS) – direct people to us on their website, never having asked us and offering no funding.
- Patients are contacting our scheme as they are no longer eligible for patient transport.
- Self-referring – patients have been told they are not eligible for non-emergency patient transport and left to sort their transport themselves.
- Doctors and hospitals refer patients to our services.
- The patient has no other way of getting to their appointment without us.



The introduction of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 should be seen as a positive for the sector. A new structure for commissioning should, in theory, make it easier to engage at a local level. The Act was brought in to provide a basis for better collaboration, partnership working and integration across local government and the NHS at all levels.

With the implementation of Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Local Healthwatch groups, the Act also gives Health and Wellbeing Boards a duty to encourage health and care commissioners to work together to advance the health and wellbeing of the people in their area. But many community transport organisations feel they have to start over again in trying to engage with the new structure, with limited success.

Integration with health organisations is extremely important; however greater collaboration should be promoted between all commissioners and providers of services. Along with health authorities, therefore, local authority departments such as education and social services should also work together to deliver joined-up working.

There is some limited evidence that integration and collaboration can work in England.

The need for joined-up working between health and transport is vital; the strain is already being felt by community transport organisations, which pick up services where the health service cannot.

There is evidence that the sector already does a very good job in meeting the needs of users by helping them access health appointments. This is a very cost-effective way of providing essential transport, with a cost-benefit ratio which is almost certainly positive.

Whilst community transport needs are best determined on a local basis, there is a need for discussion and recognition of community transport issues at a national level. Discussions need to take place with ministers from the Department of Health, Department for Transport and others to ensure better joint working and a level playing field for community transport.

RECOMMENDATION 6
 There should be better joint working between health, local government and community transport, with community transport actively considered as a fully funded option for patient transport.

60,000 calls and 30,000 patient transport service journeys pa

CASE STUDY

Hertfordshire integrated transport

Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Health Trusts and community transport schemes have worked together in Hertfordshire since 2005. In this time a number of joint partnership initiatives have been developed to benefit the wider communities and are still in operation today:

Travellink is a single point of contact service, which provides information about booking non-emergency PTS. The service commenced in 2005, initially serving residents using East & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust health services. However, in 2008 the Travellink service moved towards a countywide operation and at present handles 60,000 calls and books 30,000 patient transport service journeys per annum. From 2015 the service will be incorporated into the new patient transport services contract.

Health Shuttle scheme – The partnership has developed two ‘Health Shuttle’ transport schemes, providing residents with pre-booked, chargeable door-to-door transport, closely linked to the time of hospital appointments.

Along with the above initiatives Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups have also jointly funded a range of community and voluntary transport schemes since 2008.

These schemes provide door-to-door transport for both social and health journeys for local residents. The schemes transport residents to local health services and provide journeys to hospital appointments, especially for residents who are not eligible for PTS. Hertfordshire NHS Hospital Trusts also provide voluntary transport schemes for patients attending their hospitals.

The partnership continues and works with local authorities and NHS trusts in other areas to share information and promote transport integration and joint working.



CONCLUSIONS

Community transport in England is in good health. And, it can be argued, the health of the communities it serves is enhanced as a result of its ongoing contribution.

Staff and volunteers in community transport organisations across the country are delivering services vital to their communities. They deliver older people to meeting places, patients to medical appointments and young people to employment, education and leisure. The value of the contribution made by community transport is incalculable.

The number of journeys made by community transport may be small compared with the journeys delivered by public transport at its widest, but it is truly transformative in terms of the impact on people's lives.

Without it, older people may lose their independence and become more reliant on the state and on their families. Without it, those in need of health care may struggle to access medical appointments. Without it, those living in isolated communities may be denied access to a whole range of opportunities.

Good health is not to be taken for granted. Without proper care, community transport in England will struggle to meet the challenges it faces, as identified in this report.

Community transport sets a magnificent example in the scale of its volunteer contribution. Without action, the availability of volunteers will reduce and with it the ability of community transport to solve transport problems within communities.

It is already providing solutions to the problem of health transport in some communities; with greater recognition and improved joint working, it could do more.

The economic climate is challenging. Making decisions on competing spending priorities is increasingly difficult as resources diminish. Community transport offers excellent value; it achieves much with comparatively little. Government at all levels should recognise and value its contribution, providing funding which helps to ensure its sustainability and keep its vehicles on the road.

We commend this report to you and ask for your support in achieving the recommendations it contains.



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The Community Transport Association
Highbank, Halton Street, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 2NY

Tel: 0161 351 1475
Email: info@ctauk.org
www.ctauk.org

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