TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE
INFORMATION RESOURCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Department for Transport
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Government's Equality Strategy sets out a vision for a strong, modern and fair Britain. It is built on two principles of equality – equal treatment and equal opportunity.

The Equality Act 2010[1] which underpins the Strategy, contains provisions to implement a ban on age discrimination in the provision of services and the exercise of public functions. In addition, the Public Sector Equality Duty (S.149 Equality Act 2010), which came into force on 5 April 2011 requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work in shaping policy and in delivering services.

The growing ageing population means that there is a continued need to help older people to age well and attain a better quality of life through local services.

Research, including that by Help the Aged (Help the Aged and Age Concern have now amalgamated to form Age UK) [2], identifies a number of transport barriers that older people face when undertaking journeys, both on foot and by public transport. These include physically inaccessible transport vehicles, the pedestrian environment, safety concerns, and attitudes of transport staff.

Local Transport Plans (LTPs), and accessibility planning in particular, provide local authorities with the opportunity to tackle these barriers in a clear and systematic way. Any improvements will benefit not just older people but improve access for many other members of the community. Meeting the accessibility needs of older people is not just a transport issue. It will require a number of key service providers, within an authority and outside it (such as the voluntary sector), to work in partnership to deliver innovative solutions.

The challenge to local authorities is the Government's priority to drive down the country's budget deficit and build economic growth. The Localism Act 2011 contains a range of measures to devolve more powers from the centre back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils, freeing local government to deliver services according to local needs. In addition the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, underpinned by the Creating Growth Cutting Carbon White Paper, will help to stimulate more sustainable modes of travel at a local level and initiatives to improve integration between travel modes and end-to-end journey experiences as well as better public transport.

The opportunities offered by the Big Society agenda shifts power to communities and to volunteers giving communities more influence over issues like housing, planning, schools and transport, potentially providing more effective and tailored services for local people.

This guide aims to signpost transport planners to existing resources, information and practices, with examples of tailored transport solutions around the country. Not all the examples provided are directly targeted at older people, but this group will be one of the biggest beneficiaries.

There are a number of funding streams which local authorities can use to improve accessibility. Not all of these will necessarily be transport funds, as the benefits of

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[1] http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx
[2] http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/transport/id5969_travel_access_and_older_people_a_review_of_local_transport_accessibility_planning_2006_pro.pdf?dtrk=true

improved accessibility impact on many other areas e.g. health, social services, employment, housing. More information on funding can be found at:
Funding Streams

The information provided is structured around the barriers of affordability, accessibility, availability and acceptability. It is intended to keep this resource updated on a regular basis. If there are any further useful web links or examples you think should be included, please contact Sally Thomas at the Department for Transport (DfT) on 020 7944 2552; email to: Sally.Thomas@dft.gsi.gov.uk

AFFORDABILITY

Concessionary travel

Free off-peak concessionary bus travel throughout England gives the opportunity for greater freedom and independence to around 11 million older and disabled people in England. The concession guarantees free local bus travel for eligible older and disabled people, from 9.30am until 11pm on weekdays, and all day at weekends and bank holidays.

The concession recognises the importance of public transport for older people and the role that access to affordable transport has to play in tackling social exclusion and maintaining well-being. Follow the Directgov link for more information:
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/BusAndCoachTravel/DG_10036264

Previously the eligible age for concessionary travel was 60 years of age. However, since 6 April 2010, the age of eligibility for concessionary travel in England has been tied to the pensionable age for women. So, as the pensionable age for women gradually increases from 60 to 65 so too will the age of eligibility for concessionary travel increase for both men and women. The age of eligibility for concessionary travel is therefore:

For women = pensionable age
For men = pensionable age of a woman born on the same day

It was announced in the Spending Review 2010 that the Government plans to speed up the alignment of the pension age so that the pensionable age for women will now reach 65 by 2018 instead of 2020 as previously planned. Furthermore the pensionable age for both men and women will now rise to 66 by 2020. The age of eligibility for concessionary travel will increase in line with these and any other future changes to the pensionable age for women.

Many local authorities offer discretionary concessions over and above the statutory minimum. Local authorities are best placed to know about local needs and circumstances, including what discounts local operators offer at their commercial discretion. These enhancements are not part of the statutory minimum and must be funded from an authority's own resources.

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Examples of the types of discretionary concession that some local authorities offer are:
- o companion passes for those who are unable to travel alone
- o free travel on other modes of transport where buses are limited or scarce
- o extension to the time restriction to allow travel in peak periods

Improving take up

The England-wide national bus concession scheme has been successfully implemented by local authorities. However, there may be scope for raising people's awareness of their eligibility for the pass.

Improved facilities to assist boarding and at bus stations can encourage older and disabled people to take up the bus pass. Mersey travel Centres at its bus stations are fully accessible and fitted with induction loops for hearing impaired passengers. In Merseyside, **Easy Access** buses display stickers at the front by the door with symbols which tell passengers whether the bus is a low floor design, able to kneel at the kerb for easy boarding with wide doors and extending ramps and space for wheelchairs. The Guide also lists all of the bus services available in Merseyside. http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/information_access-guide.asp

Local authorities may wish to consider and put in place, if necessary, further information on bus services, particularly in rural communities where there may be older residents who may be dependent on cars and are not aware of existing local bus services.

Whilst research has shown that awareness of concessionary travel is relatively high, awareness of community transport solutions available to older people, such as dial-a-ride services, Taxicard schemes and discount coach and train cards can be low. Local authorities might look at opportunities for promoting these services.

Other concessions

There are a number of other concessions specifically for older people; in particular, those offered by rail companies. The Senior Railcard offers older citizens up to a third off all rail travel. Local authorities can direct people to the Direct.gov website for more information: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/ConcessionsAndOtherHelp/DG_10026819

The National Rail website can help people locate the cheapest rail fares: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/purchasing_tickets/ticket_types.html

In addition, disabled people in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) are eligible for a number of concessions including: the Motability Scheme (which allows eligible people to obtain contract hire or hire purchase car, powered wheelchair or scooter); Blue Badge scheme;

and exemption of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and toll crossings. DLA contributes towards the extra costs faced by severely disabled people who claim help with those costs before the age of 65. Once awarded, DLA may continue in payment after the age of 65, if the entitlement conditions continue to be met. Local authorities can direct citizens to the Directgov website for more information.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOther Support/Disabledpeople/DG_10018702

The Government has confirmed that it will be replacing DLA for people of working age (16 – 64 year olds) from 2013 with a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment. The Department for Work and Pensions is designing an assessment that will treat people as individuals and consider the impact of their impairments or health conditions on their everyday lives. For further information on the proposals for PIP and how they may effect the passporting concessions currently available under DLA please see the following link on the DWP website:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pip

Multi-use of smart cards

All of the English concessionary bus passes issued to people who have reached the pensionable age for women are ITSO[3] smartcards. It is possible to add non-transport functions onto the cards, for example functions that allow use of leisure centres, libraries and other services.

