

London Health
Partnership

'How Do I Get There?'

Transport handbook for
older people in London

Andrena Cumella

Liz Haggard

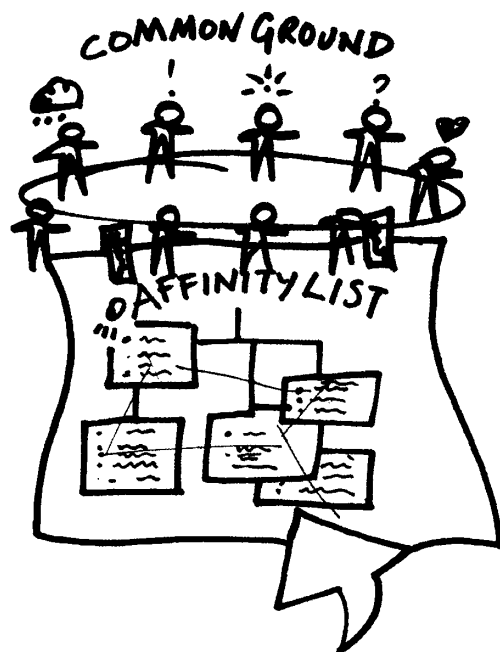
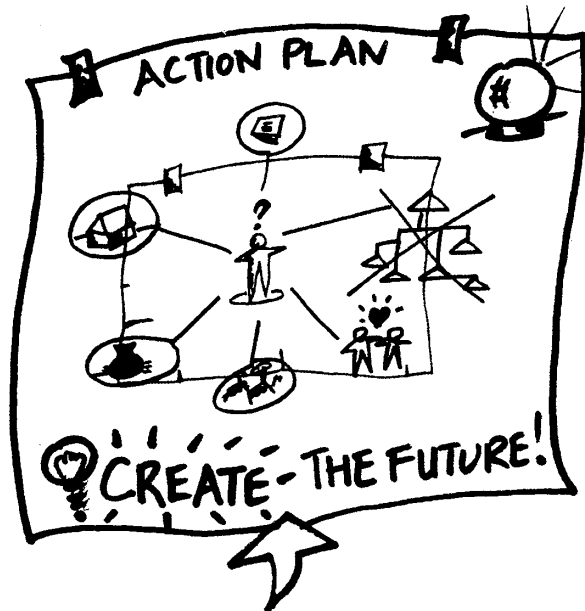
Peter Martin

QBFP (Cum)

King's Fund

Publishing

11-13 Cavendish Square
London W1M 0AN



KING'S FUND LIBRARY	
11-13 Cavendish Square London W1M 0AN	
Class mark	Extensions
QBFP	Cum
Date of Receipt	Price
18.3.98	Donation

Voices of experience...

'There's nothing worse than having to beg someone for a lift. It makes me feel like a charity case.'

'Lip-service is constantly paid to the necessity of enabling elderly people to remain independent and enjoy a reasonable quality of life. If they cannot get to the shops and the post office, the pub, the club, the church or the doctor, what sort of life can they have?'

'I found it very confusing and quite a battle to get hold of information which would tell me what services are actually available; and most of the people I asked didn't have the whole story either.'

'It took me months to find out what was available – you don't know who to ask.'

'I never realised how much I relied on public transport until I fell last winter and broke my leg. Even after it got better, I was afraid to go on the bus. I lost confidence.'

'Being able to get the special bus to and from my meetings has made such a difference. It takes the pressure off my daughter having to fetch me. I feel more independent.'

'How Do I Get There?'

Transport handbook for older people in London

Andrena Cumella, Liz Haggard & Peter Martin

Office for Public Management



London Health
Partnership



*Office for Public
Management*

Published by
King's Fund Publishing
11-13 Cavendish Square
London W1M 0AN

© King's Fund 1996

First published 1996

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, photocopying, recording and/or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publishers. This book may not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade in any form, binding or cover other than that in which it is published, without the prior consent of the publishers.

ISBN 1 85717 122 5

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Distributed by Bournemouth English Book Centre (BEBEC)
PO Box 1496
Poole
Dorset
BH12 3YD
Tel: 0800 262260
Fax: 0800 262266

Printed and bound in Great Britain

Cover illustration: Peter Allen



Contents

Preface v

Acknowledgements vi

Introduction 1

Part 1 How do I make the most of what's available? 3

What transport do I need? 3

Why do I need transport? 3

What transport is available to me? 4

Where do I start? 4

- Buses and trains 4
 - Are you comfortable using public transport? Are you able to manage getting on and off buses and trains? 4
 - Do you have difficulty getting on and off buses and trains but still prefer to use public transport? 5
 - Is there an information booklet available? 6
- Minibuses 6
 - Are community transport services available to you? 6
 - How can you find out? 6
- Walking 7
 - Do you prefer to walk but find it too dangerous? 7
- Taxis 8
 - Do you need a door-to-door service? 8
 - Is there a private taxi or car hire firm with which you can make a special arrangement? 9

General issues 9

- Are providers safe and insured? 9
- Is the cost of transport an issue for you? 9
- Complaints, compliments and comments 10

Part 2 How can I do more? 13

You want to do more! Could you start a transport scheme? 13

List of things which transport services should provide 14

Gather as much information as you can 15

Improving transport is a staff responsibility 15

Would a survey help? 16

If a service is proposed, is it going to be successful? 19

Part 3 Further information 21

The issues 21

What has changed to make transport for older people more important? 23

- The dominance of the private car 24
- Changing focus of community identity 24
- From social welfare to individual responsibilities 24
- Increasing emphasis on primary and community care 24
- The pedestrian environment is less user friendly 24

Access to transport for older people 25

- Information is the key to choice. It is hard to obtain 25
- People's needs, concerns, feelings and contribution to society are increasingly respected in the provision of services 26
- Users are making their voices heard more than before 26
- Transport is integral to community care 27
- The costs of services are under pressure and new ways of getting better value for money are important 27
- The number of older people on low incomes is increasing 27
- 'The mixed economy of provision' means that voluntary and private sector providers are important players in transport provision 28
- Better communication and collaboration are needed to help combat fragmentation of services 28
- There are more 'stakeholders' who need to be involved 29
- Charters and moves to define rights: rights of access to transport 29
- New ways of costing 30
- New ways of getting user feedback are being used 30

Bibliography 31

Contacts 32

Facts & Figures 33

Preface

This handbook was commissioned by the London Health Partnership for use by groups who wish to address a concern about transport. It describes how to make the most of the transport that is available; suggests how to get a local transport scheme started; and provides background information of interest to providers as well as users.

