

**Research Project into
Unmet Transport
Needs in Rural
Pembrokeshire**

**Pembrokeshire County
Council**

Final Report

	ASK Consulting and Alyson Jenkins Consultancy Ltd

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1. Introduction

Purpose of Research

ASK Consulting and Alyson Jenkins Consultancy Ltd. were commissioned to undertake research into the Unmet Transport Needs in Pembrokeshire. This was to look primarily at particular groups in rural communities who had been identified as disadvantaged and vulnerable.

The increased cost of running a car and limited public transport provision have led to difficulties in accessing services for rural households and there are particular problems for those who do not have the use of a car. These include many older people (and those who are frail or disabled), and young people, for whom it is often difficult to get access to training and job opportunities – or even to enjoy a night out with friends. A great deal of research and work has been done previously by PACTO (Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations) and the study used this as background.

In order to find out about the issues and access information about people's experience an intensive period of consultations, which included visiting groups, face to face interviews, telephone interviews and also door to door and street conversations took place between September and December 2011. An area south of Fishguard was identified in which to conduct the fieldwork. As well as considering the experience of Pembrokeshire residents, strategic and operational issues were looked at through consultation with voluntary organisations and statutory services providing support to vulnerable groups within the community as well as organisations providing Community Transport and the wider statutory transport sector.

This study will be used to inform the development and marketing of these services, and also to focus the development of innovative new community transport services as part of Pembrokeshire Advance's Access to Services project, funded by the Rural Development Fund for Wales 2007-2013.

The findings are presented for the different groups consulted and the report provides evidence of barriers to the uptake of services, an outline marketing strategy and a database of those organisations and individuals in the county that have been consulted. It concludes with recommendations based on the evidence gathered.

Outline of Current Position

Pembrokeshire is a mainly rural county with the majority of its population living in 5 main settlements: Fishguard, Haverfordwest, Milford Haven, Pembroke and Pembroke Dock.

Car ownership varies across the county with the lowest levels being the larger settlements such as Haverfordwest and Pembroke Dock. Areas that are more remote and further away from key services have a higher level than the rest of the county meaning that those who live in these rural areas are heavily reliant on the car as their main means of transport.¹

The county has a population that year on year is getting increasingly older due to significant increases in 55 + persons and decreases in a number of younger age groups. There was a 21.2% increase in 55+ and 16.0% fall in 25-39 yr olds between 1999 and 2009. This trend is not expected to reverse. As the population gets older, more people will become vulnerable and will find transport an issue, particularly those living in areas that are distant from key services. It is likely that this section of the population will also need to access services more.

Public Transport

In general, public transport within and on the main routes between the towns is relatively good, with hourly or better services Monday to Saturday. However, the more rural areas of the county have either poor service provision, often restricted to certain days, or no service at all. Services in these areas generally provide links to and from the main towns only and there are no links between distant rural areas. According to the 2003 Local Bus Strategy, 43% of Pembrokeshire's rural population do not have access to a daily bus service.

On Sundays and in the evenings, many routes have either poor service provision or no service at all.

The coastal bus services provide enhancements to the network, particularly during the summer.

Taxis

Currently there are approximately sixty small commercial taxi firms in Pembrokeshire, with around 160 licensed Hackney Carriages and 30 licensed Private Hire Vehicles. These however tend to be sited in the main settlements and there are few firms based in rural areas.

¹ Pembrokeshire County Council Headline Facts 2010:
<http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2%2C101%2C126%2C649%2C1497>

Patient Transport Services and the Hospital Car Scheme

Transport to hospital appointments is provided for people who are medically unfit to travel to hospital by other means. This includes a hospital car scheme, run by volunteers using their own cars.

Community Transport²

Pembrokeshire currently has a number of community transport schemes. Bookings for Community Transport are coordinated through the council where two people work part time. They take bookings for: Town Rider, WRVS Country Cars, Dial a Ride and Minibus Match. Community Transport provision includes:

Social Car Schemes: WRVS Country Cars and RSVP Cars for Carers. These provide eligible Pembrokeshire residents, who do not have access to a car or public transport, with transport through a network of volunteer drivers.

Community Dial-a-Ride schemes: (Bloomfield Bus based in Narberth, Green Dragon based in Bwlchygroes, and Manorbier CTA's service to/from Manorbier School). These provide transport, generally from rural areas not served by public transport, into town or to access local services.

Community minibus hire schemes (Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport, and other community and local authority owned minibuses in their down time). Minibuses are available for use by community groups, who are usually required to provide their own driver. There was until recently limited coordination of community minibus hire services across the county, however this has been addressed by the Minibus Match initiative.

Schemes provided by Private Sector: Neyland Dial-a-ride and Town Riders.

² A full list of Community Transport Organisations and their offer can be found in Annex 1

2. Methodology

Research and in particular a study that includes hard to reach and vulnerable groups is a specialised process requiring a clear sense of both what is being assessed and what information will need to be collected.

For this study we used a mixture of research methods that we felt were appropriate to the research questions and appropriate to the groups and individuals that we consulted with.

In discussion with Pembrokeshire County Council it was agreed that the research would concentrate on an area in the North East of the county that is very rural and that has not been consulted with before on transport issues. This area includes the towns and villages of Letterston; Little Newcastle; Puncteston; Fishguard and Newport.

Desk Research

Before beginning the consultation it was necessary to undertake a review of available background documents relevant to the research including previous studies and reports that had been produced relating to transport in Pembrokeshire. This gave the study team a context in which to begin working and also ensured that we did not duplicate any work that already been undertaken.

Consultation with Key Stakeholders³

The purpose of this phase was to consult with key stakeholders who either work with vulnerable groups in the area or who provide transport to them. These stakeholders fell into 4 categories:

- Organisations who work with groups in Pembrokeshire
- Organisations providing Transport Services
- Operational
- Strategic

Consultation with Hard to Reach and Vulnerable People

Many groups and individuals face social exclusion and are vulnerable due to a range of factors. People from the following groups have been included in the study:

- Young people
- Parents of young children
- Lone parent families
- People with learning disabilities
- Older people (particularly all pensioner households and those who do not or no longer drive)

³ A full list of organisations that have been consulted with can be found in Annex 2

- Carers
- People with physical and sensory impairment
- People with mental health issues
- Unemployed people and those on low incomes, particularly people living in no and one-car households.

A mixture of consultation methods was used. Where possible we attended existing group meetings and spoke to as many attendees as possible. During this phase of the research we undertook the following:

- Focus groups with young people, older people, people with disabilities
- Visiting groups such as Mother and Toddlers, Friendship Circle, Luncheon Club
- Telephone interviews with Stakeholders, Volunteers and Individuals
- Face to Face meetings with Stakeholders
- Visits to rural locations, including door to door interviews
- Followed mobile library to speak to users
- Questions added to Age Concern telephone call to gain the views of older isolated people
- Visited 50+ Life Event

The following table shows a detailed breakdown of the consultation methods that we have used during this research and the number of people consulted with.

Consultation method	Group	Number of Consultees
Telephone Interviews	Stakeholders	42
	Volunteers	7
	Transport Users/ Hard to Reach People	8
Focus groups	Young People	28
	Young People with Disabilities	17
Visits to Hard to Reach Groups	Fishguard Friendship Circle	45
	Letterston Luncheon Club	24
	Newport Day Centre and Care Home in Fishguard	8
	Eglwysrwr Mother and Toddler	13
	Puncheston school (parents)	5
	Fishguard Family Centre	10
Visits to events	50+ Life Event	-
Visits to rural locations	Puncheston, Little Newcastle, Letterston	23
Mobile Library	Users on route	11
	Total	241

3. Research Findings

Older People

This is the largest group of vulnerable people in Pembrokeshire. We spoke to many groups and individuals and Age Concern asked questions on our behalf as part of their regular Care Calls.

Key Findings

- Older people want to access a wide range of services, everything from the doctor, hospital, social groups and events such as lunch clubs, learning opportunities, keeping fit and leisure facilities. They need to be able to travel to do so.
- The general lack of public service buses and the long distances to get to bus stops in rural areas were a major issue amongst this group.
- Many older people in rural areas rely on family and friends for a great many of their transport needs. They rely on them to get to health appointments where public transport is not available.
- Visiting loved ones in care homes or hospital was raised as a major issue.
- Attending hospital appointments outside the county is difficult; this problem will increase as more services are relocated.
- Long journeys can be a problem for those with certain medical conditions.

*“The able will always manage.
The ones nobody sees are the
main problem”*

District Nurse

*“I live in Crundale and yes we
have problems – there is a bus
twice a week”*

Older Person

- There is a lack of awareness of community transport amongst those working with older people and general awareness was very low.
- Evening services were highlighted as an issue. The towns are well served by Town Riders but the services do not run after 6pm.
- Older people wanted recognition that they need to get out as this benefits their health and well being, particularly people living on their own.

Young People

Young people are more likely to not own a car; they rely heavily on parents and parents of friends. The young people we spoke to saw transport as a very big issue in their lives. We consulted with youth workers delivering support in the area and with young people through visiting groups.

- A general lack of buses and irregular services was highlighted as an issue.
- Lack of transport in the evenings was one of the most commonly raised issues.
- Young people walked a great deal and this can be dangerous at night. This was of concern to them and to youth workers.
- Young people in rural areas experience difficulty accessing health appointments.
- Participation in social activities and their ability to access other opportunities is restricted due to lack of transport in some areas e.g. where only two buses a week run to the nearest town.
- Young people find it difficult to go to the cinema or concerts as travelling home afterwards is not possible on public transport.

“Goodwick to Fishguard is not far but it is dark and a long way to walk in the winter alone – it is dangerous”

Youth Worker

“I am unemployed so can’t afford to drive my car – so can’t get to places to look for work – a vicious cycle.”

Young Person

- Going out and getting ‘stuck’ i.e. not being able to get transport home was a concern for young people.
- Cost is an issue for young people with transport becoming more expensive. Bus journeys are seen as expensive and learning to drive and running a car is a prohibitive cost for many.
- Lack of transport limited young people when it came to finding work. They were often unable to undertake work experience. Life opportunities were limited by lack of transport in some areas.
- They felt that most opportunities were in the south of the county and required a long bus journey (up to 2 hours) from the North East.
- Pembrokeshire College provides transport, but accessing any other training is difficult.
- Some young people live in rural areas where they are up to 3 or 4 miles from a main bus route.
- The young people that we consulted with were not at all aware of any Community Transport available in the county.