In Bracknell Forest, people over 60 can use the same card to get access to library services, bus services and sports clubs for free, and get discounts from over 100 local businesses. An added benefit is that eligible residents do not need to travel into town to register for a pass, as was the case previously. Instead, it is possible to register for any service that is available on the cards at any local location that uses them. This is a benefit for people with mobility problems, since it reduces the need for long journeys.

Derbyshire has a similar scheme, which offers discounts at over 1,400 local businesses. Access to library services is included on the cards automatically and 20,000 residents registered for the library as a result. The card, combined with a communication strategy including a magazine and regular roadshows, has helped to improve participation levels in local services. Derbyshire County Council is looking for opportunities to expand the cards to include, for example, cycle hire or DVD rentals, as well as Government entitlements.

As part of the DWP Ageing Society Programme, the Active at 60 smart card project aims to promote engagement and activity among over 60's by including access to additional services on the existing travel concession card. Southampton City Council hosted a trial to test this concept.

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[3] ITSO is an interoperable standard for smartcards which can be encoded to allow the same card to be used for a variety of services.

Data collected can be used to help Local Authorities to plan and deliver services more effectively. The ultimate aim for the project is to develop a business case that encourages Local Authorities to adopt this approach where appropriate.

Services offered by the **Southampton City Council** trial included:

o an online registration system for application and renewal that aimed to encourage participation and improve access;
o using outreach registration in libraries and sheltered housing to target the hardest to reach groups - mainly ethnic minorities, as data shows that their take-up of cards is low;
o using smart card technology in related activities – for example in conjunction with GP referrals for exercise and rehabilitation classes.

The trial ran until 31 July 2011.

AVAILABILITY

All local authorities will be focussing on measures to improve efficiency and delivery. There are already a number of tools and initiatives to help local authorities get the best value for money from their transport networks and assets, as well as helping them to develop the best possible local transport systems for their areas taking into account the needs of older people and the potential transport solutions. The web-based Policies and Good Practice Handbook http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/localtransportsplans/policies/index.html

issued alongside the Local Transport Guidance contains examples of good practice guidance.

Under the Coalition Government's commitment to localism the Department will not intervene in the way local authorities review their progress against Local Transport Plans (LTPs) or require reports or reviews. While local authorities had a statutory duty to produce LTPs by April 2011 it will be for them to decide how to implement and use them.

It is critical that transport and spatial planning are closely integrated. Both need to be considered from the outset in decisions on the location of key destinations, such as places of work, healthcare facilities, education, food shops and leisure facilities, to help reduce the need to travel and to bring environmental, health and other benefits.

Accessibility Planning

Accessibility Planning is a way of assessing more systematically whether people can easily get to destinations that are important to local residents. This requires working in partnership with others such as Primary Care Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local education authorities, local Learning and Skills Councils, and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Mapping and needs-based evidence can help identify particular accessibility problems. Solutions might include changes to the location, design and delivery of non-transport services, as well as tailoring of transport services themselves. More information on accessibility planning can be found at the following site:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/accessibility-planning-guidance/

Help the Aged (now called Age UK)'s publication '*A Review of Local Transport Accessibility Planning*' (2006) highlights how collaborative working between key service providers can help with making services more accessible: http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/transport/id5969_travel_access_and_older_people_a_review_of_local_transport_accessibility_planning_2006_pro.pdf?dtrk=true

Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Councils were awarded Beacon status in the 2008/9 round for Improving Accessibility.
The following site provides information on work they have done to advance accessibility (e.g. improving access to healthcare and healthy lifestyles) for many groups, including older people: http://www.thebigwheel.org.uk/beacon/index.html

Integrating services

One way of improving the availability of transport services is through pooling resources. A number of unitary authorities and County Councils in England have established Integrated Transport Units (ITUs), for example, which bring together the planning, procurement and delivery of all passenger transport services across a range of services in a local area. Guidance on how to set up an ITU has been produced by the North West Centre of Excellence: http://www.nwiep.org.uk/media/13251/integrated_transport_unit.pdf

Most of these ITUs integrate local bus and mainstream school transport functions, and in some cases social services and/or special needs education transport. However, these sections generally remain outside the unit.

Some authorities have sought greater vehicle efficiencies through looking at co-operation with NHS Trusts and other transport providers to better manage their social services and non-emergency healthcare transport.

'Vehicle brokerage' will maximise each vehicle's revenue earning potential, by allowing the council and community transport groups to 'sell' the time when a vehicle is not normally used. This in turn will contribute further to the key aims of ensuring accessibility to services for local residents by using community transport, whilst achieving cost efficiencies and service improvements.

Total Transport

'Total Transport', published by *pteg* looks in more detail at the potential of this kind of cross-sector working to deliver better outcomes for communities through the sharing of resources and expertise: http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/E963D5DA-346A-4CBA-B7DB-569488F07AF7/0/20110627ptegTotalTransportforWebFINAL.pdf

Other authorities have looked at efficiencies in procuring taxi services for education and social care related transport - the North West Centre of Excellence has produced a taxi toolkit looking at this issue: http://www.nwiep.org.uk/media/34172/taxi%20toolkit.pdf

In 2010 DfT published a guidance document with a number of case studies to assist local authorities and NHS agencies on the benefits of integrating the organisation and procurement of transport provided for patients and clients across various sectors, including community transport in developing Integrated Transport Units and it detailed various approaches: http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/localtransportsplans/policies/communitytransport/transportinpartnership/.

'*Door to door journeys by public transport*', looks at how travel by public transport can be improved by looking at the whole journey from end to end, Produced by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), this report highlights a number of measures which have been taken to improve the integration between rail and bus services. This includes better signage, travel information, integrated ticketing, and getting transport services to connect with each other and interchange infrastructure improvements: http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/690.pdf http://www.cpt-uk.org/_uploads/attachment/691.pdf

West Yorkshire's Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) 'Metro' has developed a partnership bus service with Kirklees Council, which combines an enhanced journey to school for pupils with special educational needs together with a new, accessible, neighbourhood bus service.

