

Rural bus passengers' experience

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22 May 2024



Bus passengers' priorities for improvement Passengers in metropolitan, urban and rural areas

		Rank		
Improvement	Met	Urban	Rural	
More buses are on time or within 5 minutes of when they are scheduled to arrive	1	1	1	
All passengers are able to get a seat on the bus for the duration of their journey	2	4	2	
Buses run more frequently at times when you want to use the bus	3	2	7	
All bus drivers are helpful and have a positive attitude	4	3	4	
Buses go to a wider range of destinations in your local area	5	7	3	
Tickets and passes are available that entitle you to travel on all bus services in your local area, not just those operated by a	6	6	12	
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Bus fares, tickets and passes offer better value for money	7	12	19	
Personal security onboard the bus is improved through the use of CCTV cameras on all buses	8	16	23	
Personal security whilst waiting for the bus is improved through the use of CCTV cameras at all bus stops	9	14	21	
All bus stops have a well-maintained shelter	10	5	5	
Accurate timetable and route information is available at all bus stops	11	8	9	
The correct route number and destination is clearly displayed on the outside of all buses	12	10	10	
Electronic displays showing the correct length of time until the next bus is due to arrive are available at all bus stops	13	15	18	
Tickets and passes are available that entitle you to travel on all types of public transport in your local area, not just buses	14	11	8	
All buses drive at an appropriate speed and are free from jolting	15	9	13	
The inside of the bus is clean and litter-free at all times of the day	16	18	16	
All buses have low floors and are easy to get on and off	17	13	6	
All bus stops are clean and free from graffiti	18	17	14	
All buses have sufficient room for wheelchair users and people with a buggy or pushchair to travel in comfort without obstructing other passengers	19	19	11	
Bus stops are located closer and with easier access to other forms of public transport e.g. rail stations in your local area	20	20	15	
Bus stops are located closer and with easier access to where you live	21	21	22	
The temperature inside the bus is regulated at all times of the year to ensure it is neither too hot nor too cold	22	22	20	
The length of time your bus journey takes is reduced by 5 minutes	23	27	29	
Bus tickets, travelcards and passes can be purchased more easily and from a wider range of sources	24	23	25	
Printed timetables, route information and other useful information is provided inside all buses	25	24	17	
The seats onboard the bus are very comfortable	26	25	24	
Information on fares is available at all bus stops	27	26	27	
The name of the next bus stop is announced or displayed electronically on the bus during the journey	28	29	26	
All bus drivers are smartly dressed and have a professional appearance	29	28	28	
The outside of the bus is clean and in better condition	30	30	30	

Demand responsive transport – 2016 research

- Suffolk Links, s.22 of Transport Act 1985, available six days a week, 12 hours a day to any destination within a defined area and operates with paid drivers
- Community bus services in Worcestershire, provided under s.19 of the Act, which largely follow particular times and use volunteer drivers
- Taxi share in Hampshire run to a set timetable and operated by taxi firms under s.11 of the Act



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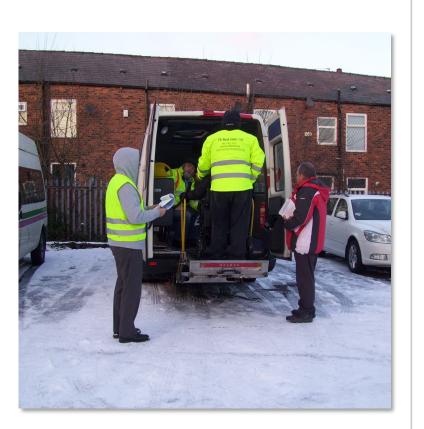
Demand responsive transport – 2016 research

- Overall cost savings but there can be significant reduction in number of passengers when conventional bus services withdrawn
- Passengers in Suffolk and Hampshire paid roughly the same to use DRT as conventional services; in Worcestershire they paid more. Fares were generally accepted as reasonable and legitimate.
- Passengers in each of the three areas appreciated the convenience of being dropped at their front door
- In Worcestershire and Suffolk the largely elderly and disabled clientele particularly appreciate the company of other regular passengers and the helpfulness of drivers; in Hampshire passengers were disappointed at loss of direct, personal connection with their regular driver
- Mixed views on having to book in advance: out of step with same day doctor's appointments in Hampshire; passengers in Worcestershire did not generally mind



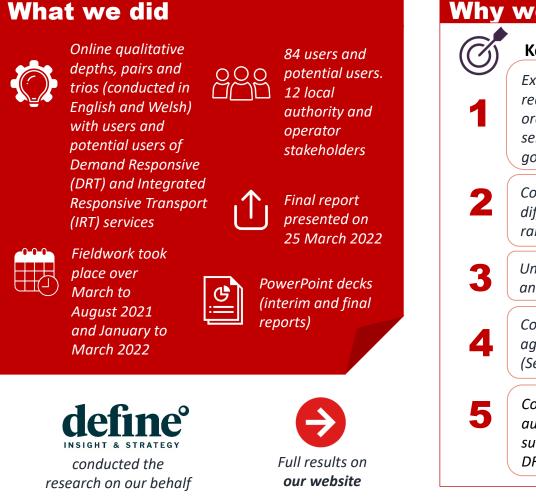
Demand responsive transport – 2016 research