People with Mental Health Issues

MIND offers many services in the county. The workers and clients at the Resource Centre in Haverfordwest acknowledged the difficulties faced by those living in rural areas and away from main bus routes.

- Transport is important to this group because it allows them to mix with others, seek voluntary or paid work or access support - all of which aid recovery.
- With services being located in the south of the county problems are encountered by those living in the north east when trying to access support.
- Even though eligible for bus passes some do not have one as they find the application process difficult. There is also an element of stigma attached to using a bus pass for them.
- Lack of transport at weekends was highlighted as an issue. This affects not only those suffering from mental health issues but also their carers.
- Lack of evening buses to rural areas was also highlighted.
- There were issues raised regarding Ambulance Cars, particularly around drop off and pick up times which are set in blocks so that people do not have a set pick up time and they are often left hanging around for hours after hospital appointments. This level of uncertainty can have a negative impact on their health and creates problems for staff who have the added responsibility of caring for people while they wait.

“They just don’t come in. Nobody from the North of the county comes down to the centre; it is impossible as the journey is too long”

Mental Health Professional

“Many journeys have been aborted recently; clients cancel because of the problem with no set time.”

Mental Health Professional

- There is a pilot project being delivered by MIND through PVT where they are able to define pick up times with the client. This is happening in the south of the county; the north still has no such provision.
- Staff working directly with clients had a low level of awareness of community transport provision.

Young People with Disabilities – Physical and Mental

On the whole, the issues faced by this group are the same as for other young people in the county. However, many young people with disabilities have more complex needs and in Pembrokeshire there is a forum which gives them a voice. We visited and consulted with young people and workers at the forum.

- Confidence is the main issue for this group. They often lack the confidence to travel alone especially if they have had a bad experience.
- Some young people are independent and use buses, they rely on them; others meet up to travel together on buses; some use taxis but accessibility (wheelchairs) is often an issue.
- Many need to be accompanied on journeys. Most rely on parents and carers to drive them about.
- Accessibility on public transport has improved but there is still work to be done as officers, staff and young people told us.
- What they have difficulty accessing is transport for social opportunities. Often the social aspect of life is not seen as a priority but it is vitally important.
- Accessing work opportunities can be even more difficult for this group.
- Timetables are not easy to read. Digital displays and audio on public buses were welcomed as a good idea for helping those with either learning difficulties or/and visual or hearing impairments.
- Attitudes and prejudice cause problems and were a great barrier to travelling. There were stories of drivers who were insensitive and unhelpful and buses that did not stop for a girl in a wheelchair. They complained of disabled spaces often being taken up by non-disabled people on buses.
- The general unreliability of buses and taxis was raised and this can be more of an issue if you have a disability and have to wait for hours for transport.

“The main issue that this group has is confidence and also confidence issues for their parents.”

Youth Worker

“If I worked in town - would not be able to get there without my parents driving me. If you got a job you would be stuck for transport.”

Young Person

Disabled Adults

For many of the people interviewed from this group, their experiences were similar to those of older people.

- Minibus Use - Groups in the county such as the Stroke Club in Letterston use the PVT bus. They rely on volunteers to help out.
- The Town Riders and WRVS Country Cars are used a great deal, mainly for shopping and appointments at the doctors.
- People are mainly driven around by carers, spouses and neighbours.
- Groups (such as stroke clubs and the visually impaired) have minibuses that pick them up and take them to regular social gatherings. Accessible vehicles are essential for transport services for disabled people and not all buses were adequate according to some.
- Many people need assistance when travelling either from a carer or the use of a guide dog.
- If people are facing social exclusion health and social services refer people to voluntary organisations or other departments in the council who then arrange transport alongside the services they provide.
- Visually impaired people have added barriers in accessing transport, as there are no audio signals/assistance on buses in Pembrokeshire.
- Even though WRVS Country Cars are seen as excellent, access to their service is limited as they can only offer one journey a week and the biggest gap is during out of hours/evenings/weekends.
- The shortage of drivers for WRVS Country Cars especially over the last few months was noted and this is an issue for concern. Lack of provision was distressing for those who had doctor appointments and again neighbours and family came to the rescue.

“Community Transport in the county is brilliant for our client group especially for those who can get concessionary rates.”

Visual Impairment Team

“People round here can’t do enough for you”

Older Person

- Emergency transport is an issue as you have to book RSVP Cars for Carers two days in advance.
- One of the biggest gaps is people being able to access social, cultural and leisure opportunities as this is not seen as priority.

Carers

The carers that were consulted with are elderly and frail and so many of the issues and challenges they face are the same as for other older people, however some are exacerbated by the extra responsibility of caring for a family member.

With an aging population, the number of older carers will also be increasing. We are aware that there are also a large number of younger and young carers within the county however during this consultation interviews were only undertaken with older carers.

- Unpaid carers are 10-15% of any population.
- As the carers who were interviewed are elderly and frail they rely heavily on family and friends but also make use of community transport.
- Carers mostly use our community transport to attend doctors/health visits/support and strategy meetings.
- Awareness of what is available was relatively high amongst those interviewed however; overall there is a need for getting information out to carers on what support they can access.

“We have also taken people to visit family in hospital/church. I would also take them to visit friends for a coffee, etc”

RSVP Cars for Carers

“Most don’t know what help is out there for them. Many don’t want to identify themselves as needing help – very independent”

RSVP Cars for Carers

- All those interviewed felt that a comprehensive booklet would be the most useful way of getting information

Transport Providers and Co-ordinators in Pembrokeshire

Consultations with Transport Providers and Co-ordinators highlighted the same issues that arose when consulting with the other groups. Everyone seemed aware of the barriers facing people and the gaps in provision and they offered suggestions for improving the situation.

- The community/ personal aspect of Community Transport is valued. There are many volunteers working tirelessly to ensure people are included in their communities, can access services and have quality of life.
- Older people are the main user group at present.
- The main issue is lack of funding and resources. The aim is to ensure that Community Transport is more sustainable in the long term.
- Transport provision needs to be coordinated through more strategic partnership working and collaborations with the health service (primary health practices and hospitals), with youth provision, education and training, environmental and cultural and leisure facilities, services and organisations.
- There are many successes in Community Transport in Pembrokeshire with some services being sustained past their initial funding streams. Even though numbers are small, people are very reliant on services.
- Marketing and Communications -Providers were aware that this was an area that needed to be looked at strategically. They felt word of mouth; leaflets and going to event and shows and giving talk were what they did best.
- Weekends and evenings are a challenge because of the lack of volunteers at these times. Also no services at Christmas and over bank holidays.
- Providers such as the Green Dragon Bus offer social outings and these are appreciated by people who might not otherwise get out. Many of the journeys are for coffee mornings, to clubs and meetings on a weekly basis.

“Carers mostly use our service to attend doctors/health visits/support and strategy meetings. But we have also taken people to visit family in hospital/church.”

RSVP cars for Carers

“We run a trip to the Cinema in Cardigan on a Sunday which is very well used and trips out once a month”

Green Dragon Bus

- There is now a shortage of volunteer drivers and this seems to be because of the increase in petrol costs and the resulting financial implications.
- In theory RSVP Cars for Carers and WRVS Country Cars work across the whole county but they need volunteers in an area to make it work.

Health

This study is not looking at transport provided by the Health Service but inevitably there is a great deal of cross over and many people across all groups spoke of hospital appointment and other related issues around transport and health.

- Most people relied on family, friends and neighbours to get them to health appointments.
- Transport is one of the 6 key priority areas for the Health Board, particularly non-emergency transport including voluntary transport for the community and vulnerable groups such as the elderly.
- There is a network of organisations in the voluntary sector that identify themselves as having an interest in health and well being issues – 160 covering a wide range of people and issues such as carer groups, disability, children and young people MIND, Age concern etc. This is facilitated through PAVS.
- Currently transport is provided by the Welsh Ambulance Service for emergency and stretcher transport, also car transport through a booking service for those who are eligible.
- There is a high demand for Hospital Cars in Pembrokeshire as residents are used to having a good service with a good volunteer base of drivers in the ambulance service and as a result the health board get more people using the service and coming from Pembrokeshire.
- Travelling across county boundaries for appointments was an issue.

“I don’t know how they would cope without their families – when they live in such isolated areas without cars”

District Nurse

“We utilize services in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion as well, we work across boundaries and this can sometimes be difficult “

Hywel Dda Representative

- A big issue is visiting loved ones in hospitals and nursing homes.
- Access is a big issue - Community Transport must be accessible. There are a couple of good taxi firms with access but it is limited.
- Many need support getting in and out of vehicles and also company on journeys.
- Cost is an issue as taxis are expensive.

Culture & Leisure

Accessing leisure facilities and participating in the social and cultural life of the community all contribute to well being and are important parts of civic society. Socialising and attending cultural events is not always seen as a necessity and it is felt that Community Transport has tended to concentrate on journeys for health reasons.

- Not being able to access health and fitness services and facilities was an issue.
- Lack of evening buses is a major issue and it has affected attendance at the theatre, cinema and other events.
- In Fishguard, Elderscreen has recently started. It has two volunteer drivers and a minibus that goes round to pick up points around the town and its local environs offering free transport to a film screening or social event. The awareness and information for these is well coordinated
- People often don't consider culture and leisure activities as 'worthy' of accessing community transport for.

"It would be good if they could book a bus (the young people) to go out of an evening - the taxis are too expensive."

Resident

Community and Miscellaneous

The majority of people in rural areas use cars and many feel they would be “stuck” without one. In Pembrokeshire there is a great deal of community spirit and good will as well as a stoic attitude which sometimes results in people not asking for what they need or making their views heard.

- There is a great deal of community spirit and good will in rural areas of Pembrokeshire and a stoic attitude.
- Many people help their neighbours and friends who don't have access to transport or who have issues such as ill health.
- Many people volunteer on schemes such as the Good Neighbours Scheme or are voluntary drivers for Community Transport or Hospital Cars.
- There is a thriving voluntary sector offering services to all sectors of the community.
- Many people that we interviewed were grateful for the services provided. Community Transport was praised by those who knew of it or who used it. WRVS Country Cars, Town Riders and minibuses for voluntary groups were particularly mentioned in positive terms.

“We have always made do; there have never been many buses out here.”

Resident

“It is cheaper to use the car, I was disappointed about this- when I moved here I wanted to use the bus to and from work, but it was impossible.”