MetroLocal services operate school transport services in the morning and afternoon peak, and during the day are designed to provide safe, reliable and accessible transport links to local health, community and shopping facilities.

> The services have been developed as a partnership with the local authority and local area committees, and aim to improve the quality of life for local residents, particularly those of advanced age, restricted mobility and parents with young children.

Community transport

Community transport is local passenger transport provision which is organised on a non-profit basis by voluntary organisations, community transport groups, and other non-statutory bodies. Community transport can be flexible and demand responsive, so it is ideal for dispersed rural communities, where buses have fewer passengers and destinations can be more diverse.

With this aim in mind, there is a permit system: Section 19 permits allow non-profit making organisations to carry passengers for hire and reward, but unlike section 22 permits do not allow them to carry the general public. Section 22 community bus permits allow organisations to run a local bus service on a voluntary non-profit basis.

Permits are issued under section 19 or 22 of the Transport Act 1985 allowing transport operators, subject to certain conditions, to operate Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) without the need for a PSV operator's licence.[4]

Section 19 and 22 permits are issued by DfT's Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) on behalf of the traffic commissioners. Section 19 permits for vehicles adapted to carry no more than 16 passengers can also be issued by 'designated bodies'[5]. These are listed in secondary legislation[6] and include local authorities along with individual not-for-profit organisations such as Age UK.

The Community Transport Association (CTA)[7], is a national charity representing and promoting community transport. The CTA provides its members with advice and support to develop and deliver services with the aim of affecting social change in their communities. The CTA would be a suitable point of contact for local authorities wishing to engage with the community transport sector.

As a result of actively seeking views from the community transport sector, and others, a wider range of vehicles can now be used under section 19 permits; rural and isolated communities can now benefit from the section 19 permit regime; and section 22 drivers can now be paid. Feedback from the community transport sector on these measures has been extremely positive and indications are that the changes should help the sector to expand[8].

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[4] VOSA's publication PSV 385 details can be found at: www.vosa.gov.uk
[5] Bodies designated in an order made by the Secretary of State, or Welsh Ministers, under section 19(7) of the Transport Act 1985
[6] See the Section 19 Minibus (Designated Bodies) Order 1987, (S.I. 1987/1229, amended by S.I. 1990/1708, S.I. 1995/1540 and S.I. 1997/535).
[7] http://www.ctauk.org/
[8] Changes came into force April 2009 and can be found at:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/365/pdfs/uksi_20090365_en.pdf
And http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/366/pdfs/uksi_20090366_en.pdf

It may be possible to reduce the need to travel. Solutions may not be just transport–based e.g. co-ordination of opening times or relocation of services might be just as effective as alteration of bus-route timetables.

DfT has published community transport best practice guidance for local authorities preparing local transport plans, which was updated in March 2011[9]. The guidance accompanied a £10 million Supporting Community Transport Fund, which was distributed to 76 rural local authorities in England designed to kick–start and support community transport in their areas; a further round of the Supporting Community Transport Fund will be paid in March 2012.

Case study: Rural Social Enterprise Programme

Aim: To encourage a more sustainable model of community transport and promote local networks

DfT is one of three funding partners working with the CTA and the Plunkett Foundation to support the development of rural social enterprise in community transport; the programme was launched by the CTA in Autumn 2009.

The programme will offer development support and a grant or loan funding package for up to eight rural organisations, or partnerships of organisations, around England. The funding has allowed these organisations to recruit a member of staff to work specifically on building up contract income over a three year period. This is intended to encourage a more sustainable model of community transport, making groups less reliant on grant funding, for the benefit of both providers and users.

Local Authorities and Community Transport

Co-operation with local authorities is an important source of funding for many non-profit-making transport providers and DfT encourages this model of working. The potential benefits, both in cost saving and improved services, should make the inclusion of community transport at the very outset of planning local transport a very real consideration.

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[9]

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna/20110131045005/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/localtransportsplans/policies/communitytransport/

Community transport can, for example, provide potential benefits to both rural and patient transport services:

Case study: West Midlands Special Needs Transport (WMSNT)

WMSNT is the largest provider of door-to-door transport services in the UK.

The Ring and Ride service is available to any individual living in the metropolitan West Midlands, who suffers a permanent or temporary disability, which makes it difficult or impossible for them to use conventional public transport.

WMSNT also operates a "home to school" transport service on behalf of a number of local authorities for children attending special educational needs schools.

Much of the charity's annual income (approximately 72%) is provided in the form of a grant from the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, which largely funds the Ring and Ride service. Most services are operated under a section 19 permit; however, the group also holds PSV operator licences for contracts, the income from which subsidises the charity's core activities.

The charity employs some 700 staff, with around 390 vehicles in 8 depots, and nearly 80,000 registered users.

Website: http://www.wmsnt.org

DfT understands how community transport, and in particular door-to-door (often termed dial-a-ride) services, are not only used to connect older people with essential medical services but also to provide a link to community groups allowing individuals to extend their social network and thus improve their quality of life.

Case study: Surrey County Council's Transport Co-ordinating Centre

The Transport Co-ordination Centre (TCC) was set up in 2006 with the aim of becoming a "one stop shop" for all the County Council's transport requirements. The TCC currently provides transport for Mainstream and Special Educational Needs, home to school transport, some ad-hoc social care transport and transport for unaccompanied children as well as emergency bookings. It also regulates operator Criminal Records Bureau checks and operator permits and licences.
There is a well advanced plan for a joint commissioning arrangement between Surrey County Council and Surrey Primary Care Trust for Non-Emergency Patient Transport services with a key focus on involving community transport.

There is also potential to form partnerships with the community transport sector and neighbouring authorities to create a Transport Social Enterprise in Surrey.

It is important that local provisions are decided upon and managed locally, with central Government providing a breadth of tools for local authorities to utilise. The Local Transport Act 2008 strengthens these 'tools'.

The Local Transport Plan guidance highlights the opportunity for local transport authorities to involve community transport in the development and delivery of their transport plans and policies.   Chapter 4 of the guidance states: *'Creating and improving partnerships can also facilitate successful outcomes. Local transport authorities may, for example, wish to consider working closely with their area's local and regional voluntary and community groups, and with local businesses, to utilise their on-the-ground expertise and mobilise their staff resources to help develop best practice transport delivery'.*

It is often the case that community transport organisations are not familiar with approaching local authorities, and frequently their voice is not heard; smaller groups can also find tendering criteria leaves them unable to bid for contracts. As a result, their experience of bidding for local authority contracts, and presenting comprehensive business plans, can be limited.