Although the workbook has been designed for use in London, groups in other cities will find Parts 2 and 3 directly useful and may find that Part 1 provides a valuable framework for organising their assessment of transport provision in their own city.

The London Health Partnership is an alliance of charitable foundations, business interests and government, formed to generate a distinctive programme of work which will promote the development of urban primary health care. The focus of its work is the well-being of elders in cities, particularly through the delivery of services in and close to their homes.

The concerns voiced by elders themselves are similar in all the sites in which the London Health Partnership has worked. They relate to long-standing intractable problems which are characterised by their complexity. Examples include transport, fear and anxiety and the provision of aids and adaptations.

Many different sorts of commissioning, providing and regulatory organisations are involved and it is not possible for any one organisation to see the whole picture, let alone 'fix' it. Complex problems of this sort are challenges for the whole system.

To meet the challenge, the London Health Partnership has brought together, in a series of 'Whole System Events', a rich mix of people concerned to improve the well-being of elders – including elders themselves, carers and people working in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. At these events people have worked together and explored the common ground, the areas of shared concern around which they are prepared to work to create the future. After the events people have chosen to continue to meet together, as self-organising groups, to work in new ways and take the concerns forward in their locality.

Acknowledgements

The London Health Partnership would like to thank the authors, Andrena Cumella, Liz Haggard and Peter Martin, of the Office for Public Management, and all those who have commented on earlier drafts.

Thanks to Minuche Mazumdar Farrar for the cover design and to Peter Allen for allowing us to use his original graphics.

Introduction

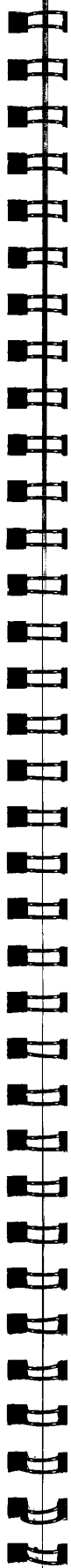
'When I arrived back home I realised what a good day it had been. I'd done my own shopping, caught up with my friends and even the nurse said I'm looking better. It makes so much difference – being able to go out and about.'

This handbook is intended to help older people with their transport needs. It gives practical information and ideas about public transport and local community transport schemes in the Greater London area. Safe, reliable transport helps support independent living and adds to the overall quality of life. For these reasons, transport is an issue of central concern to most older people.

Part 1 of the handbook is about how to find out about and make the most of the transport that is already available.

Part 2 is about doing more – about getting a local transport scheme started.

Part 3 provides information which will also be of interest to those involved in providing transport through statutory services, voluntary groups and private companies.



Part 1

How do I make the most of what's available?

The first part of this handbook asks some important questions about transport and offers practical suggestions on how you can answer them for yourself and others.

What transport do I need?

Taking time to think about the kind of transport you need is an important first step in helping decide how transport can help you live your daily life to the fullest.

Why do you need transport? Is it to get back and forth to medical appointments? To meet daily needs like shopping, banking and other errands? To enable you to get out and meet people, visit friends and family? To maintain maximum independence?

Your reasons for seeking safe, reliable transport probably include all these activities. But how do you go about meeting your transport needs? Where do you start? How do you find out what's available in your community?

Why do I need transport?

To get to:

- | | |
|----------|----------------------|
| ● Doctor | ● Friends and family |
| ● Shops | ● Chiropodist |
| ● Bank | ● Other |
-

What transport is available to me?

The availability of transport, whether public buses and trains or community transport services sponsored by volunteer or community groups, varies from one part of London to another for many reasons, including differences in demand, resources and the historical importance of transport in your community.

The questions in this section will help to narrow your search for information and prompt your thinking about how transport can improve your quality of life.

Where do I start?

In some places there is a single number you can ring for all information about local transport services and ways of getting about. There is no single number for London, but Tripscope are very helpful with information about services all over London. Tripscope are a national information service to provide information about travel for people who find it difficult to get about. They can help with information about buses, trains, special schemes for older people, voluntary schemes and private firms. They also like to hear about local services so that they can put the information on their computer to help other people.

<p>Tripscope 0181 994 9294</p>

Buses and trains

Are you comfortable using public transport? Are you able to manage getting on and off buses and trains?

If so, a telephone call to your Borough Council Office or British Rail Office requesting information on fares and local routes is the place to start. For information about buses and the underground, call London Transport. You can ask to have information posted to you – this saves you time and also ensures you have the information on hand for reference.

London Transport
0171 2221234

British Rail
0171 928 5100

Do you have difficulty getting on and off buses and trains but still prefer to use public transport?

Some transport operators now have vehicles accessible to people coping with physical difficulties. Tripscope have information about all sorts of transport services in all parts of London – they can give you information about volunteer drivers, local taxi firms and other specially arranged services.

Tripscope
0181 994 9294

The **London low-floor bus project** features buses designed to provide more convenient transport on certain routes, for users who find public transport is not suited to their needs. The low-floor buses run on five routes at the moment. The service is being reviewed and may be extended if the results are good.

London Low-Floor Bus Project
0171 918 3176

London Stationlink offers an hourly bus service with a specially adapted bus which takes wheelchairs and operates a one-way circuit of London's main railway stations, including Victoria, Paddington, Euston and Waterloo. Stationlink bus stops are located outside main line railway stations. Ring them and they will post you a copy of the timetable.

**London Stationlink –
London Transport Unit for Disabled Passengers**
0171 918 3312

Is there an information booklet available?