Resident

- Issues of lack of transport and the length of time journeys take, bus changes and irregular services coupled with cost makes travelling to and from work on public transport difficult and often impossible for most people who then rely exclusively on cars.
- The rising cost of petrol and the need to address the changes that this will bring over the coming years was recognised as a major concern.
- Young Families without a car were severely restricted particularly if they had very young children and pushchairs. They had very low awareness of community Transport and thought it was for older or disabled people only. They would welcome information about any transport alternatives.
- Buses don't correspond with school times and without a car some people found it difficult.
- Train and bus links were mentioned in Fishguard, they were seen as “hopeless”

Overview of Priority Issues for Groups

	Older People	Young People	People with Mental Health Issues	Young People with Disabilities	Disabled Adults	Carers
Weekend /Evening Services	High	High	High	High	High	High
Restricted access to social, cultural and leisure facilities	High	High	High	High	High	High
Regularity of buses / amount of time to complete tasks	High	Medium	High	High	High	Low
Seeking work made difficult by irregularity of service	Low	High	High	High	High	Low
Shortage of volunteers drivers	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium	High
Lack of awareness of full service of offers	High	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
People are unclear about use of passes / costs	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	High	High
Restriction of 1 journey per week limits use	High	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Concerns about accessibility	High	Low	Low	High	High	Medium
Lack of confidence by users	High	Low	High	High	High	High
Cost of public transport / taxis	Medium	High	Low	High	Medium	High

4. Summary of Findings, Issues and Recommendations

As the main settlements of Pembrokeshire are situated in the south of the county, it would suggest that there are more unmet needs in the more northerly and rural areas. This report is concentrating on the findings gathered from people living, and organisations working, in those areas. Although there are differences in the specific issues raised by certain groups, there are also many similarities and all issues identified during our research can be drawn together under the following headings:

1. Availability

What is working well

- There is a broad range of community transport services including social car schemes Dial a Ride schemes and Group Hire.
- There are many successes in Community Transport in Pembrokeshire with some services being sustained past their initial funding streams.
- PACTO are viewed as very good providing excellent services such as information and help generally by users and those who work with them.
- Residents who use community transport have high levels of satisfaction with the service they get.
- Community Transport including Dial a ride schemes who have a section 22 permit can pick people up either at their home or anywhere on a route.
- Some organisations are providing transport for social and cultural opportunities e.g. Green Dragon Film Club at Theatr Mwldan in Cardigan on a Sunday and Elderscreen in Fishguard.
- There is a commitment to ensuring that local services remain. E.g. In Nayland the local councils are subsidising community transport ensuring the area keeps its dial a ride.
- Examples of good practice include Green Dragon Bus linking with Narberth Medical Centre to arrange a 'block' appointment for flu jabs for their clients.
- Residents value the services they do have, and some go out of their way to ensure their continuation e.g. 'The Tag Team': some women make sure one of them always takes the bus to ensure it remains in service – Midway Motors bus (Mynachlog Ddu to Haverfordwest)

Issues:

- There is a lack of public transport in rural areas of the county particularly at evenings and weekends. This leads to isolation and people are unable to participate in many aspect of life.
- Restricted access to social, cultural, leisure and fitness opportunities can negatively affect health and well-being of all groups.
- People are unable and not inclined to participate in civic life because of lack of transport.
- For those who use public transport there are concerns about the regularity of buses and the amount of time that certain routes allow for completing everything they need to do. For example one weekly bus service to Haverfordwest only allows 2 hours before the return journey.
- Hospital and health visits to doctor's appointments can be challenging for vulnerable groups. Appointments do not always marry with transport options and people find it hard getting transport services to hospital as many don't fit the criteria for a hospital car or other community transport.
- For those seeking work, education or training, the lack of availability of public bus services is prohibitive. For example in some areas there is not a daily bus and in the areas where there is a daily bus service, the early finishing times of these services does not allow for shift working or working outside of normal office hours.
- There is shortage of volunteer drivers in social car schemes leading to a pressure on current drivers and gaps in provision.
- Most volunteer drivers are retired and drive only in the day. Due to the limited availability of drivers outside of normal working hours, there is currently little demand for and sporadic use of community transport in the evenings and very little on weekends.
- Restrictions of 1 journey per week and distance limit are a problem; people would like this changed.
- The Town Rider provision might be cut in the future and we understand this will have a huge impact.

Recommendations:

- **Identifying specific projects or routes in order to conduct a pilot.** This could be a service for young people to and from cinema for example. When a demand is identified a marketing strategy should be developed, a pool of drivers recruited and a service developed which is closely monitored in order to understand demand, communications and marketing, use, future demand etc.
- **More Effective Partnership Working.** Even though PACTO is linked with many partners in the voluntary sector it now needs to work with them to develop and promote services.
- **PACTO taking a lead.** PACTO could develop pilots as a lead organisation in partnership with relevant services or community groups who would be responsible for contact with users e.g. a youth organisation or arts organisation.

- **Recruitment of drivers.** This should target new and different groups of people including younger people and parents of young people who are likely to use any new services.
- **Beginning a dialogue with medical centres.** This is in order to explore possibilities for a coordinated approach such as appointments joined up with transport services.
- **Contingency plans.** These could be in place for services that are threatened.

2. Perception / Awareness

What is working well

- There are examples of good practice e.g. a branding exercise for the St Davids minibus went well. There was a competition to name the bus and the schools had a designing the logo competition. This was a good exercise that involved the whole community.
- PACTO has excellent relationships with many organisations: the Local Authority, umbrella organisations and smaller voluntary groups.
- Presentations and talks are well received and are a good way of promoting and marketing community transport.

Issues:

- There is a general lack of awareness of the full range of services in the county amongst residents, community groups and workers in both voluntary and statutory sectors.
- PACTO is unique, offers excellent services and it needs to shout about this!
- There is a lack of strategic marketing and partnership working on promotion and awareness.
- Many people believe that community transport is only for older people and may therefore be missing opportunities to benefit from services on offer. The Local Authority phone line is promoting it as a service for the elderly and disabled.
- Many older people believe that community transport is only for health related needs and may therefore be missing out on opportunities to socialise and access other facilities and services in the county.
- People are unclear about the use of passes and about costs of services.
- Marketing and Communication is a cross cutting theme that runs through the majority of our findings.
- There are gaps in communication with certain groups e.g. arts groups, leisure, and lifelong learning.
- Marketing and communications has not targeted younger age groups.

Recommendations:

- **Creating a Marketing Strategy** using the outline developed for this report. An integrated marketing plan will assist with the following:
 - Reinforcing the message that community transport in the county is vibrant and has a lot to offer
 - Increasing and improving partnership working between organisations in the county
 - Raising awareness of what is available and who can access services to residents, community groups and all organisations
 - Promoting a message of 'entitlement'. Community transport is there to be used and can be accessed by many people who are not currently taking advantage of it
 - Raising confidence in users as to the 'professionalism' of community transport in the county
 - Recruitment of volunteer drivers
 - Sustainability of community transport

3. Accessibility

What is working well:

- All community transport providers have some accessible vehicles at their disposal.
- Volunteer drivers are very helpful, assisting passengers and clients with access, carrying shopping etc.
- PCC has a commitment to the Disability Discrimination Act and is working well with all transport providers to ensure accessibility.
- Many drivers have undergone the MDAS training.

Issues:

- Older frail people and people with disabilities have concerns about accessibility on public transport.
- People with disabilities lack confidence in public bus services and taxis, particularly with regard to wheelchair access and driver attitudes.
- Some people with disabilities have concerns about both public transport and social car schemes with regard to access.
- The attitude of drivers towards vulnerable people may have a negative impact on accessibility. Some drivers have displayed intolerance and prejudice resulting in people not feeling confident or comfortable in using the services available.

Recommendations:

- **Information.** Ensure that information is available on all issues relating to accessibility of all vehicles and forms a part of the marketing and communication strategy.
- **Accessible Vehicles.** Strive to ensure a certain proportion of all vehicles types are fully accessible.
- **Training.** Continue with training for drivers – so that they are aware of equal opportunity issues and customer care.

4. Financial Issues

What is working well:

- Community Transport providers find PCC approachable and supportive when it comes to accessing subsidies.
- One of the main aims of Community Transport is to fill in gaps where there is no public transport and it does not intend to compete with public or private transport provision. However, it can in many instances offer a cheaper alternative to public transport and is cheaper than private taxi hire. In many cases travel is free to some vulnerable groups.

Issues:

- Public bus services are seen as expensive by young people.
- Taxis in rural areas are prohibitively expensive because of the distance to services.

Recommendations:

- **Awareness.** Ensure people are aware of costs.
- **Forecasts.** Use forecasts of the rising cost of fuel in future planning
- **New and Different Funding Streams.** Consider some creative funding approaches in order to sustain current provision, develop services and also to enable new developments, particularly in promotion and awareness.
- **Environmental Sustainability.** Looking at example of coastal buses using chip oil as fuel – explore environmental / sustainable alternatives

5. Conclusions

Pembrokeshire is typical of many rural counties in the UK. The majority of the population is heavily reliant on the car, either their own or that of a family member. Over the past ten years the county has seen a steadily increasing older population leading to an increased risk of isolation by those who do not have access to a car or who live away from major bus routes. Neighbours, friends and family enable people to continue living independently in rural areas. This is, typically, what has been happening in rural areas across the whole of the country.

However, what Pembrokeshire does have that many areas do not is a genuine commitment to providing a comprehensive transport offer by the County Council and partner organisations; this is underpinned throughout by vibrant voluntary groups and a large number of committed volunteers within the county. Those organisations working to provide community transport work well together under the umbrella organisation PACTO and there is clearly a high level of goodwill and a desire to work together for the 'common good'. Therefore we would hope that any issues and recommendations that are raised in this report are read within this context and that they be viewed as helping to improve the situation rather than being critical of current provision.

What emerged was a clear picture of a county that is working hard to ensure all residents have equal access to transport. The voluntary and statutory sectors are working together with a holistic vision on meeting the needs of all groups of people in Pembrokeshire. There are many examples of excellent Community Transport provision and an acknowledgement that there are some unmet needs. More collaborative and partnership working can contribute to more efficient, effective and sustainable services at a time when resources are being cut and petrol prices are increasing and effective marketing and communications is essential to ensure awareness by all stakeholders of this provision.

A substantial grant (£168, 000) from the rural Development Plan funding (RDP) to PACTO to develop community transport services in the North of the county. The contract is in the process of being awarded and areas for funding are: booking co-ordinators, a new mini bus for Fishguard, a rural Community Transport Officer for the Clydau project and Marketing. A further £40, 000 is available for revenue and will cover operating and driver expenses for example. The Clydau connections project has secured £75, 000 from the Welsh Government through CTA (Community Transport Association), it will be managed by PACTO and provide a holistic travel amenity for Clydau residents through raising awareness of existing services and establishing new initiatives such as a car club and improve it will also improve transport in the area by developing on-demand accessible transport provision.