However, this should be seen as an opportunity to approach and involve community transport providers with the aim of developing their skills and delivery experience for the mutual benefit of all. The majority of community transport projects are registered charities, often manned by volunteers, and frequently face the difficult task of obtaining funding for their intended services.

Door-to-door transport

The Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG) published a report on Transport and Social Inclusion in May 2010:
http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/570FF969-98D6-4C06-B9DB-9837A732E835/0/ptegTransportandSocialInclusionreportMay10.pdf
in which a number of door-to-door schemes featured. Examples include:

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) – Local Link

TfGM run 30 Local Link services across the metropolitan area. Local Link is a 'many-to-many' service - residents in the areas where the service has been introduced can use Local Link to travel from door-to-door to and from any point within a defined geographical area.

The services provide a vital lifeline for many people and enjoy high levels of passenger satisfaction. Research into just one of the Local Link services, for example, found that a quarter of passengers would have been unable to make their journey if the service ceased, a worrying statistic given some 65 per cent of

journeys made using the Local Link were to key health facilities, fresh food shopping and employment.

Improving Connectivity and Mobility Access (ICMA) project

A common priority for municipalities and transport authorities in North West Europe (NWE) is to support each link in the mobility chain so that there is an effective alternative to travel by private car.

The ICMA project aims to significantly influence modal choice at the beginning and end of a journey, so reducing the environmental footprint of transport. It also aims to provide accessible solutions where and when they are needed, fostering equitable and socially inclusive transport for all. The project aims to see more sustainable and competitive transport provision on the first and last miles, which meets citizens' expectations in NWE. More information on the project is at: http://www.icma-mobilife.eu/

Rural transport

The number of older people in rural areas in England has increased at a faster rate than in urban areas, particularly those aged over 85.

 A lack of frequent, accessible public transport is a particular concern for people living in rural areas. It may, therefore, be necessary to consider alternative transport solutions and innovative means of service delivery to help maintain access to key health, shopping and leisure facilities.

Rural proofing

Rural proofing involves assessing how policies will work for rural people and places thereby ensuring policies are implemented fairly and effectively. In any policies or services being developed, due regard should be given to rural areas. The Government remains firmly committed to the importance of rural proofing all policies and programmes. It is currently reviewing the proofing guidance and intends to produce a refreshed package of material in due course. In the meantime, the rural proofing kit published by the Commission for Rural Communities in 2009, remains available to help and support policy-makers. This can be found at:
http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/policy/influence/index.htm

Community transport schemes may have a particularly important role to play since they are demand-responsive, integrate services, and/or make better provision for the end to end journey.

The Government announced £10m in March 2011 for rural English local
authorities to kick-start community transport in their areas.

In addition, the Department for Transport in partnership with the Community Transport Association will provide each of the 76 rural local authorities in England with £2,600-worth of consultancy advice on how to establish, manage and make sustainable community transport operations within their area. There is the option for local authorities to supplement this with their own funds to receive further services.

The DfT has worked with Local Government Group to develop some good practice guidance on delivering transport solutions in rural areas, (http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=15947041). The guidance complements earlier efficiency work concerning the development of Integrated Transport Units, and the improvement of partnership working between local authorities and health agencies to help deliver non-emergency health transport. http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=15947980

The following are examples of successful rural demand responsive schemes.

Lincolnshire InterConnect

The Lincolnshire Interconnect / CallConnect service is a network of connecting local bus services designed to improve public transport links to destinations throughout Lincolnshire, making travel by bus easier, quicker and more efficient. All InterConnect routes have a high frequency of service with modern, low-floor vehicles.

CallConnect forms part of the Interconnect bus network and is a public bus service that operates only in response to a pre-booked request (on a 'dial a bus' basis). Most CallConnect services are fully flexible and are operated by modern fully accessible minibuses. Anyone can use CallConnect for any purpose such as shopping, medical appointments, work, training or just meeting friends. In most cases CallConnect will pick up and set down at designated locations in each village or town. Passengers with a disability or those living in more isolated locations (where there is no natural pick up point) can be picked up and returned to their home address, if it is safe and practical to do so.
http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/section.asp?catid=1981&docid=35955

The **Norfolk Integrated Transport Model (ITM)** covers health, social care and wellbeing. Commencing in 2002 with 3-year funding from DfT, the service now better meets the needs of eligible passengers, particularly those in areas of rural isolation or social exclusion. Working closely across multiple organisations the model has:

- Streamlined the booking and journey service for passengers by providing one central booking centre and one contact number;
- Provided direct referral for health or social service passengers eligible for free transport;

- Introduced a central pool of drivers from local services and voluntary organisations, and achieved sustainability by pooling partnership funding.

The project completes some 800,000 client trips annually and, from 2008 onwards, it is envisaged that the project will save around £230,000 per annum.

One Stop Shops

A number of local authorities provide 'one stop shops', where local residents can talk to advisors on a range of issues e.g. housing management, environmental services, and disabled parking. This service may be of particular importance for older people in rural areas. Examples of One Stop Shops include Lutterworth, Leicestershire http://www.onestopshop.org.uk/ and Burgess Hill, Sussex http://www.burgesshill.gov.uk/Helppoint

Taxi sharing and taxibuses

It is now possible for taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs - minicabs) to offer more flexible services. The Transport Act 1985 contains powers which allow taxi and PHV proprietors in England and Wales to provide services where passengers pay a separate fare (rather than the exclusive fare normally associated with taxi/PHV travel). A local authority can, for example, introduce a taxi sharing scheme where passengers can board a taxi from a designated rank and they each pay a fare to the driver. A taxi or PHV operator can marry-up two or more passengers who pre-book a cab and are travelling in the same direction; each passenger would pay his or her own fare for the journey. Taxi and PHV proprietors can acquire a special restricted public service vehicle (PSV) operator licence allowing them to use their taxis/PHVs to provide local bus services which must be registered with the Traffic Commissioner.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Department for Transport research into the travel needs, behaviour and aspirations of people in later life[10] identified the most dominant factor affecting transport use is health status rather than age. Access to key services remains the priority for people in later life eg access to food shops is recognised as important in terms of access to a choice of fresh, healthy and affordable food which contributes to quality of life.