Most London Boroughs also provide useful information in handy booklets, although the departments responsible for these vary from one authority to another. For example, the Environment Department in Camden publishes *A Guide to Accessible Transport Services for Camden's Residents*, which contains useful details with contact names and phone numbers; Richmond's Planning, Transport and Client Services Department publishes an *Accessibility Guide*, which includes timetables and a mobility bus route map; Waltham Forest provides a booklet on community transport.

Ring your Borough Council to see if they provide a local booklet. If they do not have a booklet, you may like to get a copy of the Waltham Forest, Camden or Richmond booklets to use as an example of what you would like your local council to provide. Your local councillor should be interested in helping.

Waltham Forest Community Transport

0181 521 0665

Camden Council

0171 860 5560

Richmond Council

0181 891 7327

Minibuses

Are community transport services available to you? How can you find out?

If suitably adapted public transport is not available in your community, or you do not feel comfortable using it, there may be private or voluntary community transport schemes operating in your area. It can be hard to find out about everything which is available, because many schemes are small and have different names and ways of contacting them. This is why it helps if your local council provide a guide to what is available.

If there is no guide available, you will have to ring several numbers. Start with Tripscope.

Tripscope
0181 994 9294

Other numbers to try are:

- your local council
- the local volunteer bureau
- your local Age Concern office
- your local community health centre.

Your local community health council should know about local services and volunteer schemes which help with transport to health services and they may have information about other local services. (The numbers of the London Community Health Councils are in the phone book under *Community Health Councils*.)

There are many different community transport schemes. One example, in Hammersmith and Fulham, is a scheme run by Age Concern which provides group and individual transport for local older people using minibuses fitted to accommodate wheelchairs. You can also borrow the project's specially adapted car – for social visiting or a weekend away – provided a driver can be found. If you would like information about the project, ring Hammersmith and Fulham Age Concern.

Hammersmith and Fulham Age Concern
0171 386 9085

Walking

Do you prefer to walk but find it too dangerous?

Walking accounts for a third of all journeys made in Britain. After the car, it is the most important mode of travel for older people. But in many parts of London, busy traffic, poorly marked crossings and pavements in bad condition make walking a difficult and potentially dangerous experience for many older people.

Certain initiatives, such as the 'puffin' pedestrian crossing which allows a longer time for people to cross busy streets, help to address these concerns.

But what if you live in an area where you feel unsafe to go out because of poorly marked crossings, damaged walkways and pavements or buildings with steps or heavy doors? How do you get help to do daily errands or attend appointments?

Schemes such as Shopmobility may be of help. This community transport scheme operates up and down the country, providing volunteers to push a wheelchair, carry shopping and offer company or moral support. Shopmobility volunteers in some areas are trained to guide visually impaired people. They also help raise awareness about the need for improved access in all areas of the environment. There may be a Shopmobility Scheme in your area. Ring the Shopmobility service to ask.

Shopmobility
01706 865986

Taxis

Do you need a door-to-door service?

There are a number of services which offer a door-to-door taxi service at special rates. The London Taxi-Card service, for example, offers a door-to-door taxi service for people with a permanent or long-term physical disability, visual impairment or learning difficulty which limits mobility and prevents the use of public transport. The London Accessible Transport Unit have information about Taxi-Card services.

London Accessible Transport Unit
0181 748 7272

In a number of places there is a Dial-a-Ride service which offers door-to-door taxi service. For information about services in your area contact Tripscope or your local council.

Tripscope
0181 994 9294

Is there a private taxi or car hire firm with which you can make a special arrangement?

Private companies have to cover all their costs and make some profit, so their charges will be higher than community transport schemes which have a subsidy or use volunteers. Nevertheless, it may be possible to strike a good deal for a regular journey outside peak hours, particularly with smaller companies or individual operators. Ask friends and relatives for a recommendation or check your telephone directory Yellow Pages for local companies. The Talking Yellow Pages Service is helpful and can give information about local taxi and private car and mini-bus firms. Some firms have specially adapted vehicles which make access easier and can take wheelchairs.

Talking Yellow Pages Service
0800 600900

General issues

Are providers safe and insured?

Before you use an organisation unfamiliar to you, you may want to consider personal safety aspects. You can contact your local Age Concern office or Tripscope to enquire about the service. Is it insured? Are vehicles maintained and equipped with mobile phones in case of illness or other emergencies? Are the drivers trained? If you prefer, you can also ask the transport provider directly. Responsible service providers will be able to provide straightforward answers to these questions without embarrassment.

Is the cost of transport an issue for you?

Many local authorities offer travel concessions on bus services to older people. In Greater London, residents of pension age are entitled to free travel on bus and underground services and half-price on local rail services within certain scheduling restrictions. Detailed information is available

from your local council and application forms are held at main post offices.

The rates for some community transport schemes also take into account the limited income levels of many older people. It is always worth asking if there are reductions for older people.

If you are finding it difficult to find and afford transport to places where there are a number of other older people, they will probably have similar problems. Sometimes it makes sense to organise shared taxis, book a minibus, or share a volunteer driver to take two or three people. It can be difficult for one person to organise shared transport, but it is worth asking if something can be done.

For example, the Community Voluntary Transport Scheme run by Woodside Health Centre in Croydon was started as a way of assisting older people without transport to attend a weekly clinic. Volunteer drivers collect eligible patients who often find that new friendships form as a result of travelling back and forth to the clinic together.

Community Voluntary Transport Scheme
Woodside Health Centre Croydon
0181 656 0213 (Mon & Wed am)

Complaints, compliments and comments

It may be that there is a service meant to help you but when you try to use it, there are problems. It really is important to tell the people who are paying for a service meant to help you that it is not doing the job well.

Complaints about a service

It is often hard to work out where to make a complaint so that it makes a difference. Sometimes there will be a note in the leaflet about the service which tells you how to complain. If so, start with this number. If it is not clear where to complain, contact your local council offices or your local councillor if it is a service your local council provides or pays for. If the problem is with transport which the health service provides or pays for, such as ambulances, the local community health council will know how to state your concerns.