These recent developments demonstrate a commitment to the sustainability of community and rural transport and their continued improvement in line with need.

Acknowledgement

ASK Consulting and Alyson Jenkins Consultancy would like to thank all the organisations, community groups, volunteers and residents in Pembrokeshire who took the time to take part in this research, and who have provided us with their invaluable views and insights into the issue of transport in the county.

Annex 1 – Current Transport Services

Organisation	Description of Service
WRVS Country Cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service is open to any Pembrokeshire resident who does not have a car or public transport. • Fares are more or less equivalent to public bus fares. • A bus pass allows travel at half fare. • The service runs each weekday and some weekends if a driver is available. Passengers are currently restricted to one journey per week. • Journeys must be within a 40 mile radius and can be for any purpose except hospital doctor appointments. • Pick-ups can be from anywhere the passenger chooses. • Bookings need to be made at least 48 hours before the journey. • The driver will help with carrying shopping, etc. • 3 wheelchair accessible vehicles are available.
RSVP Cars for Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service is available to unpaid carers in Pembrokeshire, whatever their age, whether they have a car or not. • The carer can travel by themselves or with their cared for person, or other passengers. • Journeys are subsidised and charges are based on the WRVS Country Cars tariff. Cared for people travel free of charge with their carer. • A bus pass allows travel at half fare. • The service runs 7 days a week plus evenings subject to availability of drivers. • The carer can travel anywhere in Pembrokeshire • Bookings are generally advised to be made at least 48 hours before the journey. • Pick-ups can be from anywhere the passenger chooses • The driver will help with carrying shopping, etc.
Preseli Rural Transport - Green Dragon Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of PRTA can use the Dial-a-Ride services • Fares are set at a similar rate to local bus fares • Bus pass holders travel free of charge • There are set runs that go to different areas of North Pembrokeshire and South Ceredigion • All journeys need to be booked the day before (or of Friday for journeys on Monday) • The bus will pick up from the passenger's doorstep • Minibuses are wheelchair accessible

<p>Wales Ambulance Service - Hospital Cars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients are eligible for free hospital transport if their medical condition means that they require the skills of ambulance staff on or for the journey and/or if it would be detrimental to their condition or recovery if they were to travel by any other means • There is a central booking service – ‘The Transport Booking Centre’ • At least one week's notice is required, in general. However, urgent appointments may be accommodated. • The Booking Centre deals with first hospital appointments only. Transport for subsequent appointments should be booked directly with the hospital. • Carers / Escorts will be considered if the patient's condition is such that they require constant attention or support
<p>Minibus Match</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minibus sharing initiative for community groups and not for profit organisations in Pembrokeshire • It offers affordable transport for groups • Minibuses have up to 17 seats • Some minibuses are wheelchair accessible • Groups are normally expected to provide their own driver. All drivers must hold a valid MiDAS Certificate
<p>PVT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PVT was established in 1988 to bring together local voluntary organisations working with disabled people who needed access to transport. • The founder organisations found it difficult to justify the costs of providing and maintaining a vehicle for their use alone. But they realised that their transport needs could be addressed by working collectively and sharing access to vehicles. • Since 1988, the pool of affiliated organisations has grown from 12 founder organisations to over 150, and the fleet now stands at 5 accessible vehicles. • In 2004 PVT took on additional responsibility for hosting an umbrella group for the community transport sector in Pembrokeshire, to support local CT providers and strengthen and develop the sector. PVT has adopted a new working title for these activities: Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO). • PVT has four wheelchair-accessible minibuses available for hire by community groups and individuals, and is working with the St Davids and Peninsula Bus Group to develop the Bws y Bobol project.
<p>Bloomfield Bus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bloomfield Bus is based in Narberth. The minibus provides Dial-a-Bus services for surrounding villages three days a week, and collects children from local schools to attend the Afterschool Club at the Bloomfield Centre. • The minibus is available for local Community Groups to hire at other times.

<p>Dial a Ride / Town Riders</p>	<p>A dial-a-ride service for elderly and disabled people who find it difficult to use bus services.</p> <p>Available now in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fishguard & Goodwick• Haverfordwest• Pembroke and Pembroke Dock• Tenby, Saundersfoot and Kilgetty• Milford Haven <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You must be a Pembrokeshire Resident, and you must have, or be eligible for, a Bus Pass under the All Wales Concessionary Travel Pass Scheme.• The Town Rider is free of charge for passengers registered with the scheme.
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Annex 2 – Stakeholders and Groups

Organisations and Groups Consulted

Organisation	Description
Pembrokeshire County Council	<p>As the local authority Pembrokeshire County Council delivers and commissions local services. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Education • Environment • Housing • Social Services • Community Services • Support to business
Hywel Dda Local Health Board	<p>Hywel Dda Local Health Board provides healthcare services to a total population of around 372,320 throughout Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. It provides Acute, Primary, Community, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities services via General and Community Hospitals, Health Centres, GP's, Dentists, Pharmacists and Optometrists and other sites.</p>
PACTO	<p>Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) was established in 2004, to bring together, strengthen and represent the community transport sector in Pembrokeshire.</p> <p>Active members of PACTO are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport • Pembrokeshire Country Cars • RSVP Cars for Carers • Manorbier Community Transport Association • Preseli Rural Transport Association • Narberth and District Community and Sports Association
PAVS	<p>Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the independent association of voluntary and community groups in Pembrokeshire • a membership organisation, offering full or associate membership to individuals and all voluntary and community groups operating in Pembrokeshire • a company limited by guarantee and registered charity, governed by trustees elected from the membership • part of a network of similar recognised organisations covering every local authority area in Wales

<p>Pembrokeshire MIND</p>	<p>Pembrokeshire Mind is a voluntary group who work for a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress. They work to promote a positive attitude and reduce stigma associated with mental health</p>
<p>Age Concern</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age Concern Pembrokeshire is a local independent charity supporting older people in Pembrokeshire to regain and remain independent. • They do this through the deployment of paid staff and volunteers. • They employ 6 members of staff but we have over 100 active volunteers across Pembrokeshire and 20 sessional Home Support Workers. • They have over 3000 older people on our database and are supporting at least 500 at any time.
<p>Youth Assembly</p>	<p>The Youth Assembly aims to represent all young people across Pembrokeshire. Meetings take place throughout the year with two representatives from all area youth forums, special interest forums and school councils.</p>
<p>Good Neighbour Schemes</p>	<p>Good Neighbour Schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide easy access to help and support for all residents living in the community, should they need it • offer a friendly, local service, responding to calls for help from any member of the community • can help to ease the impact on the community caused by the decline in services and facilities such as public transport, shops, Post Offices, doctor’s surgeries, pubs etc • can reduce the feelings of isolation and exclusion experienced by some individuals if families and friends move away in the search for employment, education or affordable housing <p>All Good Neighbour Schemes operate within a community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers are recruited who are willing to help others in their community • A small group of volunteers form a Coordinating Committee to oversee the running of the scheme • A mobile phone acts as the central contact number and can be passed on to different volunteers willing to be duty co-ordinators • A duty co-ordinator will answer a call, take all relevant information and then look for the most suitable, available volunteer to undertake the request • The duty co-ordinator can also act as a link to other sources of help and information, if it would be more appropriate for another service to deal with the request

<p>Pembrokeshire Visual Impairment Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Workers run Visual Impairment Groups in 8 locations around the County. These groups run once a month and are based in set locations. • Guest speakers often talk to the groups and various outings are arranged throughout the year. • Pembrokeshire Blind Society run a minibus enabling members to be collected from home etc and taken to the groups
<p>POINT Fishguard</p>	<p>The principle of the charity is to provide a regular service for local young people within their community, particularly for those who are socially, educationally and economically marginalised.</p> <p>To achieve this, their aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a drop-in service where young people can access non discriminatory, non judgemental, high quality support and information in a warm, safe and welcoming environment. Where they can enhance their life skills, develop their interests and socialise with their peers and positive role models. • To empower young people to make decisions and explore options and opportunities. To develop a sense of place for themselves within their community, society and the local environment. • To deliver accredited and vocational training in an informal setting and at a pace that suits each individual. • To inspire young people to take on the challenge of adventure activities with the aim of developing interests, enhancing confidence, self esteem and team skills. • To represent the needs and views of young people within their community and to work in partnership with them to action ideas
<p>Other groups and stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishguard Friendship Circle • Fishguard & District Stroke Club • Letterston Luncheon Club • Newport Day Centre • Eglwysrwr Mother and Toddler • Drug and Alcohol Services • Community Mental Health • Adult Mental Health • District Nurses • Mobile Library • Social Services Transport 	

Those consulted at Pembrokeshire County Council

Older People's Strategy Co-ordinator
Good Neighbours Scheme Development Officer
Disability Inclusion Worker
Health and Wellbeing Manager
Children & Young People Partnership Officers
Access Officer
Children & Young People Partnership Manager
Community Visitor
Transport coordinator
Greenways Officer
Fleet Manager
Public Transport Manager
Co-ordinator - Youth Assembly

Annex 3 – Research Findings - Detail

The purpose of this research was to consider the unmet transport needs in rural Pembrokeshire; the findings contained in this section of the report highlight issues and challenges and therefore can appear negative in tone, this is not the intention. There are many examples of positive experiences and as previously stated Community Transport provides excellent services in Pembrokeshire, however for the purpose of the research we focus on the unmet needs.

Older People

This is the largest group of vulnerable people in Pembrokeshire. We spoke to many groups and individuals and Age Concern asked questions on our behalf as part of their regular Care Calls.

As many older people are frail or find access to services a challenge, many of the issues are the same as those of people with disabilities.

Older people want to travel to access everything from the doctor, hospital, social gatherings and events such as lunch clubs, learning opportunities, keeping fit and leisure facilities, visiting friends and relatives, shopping and days out. The majority are reliant on the car for transport (either their own or family members) and don't use public or community transport. Family and neighbours look after many of the needs of older people.

"I have no use of the buses – family and friends do everything for me." - Older Person

"The able will always be able to manage. The ones nobody sees are the main problem." - District Nurse

There are many good things regarding transport in Pembrokeshire that were praised. The main routes were fairly well served and they were happy with the services. Disabled badges are seen as good things; Country Cars and Town Riders are used a great deal and promoted by Age Concern. Voluntary groups have access to minibuses which are used a great deal.