Accessibility covers all aspects and features of the journey, including logistical and disability aspects and from home to the bus stop. Consideration of the end to end journey, therefore, is just as fundamental as any obstacle or barrier on that journey (e.g. uneven pavement, lack of seating and absence of toilets) can undermine an older person's willingness to travel and impact on their quality of life.

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[10]http://www.dft.gov.uk/rmd/project.asp?intProjectID=12238

A 2008 study by the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University identified the measures that could eliminate many of the day-to-day problems that currently deter older people from using public transport and the pavements and roads in their locality. Examples of potential measures include:
 1 Provision of road crossings at a greater number of wide or busy junctions.
 2 Provision of road crossings that allow pedestrians a longer time to cross.
 3 Designing bus interiors to ensure secure handholds are provided in the wheelchair and buggy storage area.
 4 Designing bus stops to ensure people sitting down inside them can easily see when their bus is coming without repeatedly getting up and down to check.
 5 Introducing a system of accredited standards for taxi companies, to reassure older people that they will only be taken to their destination via the most direct route.

Accessible design of small buses

In the absence of regulatory guidance, the DfT's Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee has produced the following document to promote good practice and to encourage and sustain improvements in the design and development of suitable small bus vehicles (designed to carry 9 to 22 passengers): http://dptac.independent.gov.uk/pubs/smallbus2007/index.htm

Improving access at rail stations

The Department for Transport is providing funding, through the Access for All Main Programme, for an obstacle free, accessible route at selected stations, to and between platforms serving passenger trains. 153 stations have been included in the programme so far.

The Department for Transport also recently announced £37.5m of "mid-tier" Access for All funding for station access projects requiring between £250k and £1m of Government funding. Up to 160 stations will benefit from a variety of improvements including lifts and ramps, platform edge tactile paving, accessible toilets and "easier access" humps to reduce the stepping distance between platform and train.

Funding to support smaller access enhancements reflecting local priorities will continue, with up to £7m a year of Access for All Small Schemes funding allocated to train operators based on the number of stations they manage.

Further details of station access improvements are published on the Department's website at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/topics/access/rail/rail-stations/

Each train operator is required to produce a Disabled Person's Protection Policy, available at stations and on their websites, that sets out the facilities and services available to passengers with mobility and other impairments.

The Department also publishes "Accessible Train and Station Design for Disabled people: A Code of Practice" that sets out European and domestic standards as well as good practice for meeting the needs of mobility, visual, aural and other impairments when carrying out work on their facilities.

Accessible taxis

The Equality Act 2010 introduces provisions that will prevent licensing authorities from refusing licences to wheelchair accessible taxis, on the grounds of controlling taxi numbers, if the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles operating in the area is below a prescribed amount. Licensing authorities can currently cap the number of taxi licences they issue if they believe there is no unmet demand in the area. This means that even if they have few or no wheelchair accessible taxis operating in the area, but there is no unmet demand for taxis generally, they can refuse to license a wheelchair accessible vehicle. These provisions aim to prevent this and encourage an increase in the proportion of wheelchair accessible taxis. The Government is still considering its commencement strategy.

Street lighting

Good quality street lighting can reduce the fear of crime, lessen light pollution and contribute to a safer night time environment for everyone.

33 street lighting Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) are now operational. Each enables local authorities to carry out vital improvements and maintenance to their street lighting.

PFI credits support the capital element of the project. They are funded through revenue support which is paid as Special Grant and calculated according to a formula set out in the Special Grant Report. Details of the Special Grant Report can be found on Department for Communities and Local Government website.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localgovernmentfinance/pupprivatepartnership/centralgovernment/

Future bidding rounds will be subject to the outcome of future Spending Reviews.

Walking and cycling

Walking accounts for just under 25% of all journeys, and nearly 80% of journeys less than a mile. The Government wants walking to be easier, more pleasant and safer. This is because walking is good for people and communities. Streets are safer with people in them and walking can be an important contribution to maintaining health. Walking is also an essential part of most public transport journeys.

Older people may be more reliant on their local neighbourhood than others in the community, especially with regards to shopping and services. Walking and

cycling could be an important way to travel these potentially short distances, and have additional health benefits too. However, older people may be more liable to injury if they trip, fall or are involved in collision as a pedestrian or cyclist. Local authorities should therefore ensure that their roads, footpaths and other walkways are designed with the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in mind and are as well maintained as possible in order to prevent unnecessary falls and injuries.

Pedestrian environment

Any design of residential streets should consider and complement actions as set out in the Department for Communities and Local Government's Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Communities Strategy on housing for an ageing society. http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/lifetimehomesneighbourhoods

Home Zones

Home Zones are residential areas with streets designed for very low vehicle speeds which better suit the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. They are particularly suited to improving the neighbourhood environment for children and older people. The aim is to change the way streets are used in order to improve the quality of life. Home Zones provide scope for social activities such as people chatting or children playing, to take place in street space formerly considered to be almost exclusively for vehicles.

Modifications to the layout of the street should emphasise this change of use, so that motorists understand the need to share the street with other road users. This is achieved by creating an environment which encourages very low vehicular speeds. This natural traffic calming effect is realised through, for example, the placing of parking bays, street furniture, planting, or children's play equipment etc; to create indirect routes through the area, and shortened driver sightlines.

Good and effective consultation with all sectors of the community is important and can help ensure that the design of individual Home Zones meets the needs of the local residents. Further information on Home Zones can be found at:

http://www.homezones.org

The Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers issued *Home Zone Design Guidelines* in June 2002. These guidelines provide practical advice to those involved in the design, planning and implementation of home zones, drawing together good practice in the UK and abroad. Copies are available from:

http://www.homezones.org.uk/public/guidance/index.cfm

Home Zones - Challenging the future of our streets was published by DfT in Nov 2005 (printed Mar 2006). It disseminates good practice in Home Zone design

and scheme development, drawing particularly on the experience gathered from the Home Zones Challenge. It complements the Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers' (IHIE) Home Zone Design Guidelines published in 2002. Copies are available from:

http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/localtransportsplans/policies/publicspaces.html

Pedestrian Crossings

Some older people are unaware of how different pedestrian crossings work and believe they must finish crossing while the green man remains lit. However, the green man provides an invitation to cross and the ensuing flashing green man or blackout provides the remaining time to complete crossing. Local authorities may wish to consult their communities when installing new crossings to ensure a better understanding of pedestrian crossing systems.