Complaining about dangers of walking

Walking is a very important way of getting about, and if there are things which make walking difficult it is worth complaining about them. You may find walking difficult because of poor street lighting, broken pavements, bus stops which don't feel safe, lack of seats to rest on, buildings which are hard to get in and out of because of poor design, or danger spots on roads. Your local council or councillor is probably the best first contact. Your comments will be more effective if other people make the same comments, so encourage friends and neighbours to comment too.

If you can take photographs or ask someone to take them for you, this is helpful in showing exactly what the problems are. A local school or college might be interested in doing a project on problems for older people on foot in your local area, and they could provide some examples which would help you make your case.

How you choose to express your views will depend on the approach that feels most comfortable for you. Some people like to make their comments direct, others like to ask their local councillor or an existing local group to take up the issue.

Compliments

Compliments are as important as complaints. We all say thank you to the person who has provided a good service. It is helpful if we can find time to phone or write to the organisers of the service to say what was particularly good about the service or the particular member of staff who impressed us. If organisers of transport services have examples of ways in which their services have helped older people, it helps them show the value of their service and argue for more services.

Comments

Providers of community services such as transport are increasingly aware of the importance of listening to the experiences and ideas of people who use those services. Sometimes, slight changes to the current service help make it more convenient for people to use.

For example, a group of people in Manchester suggested that a local bus would be more widely used if the route were changed to include a stop in a nearby housing estate. This suggestion was acted upon. As a result, the transport company gained more passengers and people living on the estate gained more convenient access to transport.

Certain bus shelters, in London, now have a computerised notice-board which tells passengers when to expect the next bus. This addition to the existing service gives passengers valuable information and helps to make the overall transport system 'passenger-friendly'.

Part 2

How can I do more?

You want to do more! Could you start a transport scheme?

You may have done all you can to get current transport improved in your area but it hasn't worked in terms of your needs and those of your community. For this reason, you find yourself thinking about how you might get a local transport scheme started. But how to do it?

There are lots of examples of local schemes which have been started because one person felt strongly and took action. However, you probably don't want to start and run a transport scheme on your own – you will need a lot of support, help and information.

The first section of this booklet has given you a number of places to contact so that you can collect examples of schemes which work in other places. You will be able to use this information to develop your ideas about what might work in your area, and show to local managers what sort of thing you would like them to provide.

It is useful to keep notes of the problems with existing services and ways in which they could be solved. This will be helpful when you talk with other people about providing a new service and improving existing services.

Headings for notes might include examples of:

- Obstacles to walking – pavements in poor condition, dangerous crossings, no seats to rest on
- Roads which feel dangerous – traffic congestion, no crossing places, no 'sleeping policemen' to slow down traffic
- Fear of falling – lack of banisters, badly designed steps
- Unfriendly bus stops
- Heavy doors which are hard to open

cont.

-
- Poor street lighting
 - Cost of public transport
 - Unreliable services
 - Lack of on-board support
 - Staff on transport services not helping older people
 - Transport services not available at the times they are needed
 - Services located in places which are hard to travel to
-

It is useful to list the things which are important for transport services to provide, so you can make it clear you are not asking for something unreasonable. Most people would start with points like the ones listed below.

Transport services should provide:

- services that take into account both practical day-to-day and social needs that contribute to a quality life
 - affordable means of travel to places people want to go
 - choices – public transport, community transport and volunteer schemes – to meet the full range of transport needs and capabilities of older people
 - a reliable, regular transport service based on information gathered from people who use services
 - a safe, responsive transport environment – for example good street lighting, well maintained roads and pavements, bus shelters with seating, driver education, vehicles which meet safety standards and user-friendly rail and coach stations
 - a good information system which is easy to use so that people know what is available
 - services which are good value for money, so that as many people as possible benefit and people can see the value of providing the service
-

Gather as much information as you can

Working out the kind of transport service best suited to your community and showing that it will be valuable will involve gathering information and talking to people. Older people are the ones who know what it is like for them to use services, and what differences to their lives good services would make. Collecting this kind of information and helping older people individually or in groups make sure their experiences are heard will help show how important it is to improve transport.

There are a number of other ways to find out about current transport needs and services in your community. For example, if your immediate community is fairly self-contained, you may be able to hold an open meeting. In other areas, combining one or more of the following approaches may be better suited to your needs:

-
- A brief YES/NO questionnaire distributed to various places in your community where older people go
 - Meetings with older people interested in contributing their views on transport
 - In person or telephone conversations with transport providers in your area
 - A community meeting to which transport providers and older people are invited
 - An article or interview in your local newspaper or on the radio to invite people to a meeting or a group
-

Improving transport is a staff responsibility

Not many older people will want to spend all their time running a campaign for a new transport service. Most people will expect staff in the local council, health services, voluntary sector and private sector to take up the transport issues once it has been shown that there is a real need. There are examples of services elsewhere which work and make a

difference based on local people feeling something needed to be done and lobbying for action.

It can be difficult to get local managers and staff to take up a transport issue. They are usually busy people, and transport is complicated because it usually involves several services working together. The costs of providing transport can also be high and local staff may feel the money isn't available because there are other priorities.

People who have started schemes say you may need to contact several people before you have a feeling you have something started. It may take quite a long time. It is useful to list people who are worth contacting – your list might look something like the one below:

- council transport department
- social services
- Age Concern
- community health council
- GPs
- volunteer bureau
- clubs and organisations for older people
- press and radio
- bus companies
- taxi, car-hire and mini-bus firms

Once your transport issue has been taken up by local managers and staff, it is important to ensure providers and older people stay actively involved so that the service truly reflects the needs of your community and its older people.

Would a survey help?

Sometimes carrying out a local survey is a good way of convincing people that something should be done. Individuals can do small surveys, and sometimes large organisations such as health authorities and local councils will carry out surveys.

Surveys can be useful in getting action, but they can also take a long time and cost quite a lot of money. It is important that there is agreement that action will be taken on the results of a survey.