Issues

Availability: The general lack of public service buses and the long distances to get to bus stops in rural areas were a major issue among this group.

"I live in Crundale and yes we have problems – there is a bus twice a week" - Older Person

"I drive but if my back is bad – we are stuck – we just stay in" - Older Person

When a spouse dies and the remaining person cannot drive, then transport is a major issue:

“A lady in Tegryn – this is a particularly bad village for transport – her husband died now she is stuck!” – Volunteer Driver

Older people can't get to appointments, doctor, dentist, opticians and most rely on family for this. This was one of the main issues.

“Those without family really suffer.” - District Nurse

Wheelchair users use community transport and on the whole found it useful however some commented on the fact that it was **difficult to pre-book in advance** and felt that it was not always flexible enough when a need arose.

Being able to access services of all sorts can contribute to good health, as one woman commented:

“A stroke patient was coming on well but now she is not getting out or going to her classes because of lack of transport. The class was helping her with her recovery, helping her regain her confidence following the stroke.” – District Nurse

Access is an issue but not a major concern with those consulted. There was a need for low buses and helpful drivers and recognition of the problem.

There are many fantastic drivers but there is a need for more. Some of the minibuses were difficult to get on and off and **some drivers were not always helpful**

Long journeys – Minibus journey can often be very long as it has to pick up people along the route in outlying areas. Long journeys can be a problem for those with certain medical conditions. They can be on the bus for up to 2 hours when coming to a day centre or a club. For example a man with prostate problems can't use public transport and a really frail 92 year old could not do the 2 hour journey.

Visiting loved ones in homes or hospitals is one of the main issues

“So many can't get to see loved ones – in residential care homes or in hospital e.g. Brooklands in Saundersford.”- District Nurse

“I will want them (Country Cars) to go to visit my husband who is in a care home in Johnston” - Older Person

Age Concern can help but are not able to meet the need.

Attending **hospital appointments** outside the county is difficult; there will be more and more of this as services are relocated.

Hospital cars - there is now a call centre in Swansea; some of the people were not happy with this system. They used to know the person at the other end of the phone. Timing is an issue one lady said that she had to negotiate with a consultant at Glangwili because the cars could not get her there on time.

"Hospital cars timings are rubbish" - Older Person

There is a shortage of drivers for Hospital Cars as well as WRVS Country Cars. One of the reasons given by people who used to be voluntary drivers was because petrol became too expensive.

Age Concern employ staff to visit older people as part of their home support service, but

"Staff can't get to the jobs we give them if they haven't got a car – this puts them at a disadvantage; it discriminates against people who don't drive. We have to consider whether it is worth offering training if they are then unable to work." Age Concern

"The model of the town rider is good – many of the clients say this is very good service – more people should use it though – use it or lose it - carers can use it with clients for a nominal charge – this is good for us." - Age Concern

Age Concern are setting up **Transport to Groups**, it is a new initiative in its early days.

"It is aimed at bringing people together who are isolated and a bit lonely - it can be scrabble, classes in photography or IT, or just tea and talk - also coping in old age – leaning from each other - e.g. when spouse dies –how to pay bills etc. - But we can't do it because of the transport issues." – Age Concern

They have not started to liaise and speak to anyone yet about this

There is a concern that even if more and better services are put on people would not use them – this concern was echoed by a few working in this area.

"Even if there were buses many older people don't have confidence to get on them alone." – Age Concern

Day Centres did a great deal for older people who did not have transport such as shopping and taking them to essential appointments but staff were largely unaware of community transport provision.

"The council brings everyone here – this is very important to me, I love coming here." – Older Person

For the active older person attending classes, leisure facilities to keep fit and also social occasions are very important activities to maintain overall health and well being. Many people can't get to meetings – the main reason is the cost of petrol – they can't afford it.

"I've had to stop going to a class I enjoy because of the cost of petrol" – Older Person

"I am looking for an alternative – not transport – but a new class nearer to home – I am not aware of any other transport option" – Older Person

"We use the bus a lot (her and her husband) – we go swimming – we go shopping – we like to stay active and keep fit – without the bus we can't do any of these things – this is what the doctors and everyone recommend you do – if we did not have the bus we would become more and more inactive" – Older Person

One of the ways in which people become isolated is:

"..A couple – one becomes ill or loses mobility – or dies – then they are stranded and isolated. This is one of the main things we come across." Age Concern

Lack of awareness of Community Transport amongst those working with older people was an issue and general awareness amongst groups was very low. Country Cars was most mentioned, quite a few had used them. Some thought the service was for getting to health appointments only. One lady was developing a cataract and said she would need Country Cars soon; she knew about the service but most did not. Some said they wanted information on community transport – 'just in case' they said and were pleased to hear about it.

Negative experiences:

"I rang them but they were unhelpful and a bit rude. They tried to get me to use friends and neighbours and public transport first. I gave up in the end." - Older Person

A care home worker had a bad experience that put her off using Country Cars

"We phoned for country cars but were unable to get one – the reason given was – no drivers." – Older Person

Needs / Gaps

The gaps are in the rural areas and many older people live here. They have been used to living without facilities but as they get older their health might fail and their mobility decrease and so they can easily become isolated. When talking to people in villages they said that lack of transport, being unable to access facilities was a major reason that older people were moving from the more rural areas; this was seen as inevitable.

Evening services - The towns are well served by the Town Riders, but the buses do not run after 6pm which means that it is not possible to go out or access services/facilities after that time. One woman who likes to attend concerts in Haverfordwest has had to pay £70 for a return journey by taxi as that is the only way that she has of getting there and back in the evening.

*“Now there are no buses after 6pm to Harbour Village. They say they want to cut car use and then make it impossible to go out in the evening except by car; not everyone has a car.”
– Older Person*

How Older People Cope

Older people without cars rely a great deal on neighbours and family. There is a strong sense of community in the rural villages but many acknowledge that there could be some isolated people.

*“I am worried about a couple of ladies who live nearby, haven’t seen one in a long time” –
Older Person*

Some say that they simply don’t go out anymore and on the occasions when they must they use taxis.

People share cars such as the U3A for walking trips and groups also hire minibuses

Good Neighbours Scheme – working mainly with older people but also some young disabled and they have a directory of services and recommend services to people. Many voluntary sector organisation offer support to older people and in particular Age Concern who also accompany people to hospital appointments and refer people to County cars, RSVP Cars for Carers and Town Rider. Groups hire minibuses from Pembrokeshire community transport such as the Fishguard Friendship circle; they use ‘Millie’ every Friday to pick people up and bring them to the meetings. They have a good link with PACTO. Other groups hire buses for outings and trips but a luncheon club wanted more access to buses for days out.

What they want one lady said was

“Something like a cheap taxis service – accessible cars” Care Home Worker

"We are desperate to see the Sunday service continue (there have been rumours that it will end) – without it I can't get to church in Letterston from Wolfscastle – not many use it but those that do rely on it - it is important to us." – Older Person

They want to be consulted and asked about their needs. They want a recognition that people do need to get out, particularly people living on their own who need company. They wanted to know how they could find out more about transport.

Young People

Young people are more likely not to own or have access to a car and will therefore experience difficulties travelling and getting around. They rely heavily on parents and friends parents to give them lifts. The young people we spoke to saw transport as a very big issue in their lives. The following were issues raised by young people, youth workers and leaders and by the Youth Assembly Co-ordinator who works with secondary school councils; youth forums and specialised groups e.g. Voices for Choices.

At the POINT in Fishguard, when they apply for grants, transport is built in so people's bus fares to come to the POINT are paid for from the grant. The young people bring in tickets and get reimbursed. Funders support this and it is a big help enabling young people from rural areas to come to youth clubs whereas previously they would not have been able to.

"We have had some from Crymych being able to come because of this - it makes a big difference." – Youth Worker

"These days there are fewer buses though – and the early times back area problem. Kids from some areas just don't come. Also lots of taxis won't take young people late at night (alcohol)" - Youth Worker

A general lack of buses and irregular services was an issue:

"We need more buses - Sundays are bad – no buses." – Young Person

"Often a 3 hr wait if you miss one" – Young Person

Lack of transport in the evenings was one of the most commonly raised issues. Buses stopped running early and more services had been cut recently meaning that sometimes the last bus was before 6pm. Youth services don't finish until after 9pm and this means that it is not always possible for the young people to access provision put on especially for them .

Many young people said they went out and became stuck somewhere. Young people and youth workers were aware of the dangers when they walked or travelled at night.

"We got stuck, it was a nightmare, and we didn't think we would get home." Young Person

Many people spoke of the lack of bus services between **Fishguard and Goodwick** in general but particularly the lack of evening services and it is believed that there is a petition about this issue.

"Goodwick to Fishguard – not far but it is dark and a long way to walk in the winter and alone – steps – it is dangerous" - Young Person

"The cinema in Fishguard – kids from Goodwick don't go – because of walk back." – Youth Worker

Rural areas - with only two buses a week in some rural areas it was clear that young people from these areas did not participate as much in social and other activities. Again, those living in the north of the county missed out on opportunities due to lack of transport.

"Buses have been cut to Trecwn – The buses are missing rural area" – Youth Worker

Social - they were not able to go to the cinema or to concerts because of the lack of transport. There is a private service, known as 'The Vomit Comet'! We were told taxis did not like to take young people because of the fear of vomiting. Getting to and from leisure centres was an issue also raised.

Cost is an issue – bus journeys are expensive and learning to drive and running a car is very expensive, a prohibitive cost for many.

"Buses cost too much especially if you are a student" Young Person

"I drive but don't use the car much – it is too expensive." Young Person

Bikes are not allowed on buses and some young people do use bikes to get around. It will become an increasingly favourable option but without the ability to use them on buses their use is limited.

Work opportunities - lack of transport limited young people when it came to finding work, or to do work experience. Most opportunities were in the South of the county and required a 2 hour bus journey or more if you live in the north.

"Fishguard no longer has a job centre – so have to go to Haverfordwest, this seems unfair on those in the north." – Young Person

"I am unemployed so can't afford to drive my car – so can't get to places to look for work – a vicious cycle" – Young Person

Education and Training - accessing training at any other training provider or with private companies in Pembrokeshire was difficult. Pembrokeshire College provided transport but outside of this getting to the college was difficult.

"There are free buses to college – but some have to pay." Young Person

Pembrokeshire College did not report any major transport problems other than

"The problem is simply getting them here - the issues are capacity and the nature of the rural areas." College Representative

The council provides services and people have to make their way to the bus stops. Again this is a problem for those in the more rural areas who can live up to 3 or 4 miles from a route.