Puffin crossings can be of much help to older pedestrians as they can automatically extend the time available to allow slower pedestrians to finish crossing. Local authorities may wish to use these systems at sites where there are likely to be a higher number of older and disabled pedestrians.

Tactile paving should be provided at all controlled crossings to assist people with visual impairment - see *Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces*.

Local authorities may wish to consult their communities when installing new crossings to ensure a better understanding of the different types of pedestrian crossings.

More advice and information on pedestrian crossings can be found at:
Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/05: Pedestrian Facilities at Signal-Controlled Junctions
http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/tal/

Local Transport Note 1/95: The Assessment of Pedestrian Crossings and
http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/local-transport-notes/ltn-1-95.pdf

Local Transport Note 2/95: The Design of Pedestrian Crossings
http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/local-transport-notes/ltn-2-95.pdf

The Department for Transport has developed a toolkit for Local Authorities and Road Safety Officers, which provides them with the tools they need to spread the word about Puffin crossings throughout their communities, via community centres, local councils, libraries, schools etc. The kit includes a new leaflet, two posters, a Puffin Crossing Good Practice Guide and two DVD's – one for adults and the other for children (aged 9-10). This can be obtained free of charge from our distribution centre (Tel. 0300 123 1102). Puffin Good Practice is easily accessible using the following link:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tss/gpg/puffingoodpracticeguide.pdf

Car use

The natural ageing process increases the risk of developing certain medical conditions that may affect an individual's fitness to drive. There is no age limit for holding a driving licence but a process of renewal is in place in recognition of this risk.

Driving licences expire at the age of 70 and need to be refreshed at a maximum of every three years thereafter. At each renewal, applicants must, by law, declare whether or not they have any relevant medical condition and that they can continue to meet the eyesight standard. Failure to complete the declaration honestly is an offence and may invalidate motor insurance.

If a motorist declares a medical condition, an investigation is carried out to determine whether or not they should hold a driving licence. DVLA meets the cost of the investigation which may include gathering information from the driver and their doctor. Where appropriate, a medical examination or a driving assessment may also be requested. Drivers are advised to seek the advice of their doctor on whether it is safe for them to continue to drive while the DVLA is conducting its investigation.

For many older people, driving or travelling as a passenger, can be a lifeline to maintaining their independence and preventing isolation. An appropriate balance, therefore, needs to be made between mobility and road safety, with older people being supported to continue driving for as long as it is safe for them to do so.

Some local authorities have introduced their own older driver assessment and training initiatives through their road safety officers. It would be helpful if these schemes went on to support older people in moving on to alternatives when driving is no longer an option.

Mobility Centres

Local authorities may also wish to consider how they could work with mobility centres which have been set up, often by voluntary sector organisations, in response to perceived local need. DfT supports a number of mobility centres in England which provide advice to drivers and car passengers who are having difficulties with getting in/out of a vehicle, controlling the car or who are concerned about their driving ability. These mobility centres focus on people whose mobility is impaired by a medical condition or disability. Information on local mobility centres can be found at www.mobility-centres.org.uk.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency recognises that changes in the population's health and medical advances all mean that the demands on the health and driver licensing system are very different to those of 30 years ago when it was established. They are considering carefully the issues and examining opportunities for change.

Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems (as either a driver or a passenger). On 14 February 2011, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced wide ranging reforms to modernise the scheme, and on 1 January 2012 the Blue Badge Improvement Service was launched by the Department. The measures tackle rising levels of fraud and abuse, and ensure both that badges are issued more fairly and that the scheme remains sustainable in the long term for those disabled people who rely on it most. The Blue Badge Improvement Service offers the secure printing, supply and distribution of a new Blue Badge, a common store of key information on badges and badge holders, a web-based management information system for local authorities, and a national online application form available via Directgov at www.direct.gov.uk/bluebadge . The reforms will deliver the most comprehensive changes to the Blue Badge scheme for 40 years and almost all of the reforms have been implemented within the year. Details of the changes can be viewed on the DfT website at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/topics/access/blue-badge/reform-of-the-blue-badge-scheme/

Further information

A range of information on driving and mobility, including driving concessions available for eligible, disabled drivers through Disability Living Allowance, can be found on the Direct.gov site at:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/index.htm

Car sharing and car clubs

Car sharing is giving someone a lift or sharing a car to travel together, either as an informal arrangement, perhaps with friends or family, or via a formal car sharing scheme.

Car clubs are a form of local short-term vehicle hire, providing access to a vehicle for occasional use. Car clubs may be a formal scheme organised by local authorities or organisations, or a more informal arrangement between friends or within a neighbourhood (often called a social enterprise car club).

Both car sharing and car clubs can help to alleviate the effects of congestion, pollution or cost associated with single occupancy car use. They can also provide a way to increase the travel options, improving accessibility, for example, with the start and end of journeys and reducing social exclusion.

Car sharing can be an effective method of travelling for older people, and may be particularly suitable in rural parts of the country. Car sharing organisations are usually free to join for members of the public, and can help to find someone travelling on the same route via a website. Local authorities can also often

22

arrange car sharing services through these companies. Some organisations offer other features on their sites, for example Liftshare.com offers a 'cost calculator' illustrating how much money a person can save by car sharing, and can also help find a 'BUDi' for their walking, cycling or taxi journey www.liftshare.com.

Another option which may be available is a car club; these may be commercial operations (usually in towns) or social enterprise/not for profit organisations. Car clubs allow quick and easy access to a car for short term hire, allowing people to make use of vehicles as and when they need them. It avoids the expense of owning a vehicle for those who only need a car on an occasional basis.

Generally, anybody with a full valid driving licence can join a commercial car club and make use of the vehicles. Informal or social enterprise clubs may differ. An individual with use of a car can also consider offering their services as a volunteer driver. HM Revenue & Customs provides information on how much mileage an individual is able to offer before tax is due: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/mileage/volunteer-drivers.htm

Many local authorities already provide good information on car sharing and car clubs schemes available in their local areas. However as there are still a number of people, including older people, without access to the internet, local authorities may wish to consider making car club and car sharing information available in other formats, to ensure maximum use by potential beneficiaries of these options. For example, car club and car sharing schemes could be included in information about local services, placed in libraries, GP surgeries, and other publicly accessible places, and also marketed as part of general information about local services (such as posters or booklets).