One way of getting some survey work done is to contact a local college or university for assistance. Students studying a range of subjects do survey work as part of their courses. You may be able to work with them to create and distribute a survey to older people in your community.

Colleges and universities are interested in working with local people in this way. For example, the Merseyside Science Shop, better known as Interchange, takes local concerns, and students work to turn them into research projects. The Science Shop follows the progress of the project and translates the results into plain English. The service is provided free. Questions such as the following are examples of those you might suggest for a survey:

-
- Is the **pedestrian environment** safe and 'friendly'?
 - Are pavements in good repair?
 - Are there benches in convenient locations, should you feel like taking a break during an outing?
 - Are buses, trains and underground services **accessible**?
 - Are there supportive railings and ramps at entrance and exit points?
 - Is **specialised transport** available?
 - Are cars and drivers available?
 - Is there a taxi service designed to serve older people?
 - Are services **affordable**?
 - How much do typical journeys locally cost in relation to average incomes for older people?
 - **Information and publicity** – knowing where and who to approach for help – are the keys to choice.
 - Is information about transport services available?
 - Do people locally know how to get information?
 - Are there brochures?
 - Where are the brochures available?
-

cont.

Are transport services advertised in local papers?

- Are older peoples **needs, concerns, feelings and contribution** to society valued sufficiently?
- Are **qualifications** for transport services easily understood?

Is it clear to older people who can use the service and how much it will cost

- **Are legal responsibilities and regulations** regarding safety and insurance easily understood and available to users?
- How are **non-English speaking users** helped?
- Are transport services **assessed** regularly to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness?

Are transport services **assessed regularly by older people**?

- Is the **voluntary sector** fully involved in planning and providing local transport?
 - Are local representatives of the **private sector** involved in planning and providing local transport?
 - Are transport services looked at overall so that **duplication and gaps** are discovered and dealt with?
 - Are transport **policies** treated as a priority along with housing, medical and other essential services?
-

If a service is proposed, is it going to be successful?

Sometimes local people and managers get so involved in setting up a service that they get too enthusiastic. There are a number of examples of services which have been started and have not worked. Of course, that will sometimes happen, but it is worth stopping and asking yourselves questions every so often, so your scheme has a good chance of succeeding.

-
- Do we have the support of our local community?
How do we know?
 - Does our scheme rely on volunteer contributions of time?
Money? Is this realistic?
 - Are there grants available to assist in the development of our scheme? Will they go on being available or will they stop after a while?
 - Are there other schemes elsewhere offering this service which we can use as examples? What problems did they have?
 - Have things changed since we started designing our scheme?
For example, are there new regulations?
 - Have any new services started up since we planned our scheme? Could we extend them instead of starting a new scheme?
 - Do influential people in our community such as local councillors, GPs and churches know about our transport plan and support it?
 - Is our plan affordable? Have we thought of the cheapest way to provide a good service? Are there any ways we could reduce the costs to make it more affordable?
-



Part 3

Further information

The issues

This part of the handbook provides information of interest to those involved in commissioning and providing transport through statutory services, voluntary groups and private companies. The handbook does not attempt to summarise the complex issues involved – a good overview is given as part of the London Borough of Richmond's work on accessibility, published in 1994. For copies of the full report, *The Cross-Sector Benefits Report and the Community Groups Transport Need Assessment Research*, contact:

The Director
London Accessible Transport Unit
Britannia House
1-11 Glenthorne Road
London W6 0LF
Tel: 0181 741 8363

Head of Transport
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Planning, Transport and Client Services
Civic Centre
44 York Street
Twickenham TW1 3BZ
Tel: 0181 891 7327

Transport is a central issue for all age groups in our society and is especially important for older people. Older people, like everyone else, need to feel part of the hustle and bustle of everyday life – to belong to the community. If, for whatever reason, getting out and about becomes impossible, not only physical independence is threatened, but also quality of life. Transport enables access and is thus inextricably connected to health and social services, income and planning policy.

A lack of accessible, affordable transport leads to higher costs in terms of the personal, social and economic needs of older people. Lack of transport also makes services more difficult to deliver and raises costs – more services have to be delivered to people's own homes, or special transport has to be provided.

1. **One way of starting to look at transport needs for the whole community is to do a survey**, and Part 1 of this handbook gave some possible headings. There are many examples of local surveys – it is important that surveys are not seen to be used as a way of delaying action and that low-cost small surveys are used wherever possible.
2. **Another way to look at transport issues in your community is to hold a meeting for everyone interested in transport services for older people.** One example of this was a day held in Camden and Islington in 1994. A report of the day and information about the agencies involved, including feedback and user comments, is available from Camden Healthy Cities, Interchange Studios, Dalby Street, London NW5 3NQ.
3. **Producing a local transport services information booklet** is a start which is helpful to older people, and gives an overview of what is available. As you put it together, the information gaps, duplication, under-use of vehicles, etc. will be identified. This information will be valuable for further service planning. Examples are given in Part 1.
4. **A survey of how easy it is to get information about local services** can be helpful. It will usually show that older people have difficulty, because information is fragmented. A central information point about transport services which builds up a database and offers a help desk is obviously more effective than expecting older people to shop around for information. Tripscope provides this kind of service nationally and has good information about many local services in London.
5. **It is a better use of resources to expand a good central information service such as Tripscope** than to fund small local services, which are often high on enthusiasm and good will but low on staffing, opening hours and computer technology. The Guide service in Gloucester is another example of a central information point for a range of services, and includes transport information. (For information ring 01452 331131).

6. Co-ordinate community grant-aided vehicles. Many small groups in the community have raised money or received financial grants to purchase their own minibus or vehicle. In some parts of the country groups are no longer offered grants for their own group minibus, but are grant-aided to give them agreed use of a co-ordinated community transport service. This means that any grant-aided transport is available to the community as a whole as well as the individual group, and skills such as vehicle maintenance are concentrated and the costs of repairs etc. are spread.