Youth clubs - Because these run in the evening the problem is getting home, especially in the winter when transport finishes early in the evenings and there is a long walk home. According to a youth worker, young people were able to use their school bus pass to get to a youth club in Fishguard.

What they do now?

Young people do use buses but they are expensive, so they walk a lot and get lifts with friends. Youth workers commented that it is particularly worrying for young women and girls walking at night to and from specially run youth clubs or events as well as other social occasions. They are vulnerable and made more so due to the lack of transport.

Awareness and use of Community Transport?

The youth clubs we visited used minibuses for day trips and residential trips and the workers were well aware of provision. They had recently found out about Minibus Match, the youth worker had phoned a local school to see if they could have use of a minibus during holidays. The school put her in touch with the council and now they have hired a bus for the summer; the one used by a special school during term time

"This is brilliant – they are all thrilled with this." Youth Worker

Young people had not heard of Community Transport at all.

Gaps

As with many groups they would like to own their own bus or have unlimited access to a bus so that they could bring in young people from the rural areas so that they had the same opportunities to participate in activities. Even if this were possible staff costs would be prohibitive though as two people have to be present on buses.

As with other groups young people also needed to access doctor appointments, dentist and to shop and found all this difficult if they lived in a rural area or a distance away from a main bus route.

What they wanted

The Youth Assembly identified a project 'Ticket to Ride' offering discounts to young people –

They also wanted:

- Cheaper transport options
- Later buses
- More cycle paths
- More helpful bus drivers
- More information on community transport and all transport services
- Better, simpler timetables
- Day passes – as in London
- Cheaper taxis

Many young people just don't go out in the evenings because of a lack of transport.

People with Mental Health Issues

MIND offers many services in the county. The most important one is the **resource centre** in Haverfordwest which is open 365 days a year; the client group includes people of all ages, from all over the county. It is important that they are able to access this important service that contributes to their well being. The workers and clients acknowledge the difficulties faced by those living in rural areas and places away from towns and main bus routes:

“... They just don’t come in. Nobody from the North of the county comes down to the centre; it is impossible – too long”. - Mental Health Professional

This means people are disadvantaged and that their health could deteriorate as a result. Transport is important for this group because it allows them to mix with others, to seek voluntary or paid work and also come to the day centre; all of which aid their recovery or prevent their conditions from deteriorating. The centre in Haverfordwest was described as a “lifeline” by some of the users. One woman said her husband drove her everywhere; she only ever came to the MIND centre and shopping “*If I don’t get here my health deteriorates*” she said. “*When our car was broken down I couldn’t come in – this was for 1 month – I was stuck*” she added.

Clients face many barriers and “*getting out of their homes is a struggle for many*”.

“Most people come to us and we need transport to get people to meetings as well as to services.” - Mental Health Professional

“They have specific issues about getting on buses – they lack confidence and have fear, anxiety.” - Mental Health Professional

“Cost is also prohibitive for some at times.” - Care Worker

Even though they are eligible for **bus passes** many do not have one because “*getting a bus pass is difficult for some; they don’t know they can have one and applying is difficult. Young people for example don’t know they can have one – are eligible for one - don’t like to use it either because of the stigma.*” There is a bus pass volunteer scheme where volunteers help people complete forms and accompany them to have their photo taken. This makes a big difference to some people.

Lack of transport on weekends is an issue,

“People do not demand services on weekends – not sure if this is because they just know there isn’t any so don’t ask.” And “many people have crisis on weekends and need transport then.” “Weekends are terrible – carers and everyone suffer because they are stuck!!” Mental Health Professional

MIND does offer help with travel for clients to do training and they also deliver training to organisations (coach companies) and have had input into their training (FRAME⁴)

MIND's clients in and around Haverfordwest were on the whole happy with bus services:

"I go from Milford to Haverfordwest - I've got a pass – it's all OK, great." – MIND Client

One of the main complaints and concerns was the change in the times of the last bus services which we were told had recently gone from about 7 to 5:50pm, for the Haverfordwest to St David's route.

"This is a recent change – it is really terrible for me – I can't come to things here because the buses go back so early" – MIND Client

"Nobody notified us of the changes either!" – MIND Client

One young man did gardening work and found it very difficult in the summer if he worked late.

People with mental health issues often need to access **day hospitals**

"Most people use hospital cars – ambulance cars, or otherwise they rely on buses to access services here". - Mental Health Professional

There are issues with Ambulance Cars particularly around drop off and pick up times which are set around 10AM and 2PM. However, people do not know if they will be picked up at 8am or 9pm so they have to hang around and then they could be waiting at the hospital for a long time after appointments or before. Particularly for people with mental health problems this level of uncertainty can have a negative impact on their confidence and can be quite destabilising.

"This is a big problem – Many journeys have been aborted recently, clients cancel because of the problem with no set time." - Mental Health Professional

There are not enough buses in some areas and on some routes and so access to essential health services depends on where the person lives. Good mental health is often sustained by being active: getting involved with a voluntary group, doing voluntary or paid work or work experience for example as a route to recovery.

"It can be part of their care plan". - Mental Health Professional

"However, if they live in rural areas this is a BIG problem, it is impossible, people can't afford taxis." - Mental Health Professional

⁴ <http://www.pembrokeshire-frame.org.uk/>

Service users rely on staff to arrange and then bring them in to the day centre, or to 1-1 therapy sessions. Also people rely on friends and family a great deal. Staff consider this situation unacceptable and inadequate and it has led to a review and pilot project:

Pilot Project

St. Brynach Day Hospital is using Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport. They are more in control; they can define a time with the client. They identified people and routes in the South of the county (the north suffers still) and buses are booked; a minibus and a driver. This started as a pilot in September 2011 and is being reviewed in December 2011. It will run for a minimum of 12 months. *“The feedback from clients is very positive and it makes it easier to work with carers and family too.” - Mental Health Professional.* The hospital invited Community Transport to the review meeting and they were very involved in the review.

Young People with Disabilities – Physical and Mental

On the whole, the issues faced by this group are the same as for other young people in the county. However, many young people with disabilities have more complex needs and in Pembrokeshire there is a forum, which the researchers visited, where these young people can have a voice. **Confidence** is the main issue for this group:

“The main issue that this group has is confidence and also confidence issues for their parents.” Youth Worker

Some young people are independent and use buses, they rely on them; others meet up and use buses, some use taxis but accessibility (wheelchairs) is often an issue. Many need to be accompanied on journeys. Most rely on parents and carers to drive them about.

Accessibility on public transport has improved but there is still work to be done as officers, staff and young people told us. Also the behaviour of drivers is a barrier, as they are sometimes insensitive to the needs of these vulnerable young people. They are unhelpful and impatient.

“There are no disabled taxis in Fishguard” – Young Person

Buses stopping early in the evening are a big issue.

“7:45 from St David’s to Haverfordwest – it used to be this now it is 6:45! This is too early – it is very limiting.” Young Person

They are so reliant on parents and good will for transport. What they have difficulty accessing is transport for **social** opportunities. Often the social aspect of life is not a priority but it is important.

Work opportunities

"If I worked in town - would not be able to get there without my parents driving me. If you got a job you would be stuck for transport." Young Person

One girl had work experience – *"and this was difficult - transport twice a week was difficult to arrange because you are only allowed so many journeys on community transport"*- Young Person

"They have issues regarding work – this gives them independence and transport is difficult - they miss out on educational and employment opportunities." – Youth Worker

The Pembrokeshire Youth Assembly Co-ordinator attends PACTO meetings but she is not aware of some of the services available through the county. The forum has its own bus and first call on a community minibus. They use it for social outings but need to find a driver. Clients are all over the county so this is difficult, pick up and put down can take hours.

Cost is an issue for many with; bus fares and taxis proving expensive.

Timetables are not easy to read. Digital displays and audio on public buses were welcomed as a good idea for helping those with either learning difficulties or visual or hearing impairments.

Attitudes and prejudice causes problems, there were stories of drivers who were unhelpful and buses that did not stop for a girl in a wheelchair. They complained of disabled spaces often being taken up by non-disabled people on the buses. The forum has spoken to the transport manager about this and drivers are now having Travel Training offered by FRAME, a social enterprise. Pembrokeshire People First (an organisation working with adults with learning disabilities) are going to conduct training with bus drivers on disability and equality.

"The barriers are attitudes – very off putting – one bad experience puts them off for a while" – Youth Worker

The general unreliability of buses and taxis was raised and this can be more of an issue if you have a disability and have to wait for hours. *"Buses don't turn up."* One girl lived in Trefgarn Owen where there is only one bus – Tuesday and Friday at 10am.

"It takes ages to get into town then only in town till 2pm - not enough time at all - only one bus back and so if you miss it you are stuck!" - Young person

"Generally going out is BAD – you are afraid you will get stuck somewhere" – Young Person

"Went to a gig – taxi did not pick us up afterwards! They are unreliable" – Young Person

How do the young people cope?

Without cars and parents driving them, often in groups, many of the young people would not be able to access the things all young people should be able to access such as football, gym or the cinema. Taxis are used a lot. A local secondary school give the group free use of their minibus over the summer holidays. Some walk a great deal and others said they never went outside the Haverfordwest area.

What they would like?

Occasionally, the ability to have something out of hours, ending at 10pm or 11pm would be good.

“For example young people from Fishguard wanting to go to see friends in Haverfordwest - they have to rely on good will.” Young Person

Other suggestions were: use new technology: a credit card that deducts each journey and to extend child rate up to 20 year olds in rural areas and a pass for a day – like London.

The Fishguard Town Rider was mentioned as a good service that they would like replicated.

A bus for going to the cinemas – every other Friday or even once a month was suggested.

“A late bus for cinema use or late shopping, just now and again” Young Person

“Good thing – the bus passes – from PCC because of their disabilities – they can use them in Cardiff – not sure of other places.” Youth Worker

Disabled Adults

For many of the people from this group that we interviewed, their experiences were similar to those of older people.

Minibus Use - Groups in the county such as the Stroke Club in Letterston use the PVT bus, a 14 seater. When the bus has to go to outlying areas, then everyone goes; it can be a long journey. They rely on volunteers to help out.

The Town Riders and WRVS Country Cars are used a great deal, mainly for shopping and appointments at the doctors.

Carers and spouses drive people around in the main, also neighbours and volunteers. As the gentleman who ran the stroke club said: *“If the bus is full I drive around the Letterston area – bring them to the hall”*. He used his own car to give people lifts to the Community Hall in order that they could attend the Stroke Club.