The Department for Transport's website contains links to further information about car sharing and car clubs:
http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cars/index.html. Information is also available on Directgov:
www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Greenertravel/Greenercarsa nddriving/DG_10036310

The Department for Transport has published good practice guidance in Making Car Sharing and Car Clubs Work:
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable /cars/makingcarsharingmarch2005.pdf

The Carplus website http://www.carplus.org.uk/ provides information on car sharing and car clubs and links to existing local and national organisations.

Mobility Vehicles

Mobility vehicles help to provide independence for people with reduced mobility.

There are two distinct types of powered mobility vehicles; the powered wheelchair and the powered mobility scooter. Mobility vehicles are further divided into 2 classes. The 'Class 2' type can travel at speeds up to 4mph and is primarily intended for use on the pavement (but can be used on the carriageway to cross the road or if there is no pedestrian footpath present). The 'Class 3' type can travel at speeds of up to 8mph and can be used on both pavements and the road. They must not exceed 4 mph when used on the pavement. Both classes of vehicle can be used in other pedestrian environments (including shopping centres).

Class 3 vehicles have to be registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) because they are designed for use on the road as well as the pavement. They need to be registered for road use, licensed in the disabled vehicle taxation class and display a nil duty tax disc. (Further information can be found at http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/vehicles/invalid_vehicles.aspx?ext=dg).

People may use wheelchairs (whether manual or powered) on buses, trains or taxis if those vehicles are constructed or adapted to carry a "reference wheelchair". A reference wheelchair is one that complies with the following basic dimensions: an overall width of 700mm, length of 1200mm and height of 1350mm. These dimensions are based on the international wheelchair standard and are bigger than the majority of wheelchairs. Some lighter models of mobility scooters are accepted on some public transport vehicles, **but people should contact their local transport operator to check.**

The Confederation of Passenger Transport has published a non-statutory Voluntary Code of Best Practice for bus operators regarding the use and acceptance of mobility scooters on low floor buses adapted to carry wheelchairs http://www.cpt-uk.org/index.php?fuseaction=newsevents.details_news&news_id=720

It is not mandatory to undertake training or to take out insurance to use a mobility vehicle, although both are strongly recommended.

People using powered mobility vehicles for the first time, or those who have not driven on the road for some time, should undertake some training. They should also consider having an eyesight check. Further information is available from local Disabled Living Centres or Mobility Centres (call free phone 0800 559 3636); from local 'Shopmobility' schemes see: http://www.shopmobilityuk.org/ (for further information on Shopmobility see under travel information section) or from local authorities or local police services.

People should also consider taking out insurance cover for personal safety, for other people's safety and for the value of the vehicle. It should not be assumed that household insurance provides cover to use vehicles on the public highway.

ACCEPTABILITY

A person's ability and willingness to be able to use transport can be undermined by a range of issues, such as poor staff attitudes, concerns for personal security and safety, unfamiliarity with what is available, the first and last mile of journeys and a lack of information on how to use the transport system.

Personal Security and Safety

The walking and waiting parts of the journey can be where passengers feel most at risk, particularly at night. Car drivers may also feel insecure using less well-managed car parks. To improve personal security across the whole transport journey, effective partnership working will be needed.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) can work with the transport sector to help tackle crime and anti social behaviour across the whole journey. DfT guidance on this can be found at:
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110503180952/http:/www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/crimedisorderpublictransport?page=1#a1000

Local Authorities may wish to work with their local rail and underground station operators to obtain accreditation under the Government's Secure Stations Scheme for stations within their local authority boundary:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/sss/securestationsscheme?page=2#a1001

The Secure Station Scheme is directed by DfT and the British Transport Police and sets strict criteria for station design and management to prevent crime. To gain accreditation, crime statistics need to show that crime is being managed at the station and a survey of users must reveal that, on the whole, passengers feel secure using the station.

First TransPennine Express (FTPE) committed at the start of its franchise to make its station facilities as secure as possible through investment and initiatives. FTPE has invested £5m in CCTV and passenger help points across 30 stations and has continually supported colleagues with customer service training to equip them to deal with difficult situations and protect vulnerable passengers. Station posters and information points encourage customers to report crime and security concerns either direct to the business or via British Transport Police (BTP) and Crimestoppers.

All of FTPE's 30 managed stations have been accredited to DfT's Secure Station Scheme, a scheme that assesses the safety level of individual stations. Improvements made through this scheme have ranged from building maintenance to improved technology and staff training and awareness. The success of the 100% accreditation, the first new Train Operating Company to achieve this, is fundamentally down to partnership working with colleagues, industry partners and BTP. The support of the BTP Crime Reduction Officers has been vitally important.

FTPE sponsor additional BTP Police Community Support Officer staff and these officers have a very visible presence on the network. FTPE further supplement this with accredited security officers who perform a static and travelling role across the network. They primarily target anti-social behaviour.

FTPE is determined to reduce crime on its stations and will always assist customers who have been victims of crime by providing CCTV to support investigations and prosecutions.

Local Authorities can also seek accreditation under the British Parking Association's Park Mark Safer Parking Scheme for the car parks they own or manage: http://www.saferparking.com/

Tyne and Wear's 'Nexus' – safety on the Metro
Nexus have taken a number of steps to improve passenger safety on the Metro system. All stations are monitored 24 hours a day by digital CCTV. Over 550 cameras cover the entire Metro network including platforms, station approaches, subways and car parks. Nexus are now investing £0.25m to extend digital CCTV to all Metro trains. The CCTV is complemented by the presence of dedicated Travel Support Officers, who patrol the network, as well as a blanket ban on alcohol to reduce disorder, in place since 2004. Nexus report that the expansions to CCTV coverage have given them, and the police, detection rates above the force averages for Northumbria Police and the British Transport Police who cover the Metro system.

Transport for Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Travel Safe Scheme
Greater Manchester's dedicated Bus Watch Specials, who have been tackling crime and anti-social behaviour on the bus network for over two years, are expanding and will now also cover the region's growing Metrolink network. Established in April 2009, the Bus Watch Specials scheme is a successful public-private partnership between Greater Manchester Police, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and bus operators, Stagecoach Manchester and First in Manchester. Since its inception, the initiative has reduced crime and anti-social behaviour across the region's bus network as well as providing a reassuring uniformed presence on passenger services and at bus stations. Now, under the new name Greater Manchester Travel Safe Scheme, the initiative has expanded to include Metrolink services.