The remainder of this section discusses some ways in which to approach improving transport for older people. However, transport also requires inter-agency working to ensure that services are co-ordinated to meet the wide range of needs in the community and make best use of all the resources available. Inter-agency work needs commitment, time, patience, rewards, resources, willingness to share assets and skills and understand other agencies' objectives and values. Resource pressures, changes in staff, and new regulations and de-regulations all make inter-agency work on complex issues difficult.

Transport services are as individual as people and communities. There is no blue-print which can be lifted from one community to another. However, there are numerous examples of ways of helping older people retain the sense of belonging to the community by being able to travel to places which are important to them. Some schemes are costly, and resources are too tight at present to offer these, but other schemes can be low cost and effective. Imagination, determination and working with older people will help improve existing services and provide new ones.

What has changed to make transport for older people more important?

As you work on transport issues, it is useful to identify the factors which cause many older people to feel isolated because transport is not available. The headings which follow are based on issues which usually emerge during transport discussions. This overview identifies national trends which affect local work. There are some further facts and figures at the end of the book.

A number of broad changes influence the need for better transport services for older people. These include:

- *The dominance of the private car*

During the course of a century the number of vehicles on our roads has increased many times over and, particularly for younger generations, the private car has become the normal mode of transport. Car use has contributed to traffic pollution, noise and access problems for pedestrians.

- *Changing focus of community identity*

In London, busy roads have formed barriers dividing people from their friends and eroding the sense of community around shops and other shared facilities. At the same time, the increased mobility of the general population has enabled people to travel away from their own immediate neighbourhood to shops, work and social activities.

- *From social welfare to individual responsibilities*

A changing emphasis in government policies, away from the institutional provision of universal welfare towards a philosophy of individual choice requires individuals to be responsible for their own needs and interests in order to have those needs and interests met.

- *Increasing emphasis on primary and community care*

Services concerned with the prevention of ill health, the treatment of acute and chronic illness and rehabilitation for patients who are frail, elderly, disabled or acutely or chronically ill, are increasingly community-based. This means that more older people will be living in their own homes and will require transport to enable easy access to services in their community. Without transport their quality of life will be less good. If transport to services can be provided there will be social benefits for older people and cost benefits for services.

- *The pedestrian environment is less user friendly*

Research carried out by the National Consumer Council (1987) noted a variety of obstacles for pedestrians. These included: broken pavements,

dog mess, lack of road-crossing facilities, and 'street furniture'. People over 65 were more likely than others to report cracked or uneven pavements, pavement cycling and dog mess as problems. Also, in London, cyclists often resort to using pavements due to lack of segregated cycle-ways. By maintaining a safe, sound and amenable pedestrian environment transport costs can be saved.

In 1989, nearly half of all pedestrians killed on the roads were over 60 (842 deaths), with the risk increasing sharply over the age of 70. Pedestrians aged between 70 and 79 are three times more likely to be killed on the roads than other adults. Older pedestrians also tend to receive severe injuries when involved in road accidents. Inadequate facilities for crossing busy roads can isolate people from their friends, relatives and the services they need.

Access to transport for older people

The focus in this handbook is on travel by walking, bus, minibus, car and taxi because these are by far the most important modes of local transport for older people.

Only 10% of pensioner households own a cycle and cycling mileage by pensioners has halved between 1975/6 and 1989/91.

Only 3% of people aged 50-74 travel by train once a week or more, while 63% never or rarely do so. Of people over 74, 91% use the train twice yearly or less.

The 1992 Family Expenditure Survey found that only 42.7% of pensioner couples and 9% of single pensioner households mainly dependent on state pensions had a car, compared to 67.6% of all households.

Information is the key to choice. It is hard to obtain

People with the greatest need for information have to go to the greatest lengths to get it. The transport jigsaw cannot be pieced together without sufficient information. Disabled travellers have described finding information as difficult, discouraging, expensive and time-consuming. Lack of information means that some people may not have the confidence to set out on a journey which can involve changing from one mode of transport to another and which means matching up different operators'

timetables. Those who travel on unfamiliar routes sometimes find their journeys are unnecessarily difficult, inconvenient, uncomfortable or tense.

The consumer body Buswatch found that 27.7% of bus stops in suburban and 40.4% of bus stops in urban areas had no timetable.

There are examples of good practice in the provision of information, such as the guide to transport facilities in Camden which covers all means of local transport. It contains full information on fare concessions and a clear summary of what accessible transport exists. Phone 0171 860 5560 for a copy.

Older people may have additional problems in using the information available. We have written this booklet as if everyone had a telephone, could read the telephone directory easily, had good hearing and could easily understand information given on the phone. We know that for some people this is not the case, although the majority of older people do have a telephone. Where there are problems with visual impairment, hearing difficulty, language and comprehension problems the information jigsaw pieces will be even harder to put together. This is why it is important to test information sources for their usefulness to older people.

People's needs, concerns, feelings and contribution to society are increasingly respected in the provision of services

Respect and understanding are a prerequisite for establishing a user-friendly service. It is now accepted that services must meet the needs of those for whom they are provided and all service provision for elderly people needs to embody respect for older people's needs, concerns, feelings and contribution to society. The increasing trend to measure satisfaction, efficiency and effectiveness means that older people's experiences matter.

Users are making their voices heard more than before

Increasingly users are finding ways of making their voices heard and service commissioners and providers are encouraging user involvement in planning and evaluating services. More users are getting together to form self-help groups and pressure groups, and local newspapers and radio stations are giving local groups access to a wider audience.

Transport is integral to community care

As services move to be more locally based and enable more people to remain in their own homes, enabling people to reach services which are still centrally provided is a vital aspect of good care and service planning.

The costs of services are under pressure and new ways of getting better value for money are important

There are costs involved in the provision of all forms of transport. Passing those costs directly or indirectly to the user can create a barrier for people on a low income. If costs of providing the service are higher than necessary, then the potential for more and better services is reduced.

It is now much more likely that service costs will be questioned and compared with the costs of alternative providers or ways of providing a service to meet the need.