“People round here can’t do enough for you” Older Person

Groups (such as stroke clubs and the visually impaired) have minibuses that pick them up and take them to regular social gatherings. Voluntary drivers and accessible vehicles are essential for transport services for disabled people. Also many people need assistance either from a carer or the use of a guide dog.

If people are facing social exclusion health and social services refer people to voluntary organisations or other departments in the council who then arrange transport alongside the services they provide.

Visually impaired people have added barriers in accessing transport, as there is no audio signals/assistance on buses in Pembrokeshire. In rural areas if public transport is available and can be accessed it is necessary for the user to know the route and people will often need assistance when travelling.

“Community Transport in the county is brilliant for our client group especially for those who can get concessionary rates.” Visual Impairment Team

Issues include the shortage of drivers for WRVS Country Cars noted over the last few months. This was distressing for those who had doctor appointments; again neighbours and family come to the rescue. Emergency transport is an issue as you have to book RSVP Cars for Carers two days in advance.

The attitude of a Service Bus driver to the Disability Discrimination Act was mentioned. It is clearly an area for concern and action.

“There is legislation in place to make all Public Transport fully accessible. However this only requires a bus to have 1 wheelchair place which means a wheelchair user does not have confidence that they can get out and back if the space is taken. These spaces are often taken by pushchairs. Drivers need the confidence to deal with this. These are the reasons that people don’t use Public Transport; it’s easier to use a taxi.” Access Officer

“Problems are exacerbated for people with learning difficulties. The Pembrokeshire Passport has been an attempt to overcome this. It is a credit card shaped wallet. The person can prepare for and pre-plan the journey e.g. if they can’t speak they can write down what they need. We have got all the main bus companies on board with this so in theory the driver knows the person needs help.” – Access Officer

Take up has not been high at present, it is hoped once more people know about it they will use it as it is a good ‘low tech’ tool and potential solution.

Gaps - Even though WRVS Country Cars are seen as excellent, access to their service is limited as they can only offer one journey a week and the biggest gap is during out of hours/evenings/weekends. One of the biggest gaps is people being able to access social, cultural and leisure opportunities. This is very important. Health appointments and shopping are also issues.

Carers

The carers that were consulted are mainly elderly and also caring for and older, frail persons and so many of the issues and challenges they face are the same as for other older people; however some are exacerbated by the extra responsibility of caring for a family member.

“Carer 1 is poorly following stroke and her husband is in hospital. Tried Country Cars accessible vehicles but did not feel stable. When she does travel, she worries about whether she will be helped in and out of a wheelchair.”

“Carer 2 transport is important as lives down a long lane and could be quite isolated, but this is not a problem at the moment. Long recovery after fall, and is now taken out by KeyCare⁵. She also uses Country Cars and RSVP Cars for Carers.”

“Carer 3 - daughter has moved to village and helps a lot with transport. She can't access normal bus as not low-floor (waiting for hip replacement). However, used to use Green Dragon a lot and while we were talking she remembered their lift at the back and said she would get back in touch with them.”

How do they currently manage?

As the carers who were interviewed are elderly and frail they rely heavily on family and friends but also make use of community transport.

“My son helps when he can.” - Carer

“I get help from Keycare Country Cars and Cars for Carers.” - Carer

“My daughter and Cars for Carers occasionally.” - Carer

How would they like to find out about services?

Awareness of what is available was relatively high. All felt that a comprehensive booklet would be the most useful way of getting information.

“Booklet. I don't want to be visited, as I'm anxious much of the time.” – Carer

“Booklet, but I'm happy with what I'm receiving.” - Carer

“A booklet, as I don't read the local paper.” - Carer

⁵ Keycare is a home care agency working in Pembrokeshire

Transport Providers and Coordinators in Pembrokeshire

When we consulted with Transport Providers and Co-ordinators, the same issues that arose when consulting with vulnerable groups were found; all seemed to be aware of the barriers facing people, the gaps in provision and offered suggestions for improving the situation. We have not reported in detail on the provision as this information is available and accessible elsewhere, however we have listed what is available in Annex 1 of this report.

Bookings for Community Transport are coordinated through the council where two people work part time. They take bookings for: Town Rider, County Cars, Dial a Ride and Minibus Match.

The community/ personal aspect of Community Transport is valued. Older people are the main user group at present.

Strategic Issues

Community Transport offers a flexibility that statutory/public transport provision cannot and Pembrokeshire County Council has been good with concessionary fares which makes Community Transport more viable. A role for Community Transport is to fill the gaps in public transport.

"We are very fortunate in Pembrokeshire with PACTO and PCC and the integration between them – organisations working together – good partnerships and very good services – considering its rurality"

The main issue it has is lack of funding and resources being cut back. The aim is to ensure that Community Transport is more sustainable in the long term.

Transport provision needs to be coordinated and partnerships developed with the health service, to health practices and with hospitals, with youth provision, education and training environmental and cultural and leisure services and organisations.

One driver commented:

"I would like to see more joined up working between all the transport services both public and community" Volunteer Driver

Training drivers – MIDAS is important so that they are aware of disability, diversity and general equal opportunities issues as well as basic customer care.

SWITCH offers training and information and support in developing travel plans; finding out what staff want and what their needs are, setting targets and measures and also setting up car sharing schemes. They run Travel Champion Training sessions for 10 – 12 people so that these people then have the knowledge about transport and are the contact for that organisation and they also run Train the Trainer courses.

“The main barrier is lack of resources for organisations themselves – they don’t have time or staff to write and follow up travel plans” - SWWITCH

The other major barrier is lack of strategic marketing.
Statutory services have to prioritise and it is likely that some services will be cut back.

*“We have had to cut some services – there have been some complaints - but mainly people accept it – they can see why - they understand the cost - We have to balance things”
“Later at night for social; a lower priority for us”*

Community Transport develops services based on evidence of need. It has done a considerable amount of research in the past such as the Clydau Household survey, SWWITCH surveys and many audits and consultations undertaken by PACTO.

“Anecdotal stuff to start e.g. Dial a Ride – needed in towns specifically because the service was being used too much by people for short town journeys and the rural population missing out because cars were busy – so we developed the Town Riders”

There are many successes in Community Transport in Pembrokeshire with some services being sustained past their initial funding streams. Even though numbers are small, people are very reliant on services.

Marketing and Communications - Providers were aware that this was an area that needed to be looked at strategically. They felt word of mouth; leaflets and going to event and shows and giving talk were what they did best.

“We are always at shows and events.”

“We are finding still that quite lot of people don’t know about us”

“Image and perception is bad; young people don’t use it”

“Marketing – there is definitely a marketing job to be done - - we have a lack of resources so limited here – need to look at young people and marketing – information to them – how?”

“One main challenge - Marketing! Getting people to understand that if they have problems with transport that they can talk it through with us – and to understand what there is and what we can do”

It is vital that people know that this is their entitlement

During the study it became apparent that many people who could benefit from Community Transport Services were unaware of the provision. Organisations, whilst they did know of some services were not fully aware of the breadth of provision available. Marketing and communications covers many areas of operation including the continued recruitment of volunteers which is crucial to sustaining the provision of services. Marketing is often neglected when resources are limited, however taking time to think strategically and to carefully plan marketing is essential. SWWITCH said:

“A barrier we have is marketing – no person doing it and so it gets left”

An outline Marketing Strategy⁶ has been produced and this can be used in conjunction with the database of contacts that has also been developed.

The strategy will need to be worked on by PCC, PACTO and partners. It is essential that everyone is on board with marketing and see it as the responsibility of all those involved.

The Outline Marketing Plan contains the following sections

- Introduction
- Customers
- Marketing Partnerships
- Current Situation
- Market Research
- Advertising and Promoting - Messages and Media
- Marketing Plan
- Recommendations

Operational Issues

We spoke to many drivers; they drive buses and cars for people who can't get to public transport. As noted in other parts of the report the North of the county experiences a lack of transport and other services.

Some people get to know one route or one service in particular:

There is a social aspect to our service. Some of our passengers have the face to face contact that they would miss otherwise; they talk to each other and socialise during the journey.

⁶ An outline Marketing Strategy can be found in Annex 3

Providers such as the Green Dragon Bus offer social outings and these are appreciated by people who might not otherwise get out. Many of the journeys are for coffee mornings, to clubs and meetings on a weekly basis.

You have to register for the Green Dragon bus service. It is free to those with a bus pass but all others have to pay.

"We run a trip to the Cinema in Cardigan on a Sunday which is very well used and trips out once a month"

Some of the buses are getting old and there is a need for new vehicles.

WRVS Country Cars

This offers transport for most things apart from hospital appointments. Most people think it is a service for the elderly and would not think to contact them. When told of the provision most people were pleasantly surprised and wanted to know more.

"Our client group are mainly the elderly but anyone can use the service e.g. we have taken children to disabled riding classes and also to work experience".

They have over 60 volunteer drivers across the county and work closely with RSVP Cars for Carers which is a social car scheme for unpaid carers. Both organisations worry about future funding. Area organisers for WRVS Country Cars are all over the county in 10 centres.

Volunteers and Volunteer Drivers

There is now a shortage and this seems to be because there is a financial implication to being a driver:

"Some of my passengers have had difficulty getting hold of Country Cars because they seem to have a shortage of drivers but I understand that because there is minimal reimbursement – people will give their time willingly but it is different when extra cost is incurred."
Volunteer Driver

"I would like us to have enough volunteers so that no-one had to do too much – there is a threshold of 10k miles because of the cost. With more volunteers we could spread things more widely and no one need be burdened". WRVS Country Cars

Weekends and evenings are a challenge because of the lack of volunteers at these times. Also no services at Christmas and over bank holidays and people really need them then. There is also less demand but we are not sure which came first.

In theory RSVP Cars for Carers and WRVS Country Cars work across the whole county but they need volunteers in an area to make it work.

“Carers mostly use our service to attend doctors/health visits/support and strategy meetings. But we have also taken people to visit family in hospital/church. I would also take them to visit friends for a coffee, etc. but this sort of thing doesn’t happen often (funding)”
“Unpaid carers are 10-15% of any population. Most don’t know what help is out there for them. Many don’t want to identify themselves as needing help – very independent” RSVP
Cars for Carers

WRVS Country Cars have many stories of how their service makes a big difference to the quality of people’s lives.

Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport has fully accessible vehicles and is very important for wheelchair users.

As well as more volunteers these organisations would benefit from more money to fund longer hours for the paid workers who are responsible for co-ordinating services. More funding and resources would enable time to be allocated to strategic marketing activities and more co-ordinating activities.