Falls on Buses
Falling on buses is a concern for older people. Research commissioned by Age UK shows that over 800 older people per day fall on a bus and nearly two million are concerned about falling while a passenger. First Group have supported the focus on falls on buses by producing safe journey cards:
http://www.firstgroup.com/safejourney

Travel Training and Mentoring

Travel Training schemes can help instil the confidence and skills in individuals needed to travel on public transport. This may be particularly important for those older people who have given up driving for health reasons and are embarking upon using public transport for the first time or following a long period of absence. The following DfT website link provides some information on a number of travel training schemes around the country and details of guidance: http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/inclusion/tts/

Local authorities may wish to encourage travel ambassadors and mentors. Transport for London, for example, offers the Travel Mentoring Service to disabled Londoners who want to broaden their horizons and make use of the many mainstream accessible public transport options now available. https://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/gettingaround/dialaride/travelassistance.asp

Nexus – Partners in Travel "buddy service"
The "buddy service" funded by Nexus provides training for adults with learning disabilities who live in Tyne and Wear. Nexus work in partnership with all local authorities in Tyne and Wear. Training is provided in personal safety, in following directions, road safety and getting on the right bus or Metro.

Bridge Card
Nexus also operate a Bridge Card scheme for people who have difficulty using public transport because of age, disability, illness, or simply because they lack confidence to make a journey. The card does not entitle people to a concessionary or discount fare but when shown to transport staff, they will recognise that the person may need extra help during their journey. Bridge Cards are available from Nexus TravelShops, day centres, libraries or local authorities.

Staff attitudes and training

The Conduct of Drivers, Inspectors, Conductors and Passengers Regulations impose a duty on coach and bus staff regarding the safe travel of disabled passengers. The Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DriverCPC) is an initial qualification for drivers entering the bus industry which they must complete in order to drive professionally. All professional or vocational bus and coach drivers must undertake periodic training in order to maintain their Driver CPC.

Training is available for taxi drivers, which has led to improvements in skills such as customer service standards and disability awareness. Many thousands of drivers have undertaken this training across the country.

The Equality Act 2010 places duties on drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) that are designated as wheelchair accessible, to provide assistance to passengers in wheelchairs to get into, and out of the vehicle, and carry them in safety and comfort. The duty to assist will apply to the driver of any wheelchair

accessible taxi or PHV that appears on a licensing authority's designated list. The Government is still considering its commencement strategy.

GoSkills is the Sector Skills Council for passenger transport. Their mission is to work with employers UK-wide to improve the skills that make a difference to the performance of the passenger transport sector. Information on National Occupational Standards, training courses and other training material can be found at http://www.goskills.org

Mystery shopping can help to improve customer service across the public transport experience. In West Yorkshire, mystery shopper exercises are regularly carried out at Metro's Travel Centres and through calls to the MetroLine service, to ensure the highest standard of customer service is being provided.

Provision of better information

Many local authorities and all Passenger Transport Executives offer a wide range of transport information for their residents. However, information provision is not consistent across the country. Poor information, especially regarding accessible transport options, can be a barrier to older people with mobility problems. It can also mean that services are not used as much as they could be, potentially threatening the viability of the service.

Provision of information on the web or in a variety of other formats, for example, in large print (leaflets, printed timetables, in timetable displays provided at bus stops and shelters) can improve access to information and, therefore, transport for many older people.

Audio-visual announcements

Audio-visual announcements are already a requirement for all new trains.

While there are systems in place on buses in some regions (e.g. London), they are not available everywhere. DfT is currently researching audio visual announcements on buses - which can assist in making journeys easier for older (and disabled people). DfT will be issuing guidance in this area in due course.

Talking bus stops are for blind and partially sighted passengers who use a battery-operated key fob which alerts them when they are near one of the talking bus stops. The bus stop gives them details of which services are due, and where they are going to http://www.journeyon.co.uk/talking-bus-stops.asp

Metro – Talking timetables

West Yorkshire's Metro has developed an automated talking timetables voice system giving people access to real time and scheduled departure information over the phone, in addition to the current SMS (Short Messaging Service), web and WAP (mobile internet) services.

Nexus – Talking signs

In early 2009, Newcastle City Council became one of only twelve local authorities to introduce the React system of talking signs using technology created by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) in partnership with the manufacturer SFX. RNIB React enables blind or partially sighted people to get around independently. It helps the person confirm where they are and to make choices about where to go next. Speakers fixed to a lamp post, wall or ceiling, announce a pre-recorded message when triggered by an electronic fob which users carry. It can tell the person where they are and can also give them other information such as where to board a train, location of exits, and where the lift or travel shop is located.

Twenty of these units have been installed at two of the busiest stations on the Nexus Metro system – Haymarket and Monument. Located in the heart of Newcastle City Centre, they are used by more than 16 million passengers annually. These are complemented by a further 17 units on city centre streets with 3 more leading to the Royal Victoria Infirmary Hospital eye clinic. Funding for the signs is from Nexus, Newcastle City Council and the European Social Fund.

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) – Hospital route maps

TfGM produces guides to accessing each of Greater Manchester's hospital sites. The guides include details of key stops along the bus routes calling at the hospital including approximate travelling times between each key stop and the hospital. Each guide also contains a detailed map of the hospital site with departments, as well as bus stops, highlighted.

http://www.tfgm.com/content.cfm?subcategory_id=6114863&library_category_id=539010

Other useful national sources of travel information include:

Transport Direct (http://www.transportdirect.info/): the award-winning site reached a milestone one hundred million user sessions in 2010-11 since its launch and provides journey planning and travel information for both car and public transport journeys, plus find a place, and live travel news across Great Britain. In addition to the journey planning, the on line portal includes information

on car sharing, Park and Ride, motoring costs and car park location data. Information on CO_2 comparisons is also available, as well as a cycle journey planner covering all of England. Transport Direct is also available via Digi TV on Virgin Media and the BBC red button in collaboration with Looking Local. This is aimed at sections of the community that do not have computer access. The Looking Local site can be found at the following link: www.lookinglocal.gov.uk/site/tour

The **National Rail Enquiries** website; providing a host of information, including the facilities at stations, local transport links, and travel assistance for disabled passengers: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk

The **Shopmobility** website offers information on the type/location of Shopmobility schemes that exist around the country to help people with mobility problems shop and use the local area's facilities (usually through providing wheelchairs and mobility scooters): http://www.shopmobilityuk.org/