The number of older people on low incomes is increasing

Pensioners are over-represented among the poorest households. Over 50% of pensioner households (3.6 million) depend on state pensions and benefits for at least 75% of their income. Fourteen per cent of pensioner households (552,000) are entirely dependent on state pensions and benefits (House of Commons *Hansard*, 29 June 1993).

The comparatively low level of car ownership may in part be due to the relatively recent growth in mass car ownership and to the fact that fewer older women have learnt to drive. Nonetheless, low income is likely to be the major factor.

Age Concern calls for an adequate level of income to allow all older people to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. Age Concern believes that the age bar to the mobility components of the DLA¹ should be removed. The costs of disability do not fall with age and the mobility component of the DLA would clearly be of great benefit in helping older drivers to pay for the hire or purchase of an adapted car.

1. The bar on getting the mobility component of the Disabled Living Allowance (DLA) for older drivers who become disabled after reaching 65 may cause many to stop driving. A study by Philip Oxley of the Transport and Road Research Laboratory shows that disabled people with mobility assistance are two-and-a-half to three times more likely to own a car than those not getting assistance.

Pensioners' bus passes and other concessionary schemes help reduce the impact of fare increases on many retired people. This probably explains why there has been no reduction in bus use for the 60 and over age group, while for all other age groups there have been marked decreases.

Use of concessions by pensioners is highest in London (82%) and the Metropolitan Counties (84%).

'The mixed economy of provision' means that voluntary and private sector providers are important players in transport provision

Voluntary groups are sometimes cited as either the major or a potential major provider of transport for community care. It is hard to see how they can play a leading role until statutory service commissioners develop ways of building voluntary sector innovations into their mainstream service specifications – even if it is difficult at first. Voluntary organisations are also becoming increasingly aware of the dangers that their services may be used mainly to exploit the low costs, free labour and goodwill that voluntary organisations can harness.

The private sector are major providers of transport and with de-regulation there is no possibility of providing a comprehensive transport service without their active involvement as partners.

Better communication and collaboration are needed to help combat fragmentation of services

The more parties involved in service provision, the more communication is required between them and the more care has to be taken to make sure there is clear responsibility for making sure the individual user can get good, comprehensive information easily.

Communication and collaboration cost time, skill and money, and commissioners of services have to take a leading role in bringing provider information together and making it available to the public.

There are more 'stakeholders' who need to be involved

The links between funders, enablers, commissioners, providers and regulators are many and complex. It is helpful if they meet and produce a 'stakeholder analysis'. This analysis will help them to understand each others' needs and objectives, the constraints they have to work with, and what might be gained by working together. Users should also be involved in the design, planning, management and evaluation of services which are intended to meet their needs. They are the most important stakeholders of all.

Charters and moves to define rights: rights of access to transport

The increasing use of charters which set standards which providers are expected to meet may improve services. For example, health services have to report on the average length of time patients wait before being seen for appointments. Agreeing standards and how they are to be measured is one way of improving services. People with community care needs either make use, or wish to make use, of the full range of types of transport. However, there is much debate about what types of transport should be made available. One main area of contention is the extent to which transport should be treated as a universal, accessible service or specially tailored for, and targeted on, people with particular needs.

In 1988, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) recommended that a comprehensive list of design features, which would help eliminate many of the physical difficulties faced by older and disabled people using buses, should be introduced by all public transport bus operators by 1997. Important improvements include low floors to allow easy entry and exit, and bells within easy reach. But vehicles are built to last for many years and profit margins in the industry are often low. These realities discourage operators from replacing old vehicles with new accessible models. Without enforcing legislation, it is likely to be many years before all unsuitable buses are replaced.

Age Concern and other groups have called for the implementation of mandatory access standards for all public transport vehicles, starting with the DPTAC standards for buses. They also argue that the design of future stock should take place in consultation with older and disabled people and organisations representing them.

New ways of costing

Accessible transport can reduce the need for other forms of support such as day and domiciliary care. Money spent on ensuring people have the ability to get around may lead to savings in other budgets, such as health and social services. An overall enhancement in quality of life can influence health, confidence and motivation. Rather than a 'vicious circle' of loss of mobility, frustration, isolation, increasing dependence on others and ill health, a 'virtuous' circle of health and social gains can be initiated by an improvement in transport.

Current systems of separate budgets make it hard to get agreements to create 'virtuous' circles. However, society is beginning to realise the consequences of providing services without considering the social and transport elements. The impact of out-of-town shopping centres, re-location of large hospitals on the outskirts of the city and the closure of small local facilities within walking distance has been particularly hard for older people and non-car owners. As this concern grows, it is likely that there will be increasing pressure to include transport impact analysis and transport costs in planning new services and service changes.

New ways of getting user feedback are being used

It can be difficult to get feedback from users, especially when they are benefiting from a service for which they are not directly paying. Stoicism and straightforward appreciation for what is provided can be gratifying for services providers but more (constructively) critical comment is valuable when evaluating services and planning improvements. Older people may feel particularly vulnerable when being asked to comment on domiciliary services staff who come to care for them at home.

Many commissioners and providers are realising that using longer one-to-one interviews, arranging focus groups or holding meetings where older people are encouraged to talk give a more vivid picture of how older people really experience services and what changes are needed.

It is the responsibility of service providers to develop appropriate methods for gathering feedback from users. Given the concerns of many older people around providing feedback, the approach to gathering information should emphasise confidentiality and anonymity.