There are many examples of good practice such as the Green Dragon Bus that offer a free service to registered users, it has a ‘run’ every day of the week including a journey to the Film Club at Theatr Mwldan in Cardigan on a Sunday.

“All the dial rides are a great success and well used and I think that is due to the fact that we are flexible.” Green Dragon Bus

The previous sections of this report have looked at the views of the people of rural Pembrokeshire. However, during the research phase of this study it became apparent that there were themes that cut across all groups. Therefore the following section will look in more detail at these.

Health

This study is not looking at transport provided by the Health Service but inevitably there is a great deal of cross over and many people across all groups spoke of getting to hospital appointment and other related issues around transport and health. Most people relied on family, friends and neighbours. A district nurse said:

“I don’t know how they would cope without their families – when they live in such isolated areas without cars” District Nurse

We spoke to health and social care representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors, district nurses, a representative from Hywel Dda Health Board about transport and others (see Annex 2). Transport is one of the 6 key priority areas for the Health Board, particularly non-emergency transport including voluntary transport for the community and vulnerable groups such as the elderly. There is a strategy in place for *“an integrated demand centre that offers support with a clear mix of services.”* And many things are being considered such as reimbursing carers for bringing patients to their appointments.

“There is a needs assessment done in the first place and then priorities are identified – Transport is always an issue! People must have transport to access services!” – Health and Well Being and social care Manager – for PCC

There is a network of organisations in the voluntary sector that identify themselves as having an interest in health and well being issues – 160 covering a wide range of people and issues such as carer groups, disability, children and young people MIND, Age concern etc. This is facilitated through PAVS. There is a pot of funding from the health board in order to enable people to travel to events; we wondered how widely known this is. Disability groups in the county are not coordinated in the same way, there was a coalition but it dissolved.

Ambulance Cars / Hospital Cars

Currently transport is provided by the Welsh Ambulance Service for emergency and stretcher transport – also car transport through a booking service for those who are eligible. The Health Board works in partnership to deliver its services with the voluntary sector, private ambulances, St John Ambulance and voluntary transport for day care for example.

There is a high demand in Pembrokeshire as residents are used to having a good service with a good volunteer base of drivers in the ambulance service and as a result the health board get more people using the service and coming from Pembrokeshire. People use hospital cars a great deal.

The Local Authority are running a scheme where the Social Care minibuses are taking people home from hospital, this is more cost effective.

The main issues were:

- General availability of transport in rural areas, often only one bus a week and have to fit in all appointments with this.

“Getting to South Pembs is difficult – there is a rehab facility in Pembrokeshire docks – a cottage/community hospital – it is very difficult to get to with many bus changes.” – Substance Misuse Worker

- Hospital cars don’t start early enough in the morning and so people can’t get to early appointment.
- Hospital cars are inflexible – set pick up times – from home and from hospital and so people can be waiting around for a long time.
- More services are being delivered outside the county. We spoke to people who were having problems getting to Cardigan, Glangwili and Morriston.

“There are 4 main hospitals used by Pembroke residents and we have to consider where the services need to be delivered across the county. It may be that more services are going to be delivered outside of the county, particularly clinical services.” Hywel Dda

- Travelling across county boundaries was an issue

“We utilize services in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion as well – especially Ceredigion up here in the north – we work across boundaries and this can sometimes be difficult “ District Nurse

“There is a new initiative – pilot stage – up here on the boundaries –It is about looking at people in this area and what they need – transport is part of this!!! - it is funded – there is money for it” –“ District Nurse

- Reaching those who do not access transport services – *“the really, really hard to reach it is very important to try to reach these.”*
- A big issue is visiting loved ones in hospitals and also nursing homes
- Access is a big issue - Community Transport must be accessible and many need support getting in and out of vehicles. There are a couple of good taxi firms with access but it is limited.
- Cost is an issue as taxis are expensive.
- Promoting services and raising awareness of the options for people

A long term aspiration of Health Services is

“..To make people aware of what exists and to zone people to ensure that there is better timing for appointments. We hope to create one telephone number/contact that deals with appointments and transport – this new service will be available from 11th November – this will mean that the public will be directed to the right person/service.” – Hywel Dda

However older people did not like this as one care home worker said:

“There is now a call centre in Swansea that they call – they don’t like this – they used to know the person at the other end of the phone.” Care Home Worker

It was widely recognised that health and well-being was reliant not just on doctors and hospitals but on a wide range of things

“Need to balance this with accessing other services and facilities that contribute to overall well being – leisure, social and the day to day needs like shopping – these must also be there because this all contributes to well being.”

And in Health as in other areas

“Rural people suffer all round - there are inequitable services. What we need is equitable services for all people – this should be the ideal – what we aim for”

District nurses are called on a lot because:

“People can’t get in – many live down little lanes – impossible for them to walk even to the main road / bus stop. Many live two or three miles from a bus stop” District Nurse

Some solutions to these issues relating to health care were:

- There is a planned intervention - a minibus to bring people in to have flu jabs.
- There is a ‘4x4 club’ in the winter to take up or to drive to remote locations in the snow (arranged through the trust)
- The community resource team – co-ordinating efforts in areas of the county.

What was needed was:

- Services we need are the ‘on demand type’
- Partnership working with social services

Community Transport

Many health workers had heard of community transport but not all

*"I have heard people say it is a lifeline for them"
"You have to book though and this is not always possible."
"One lady said she goes shopping and a driver helps her with her bags – this means a lot to her."*

What's needed was an on-demand service that operated every day, not only to go to doctor's appointments but for the dentist and optician as well.

*"Some patients are devastated if they have appointments but cannot get there!"
"In Scotland there is a scheme operating in remote areas – minibus"*

We also spoke to the drug and alcohol services. People walk and cycle and rely on family and friends. They also move from the rural areas we were told. Attending therapy was difficult:

"One man wants to go to Glangwili for therapy – impossible – he will have to wait 3 hours – before appointment."

Culture and Leisure

Leisure facilities and participation in the social and cultural life of your community contribute to well being and are important parts of civic society. Socialising and attending cultural events is not always seen as a necessity and it is felt that Community Transport has tended to concentrate on journeys for health reasons.

Not able to access **health and fitness services** and facilities was an issue

"I used to go swimming – but I don't now because the petrol is expensive - they want you to be healthy and fit but I can't get to classes and things" Resident

There used to run a group called Evergreen getting older people to the Theatre using a minibus - that group has now been replaced by Elderscreen which has recently started. It has two volunteer drivers who are 'wonderful'. The minibus goes round to pick up points around the town and its local environs offering free transport to a film screening or social event. The awareness and information for these is well coordinated

"In outlying areas we have Ambassadors who receive posters from us to distribute and they also will take out other information as well and we have a large email list which we use to contact people." Theatr Gwaun

Lack of evening buses is a major issue and it has affected attendance at the theatre, cinema and other events. *"It is possible to get in but not to get back"*. Offering transport to enable young people to access cultural and social events was seen as important. One mother said:

"I don't mind driving them there – but don't want to pick them up as well - say from Fishguard - would do one journey – but the buses are so bad" - Resident
"Services for the youngsters are the problem; we're just going to lose them." – Resident
"It would be good if they could book a bus (the young people) to go out of an evening - the taxis are too expensive." – Resident

Community and Miscellaneous

The majority of people in rural areas use cars and many feel they would be "stuck" without one. In Pembrokeshire there is a great deal of community spirit and good will as well as a stoic attitude which sometimes results in people not asking from what they need or making their views heard.

"We have always made do – there have never been many buses out here." - Resident
"It's pants to be honest! This is what you expect in rural areas" - Resident

Even though communities have changed a great deal there are a great many people who help their neighbours and friends who don't have access to transport or can't access services or facilities due to ill health. Families look after the needs of older people by doing their shopping and driving them to appointments. However as one person said:

"There are only so many favours you can ask – it is horrible for me with no car" - Resident

Many people volunteer on schemes such as the Good Neighbours Scheme where people offer lifts for important journeys: we heard of people being taken to catch trains and to go to Morriston Hospital. Many are voluntary drivers for Community Transport or Hospital Cars. There is a thriving voluntary sector offering services to all sectors of the community.

"We cope by asking people in the village to give us lifts or get us shopping - either this or you have a very restricted life!" – Older Person
"I do a lot of shopping for older people in the village - -it's getting more and more expensive to run a car though" - Volunteer

Many did not perceive any transport problems because of the support offered and older people in particular were grateful for the transport services they did have, this included the buses to take them to the luncheon clubs or day centres even though there were problems at times as outlined in this report. Community Transport was praised by those who knew of it and used it particularly the Town Riders, use of minibuses for voluntary groups and County Cars.

“Country Cars are excellent but there is not enough CT available for getting a short distance e.g. ½ mile to the doctors or on the other hand for people who need to visit hospital outside of the county.”

Work

Issues of lack of transport and the length of time journeys take, bus changes and irregular services coupled with cost makes travelling to and from work on public transport difficult and often impossible for most people who then rely exclusively on cars.

“It is cheaper to use the car, I was disappointed about this- when I moved here I wanted to use the bus to and from work, but it was impossible.” - Resident

This woman wanted to support public transport and also help with decreasing carbon emissions. People on later shifts, in shops for example suffered because of the earliness of the last bus:

“Buses stop too early in the day - if you are on a late shift – stuck.” - Resident

General

“Not enough time in the town before the bus goes back” - Resident

This was heard by all sections of the community and the general issue of long journey times. If you lived on a main bus route then there were no real problems.

Misconceptions was an issue. Many people thought that only disabled or older people could use community transport.

“I don’t use Community Transport – I thought you had to be disabled or have a bus pass or something – or old.” - Resident

The rising cost of petrol and the need to address the changes that this will bring over the coming years was recognised as a major concern. Young people in particular, and those with young families wanted to use public transport in preference to a car for social **and environmental reasons**.

“I would use buses if they were running – nothing has changed since I was a child round here.” - Resident

“I would use the buses – but getting back is the problem - would use it if it was regular and reliable.” - Resident

Young Families without a car were severely restricted particularly if they had very young children and pushchairs. They had very low awareness of community Transport and thought it was for older or disabled people only. They would welcome information about any transport alternatives. Some young mothers were stuck in the day if their husband took the car to work I haven't got a car –

"I just don't go anywhere –sometimes I borrow my husband's car for shopping" Resident

Buses don't correspond with school times and without a car some people found it difficult

Train and bus links were mentioned in Fishguard, they were seen as *"hopeless"*