Bibliography

Accessibility Guide – A guide to transport service information for those with mobility problems, London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, February 1994

Age Concern: Fact Sheet – Travel information for older people, Astral House, May 1994

Briefings: Age Concern England – Needs of Older People, Information and Policy Department, Astral House, November 1992

Comparing Public Transport Experiments – A guide for standard evaluation schemes, Institute of Transport Economics, Norwegian Centre for Transport Research, 1993

Co-ordinated Planning of Accessible Transport, The Department of Transport, June 1992

Kent County Council Social Services – Services for Kent's elderly people 1988–1990

'Mobile Orderly Day Care Unit', *Nursing the Elderly*, January 1990

Moving Forward – Towards an accessible transport system, Association of Metropolitan Authorities, 1994

On The Move – Transport, mobility and older people, Age Concern, Astral House, 1994

Richmond Accessible Transport Study, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Planning, Transport and Client Services, 1994

Support Network for Older People – A guide for practitioners, G. Clare Wenger Centre for Social Policy, Research & Development, University of Wales, Bangor 1994

Survey of Elderly and Disabled People: Cross-sector benefits, London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Accessible Transport Study, Cranfield Centre for Logistics and Transportation, Cranfield University, 1994

'Tea and Sympathy on Wheels', *Health Services Journal*, January 1990

'Volunteers Make Ripon Community Care Work', *Health Service Journal*, January 1990

Contacts

Guide Information Service

Information about health, disability and community support services in Gloucestershire – a free and confidential service.

Contact: Main Reception, Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.
Tel: 01452 331131

Richmond Accessible Transport Study

This leaflet provides a summary of the results of comprehensive research into co-ordination of accessible transport.

Contact: The Director, London Accessible Transport Unit, Britannia House, 1–11 Glenthorne Road, London W6 0LF. Tel: 0181 741 8363

Tripscope

A nation-wide travel and transport information service for people with mobility problems. Offers assistance with any aspect of travel, whether planning journeys involving private motoring or public transport.

Contact: Jim or Adrian, The Courtyard, Evelyn Road, London W4 5JL
Tel: 0181 994 9294 Fax: 0181 994 3618

The London Lowfloor Bus Project

Trials of these new low-floor buses are taking place on routes in London, Liverpool, Whitley Bay and on Tayside, and are designed to provide more convenient user-friendly transport.

Contact: London: The Lowfloor Bus Project. Tel: 0171 918 4183

Community Volunteer Transport Scheme, Woodside Health Centre Croydon

This scheme offers patients transport to health clinic by car on a weekly basis. It was nominated for the *Health Service Journal* health management award 1990 based on the creative nature of the project and its importance as a way of reducing patient isolation and maximising staff resources.

Contact: Muriel Plescence, Co-ordinator Woodside Health Centre.
Tel: 0181 656 0213

Facts & Figures

The 1986 General Household Survey found that in the country as a whole 87% of people aged 65 and over were physically able to go out on their own.

The 1992 Family Expenditure Survey found that only 42% of pensioner couples and 9% of single pensioner households mainly dependent on state pensions had a car, compared to 67.6% of all households.

Pensioners are over-represented among the poorest households. 53% of pensioner households (3.6 million) depend on state pensions and benefits for at least 75% of their income. 14% of pensioner households (552,000) are entirely dependent on state pensions and benefits.

Of people aged 50 to 74, 46% of women and 24% of men are regular bus users. Of people 75 and over, around one in three uses buses on a regular basis.

Pensioners' bus passes and other concessionary schemes reduce the impact of fare increases on many retired people. This probably explains why there has been no reduction in bus use for the 60 and over age group, while for all other age groups there have been marked decreases.

Use of concessions by pensioners was highest in London Boroughs at 82%.

In 1989 nearly half of all pedestrians killed on the roads were over 60 (842 deaths) with the risk increasing sharply over the age of 70. Pedestrians aged between 70 and 79 are three times more likely to be killed on the roads than other adults.

Walking accounts for a third of all journeys made in Britain – after the car, it is the most important mode of transport for older people.

Only 3% of people aged 50-74 travel by train once a week or more, while 63% never or rarely do so. 91% of people over 74 use the train twice yearly or less. Only 10% of pensioner households own a cycle and cycling mileage by pensioners has halved between 1975/6 and 1989/91.

Disabled people with mobility assistance are two-and-a-half to three times more likely to own a car than those not getting assistance.



King's Fund



54001000717291

Voices of experience...

'The driver jerked the bus and I fell over – I hadn't even got a seat! That was two years ago and I haven't used a bus since.'

'PlusBus is really a plus! I visit my sister every week now.'

'I don't think it should cost more for a cab from home than hailing one in the street – but it does.'

'The trouble with Taxicard is that I have to wait downstairs in the hall, otherwise they just sit outside for two minutes then drive off again. They never knock.'

'On my hospital days I spend most of my time waiting. They are very good there but it usually takes about five hours – just for a ten-minute appointment.'

'Some drivers are helpful. Occasionally you get one who's in a mood – I get worried they won't give me enough time to get off.'

'We have the same volunteer drivers every week. They're always so pleasant. Nothing's too much trouble, that makes a big difference.'

'The ambulance service is good although we go all round the houses. It usually takes over an hour though the hospital is barely a mile away; and it's often late.'

'They rebuilt the tube station but I still can't get down there with the wheelchair'

This handbook was commissioned by the London Health Partnership for use by groups who wish to address a concern about transport.

- Part 1 describes how to make the most of the transport that is available;
- Part 2 suggests how to get a local transport scheme started;
- Part 3 provides background information of interest to providers as well as users.

Although the workbook has been designed for use in London, groups in other cities will find Parts 2 and 3 directly useful and may find that Part 1 provides a valuable framework for organising their assessment of transport provision in their own city.

The London Health Partnership is an alliance of charitable foundations, business interests and government, formed to generate a distinctive programme of work which will promote the development of urban primary health care. The focus of its work is the well-being of elders in cities, particularly through the delivery of services in and close to their homes.

The London Health Partnership has brought together, in a series of 'Whole System Events', a rich mix of people concerned to improve the well-being of elders – including elders themselves, carers and people working in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. At these events people have worked together and explored the common ground, the areas of shared concern around which they are prepared to work to create the future. After the events people have chosen to continue to meet together, as self-organising groups, to work in new ways and take the concerns forward in their locality.

About the authors

Andrena Cumella, Liz Haggard and **Peter Martin** work for the Office for Public Management. The Office was established in 1989 as an independent centre to develop management thinking and practice in health services and other parts of the public and voluntary sectors. It offers organisational consultancy, social and market research and management education programmes.