- Consistently low awareness of DRT
- When the service is explained, with its accessible vehicles and front door drop-offs, younger people tend to view the services as more geared towards older and disabled people
- Potential users in Worcestershire and Hampshire may be put off by shortage of time at destination



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Fflecsi – the passenger experience of Demand Responsive Transport in Wales



Why we did it

Key Objectives

Explore user feedback from passengers and reasons for rejection by potential users (in order to understand what might make the service more attractive) to feed into Welsh government strategy

Collect views and understand the differences in experience and ambitions of a range of passenger types

Understand any differences between rural and urban operations

Compare the Welsh fflecsi operations against selected DRT services in England (Sevenoaks and Tees Valley)

Collect views from operators and local authorities about their experience, including successes, challenges and failures of DRT/IRT services in their area

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Fflecsi – the passenger experience of Demand Responsive Transport in Wales

Key findings

Despite each offering being bespoke to the location, there were strong similarities in responses across the six areas studied. While Newport was a contrast for the Welsh locations in terms of the urban nature of the environment and volume of use (since the end of the pandemic), the same triggers and barriers to usage were seen

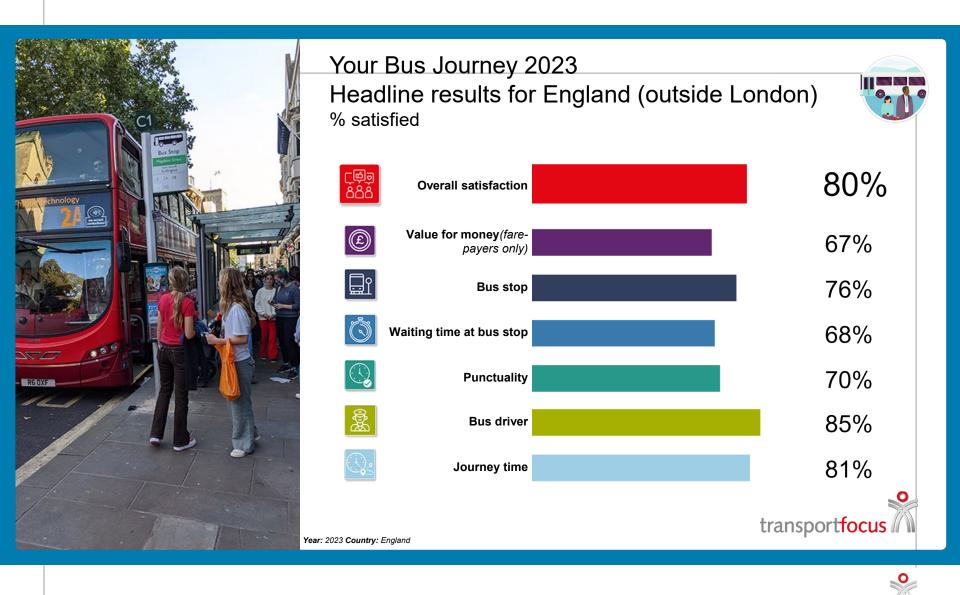
Findings indicate flexible bus services have value to passengers in those areas tested. All respondents could see some advantages in their local DRT/IRT service, and the circumstances in which it might help them as individuals. However, there are currently perceptions of some weaker points in the service: reliability (predictability), times available, and (for some) the perceived need to plan ahead



Within the research, interest from potential users increased in response to some clear surprises about the service – it's for everyone; genuine flexibility; competitive price; modern, accessible vehicles; helpful drivers. Flexible services appear to provide particular utility on routes in remote rural areas, to link remote settlements into transport hubs, and connecting between spokes in urban areas

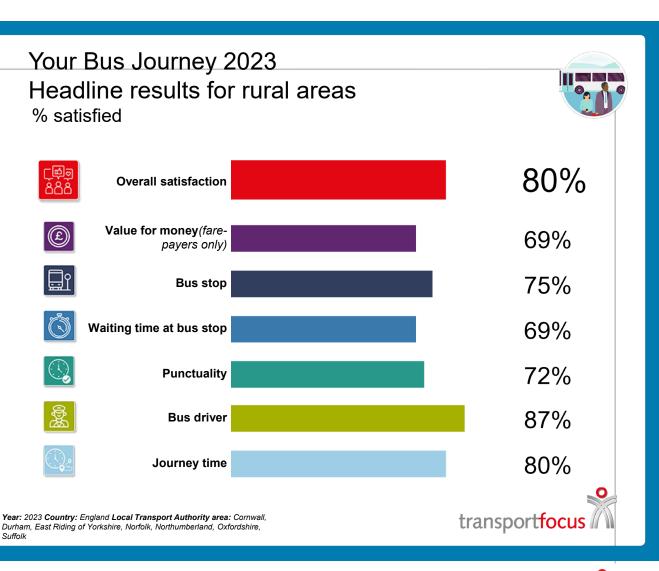
Outcome/Context

This qualitative study found that DRT services can have a significant positive impact as part of the overall transport mix in an area – providing access to public transport for those previously without it, and further options for those in more urban areas. This will feed into the body of evidence allowing Transport for Wales to understand and assess their pilot schemes across Wales, as well as providing useful learnings for other communities. We'd be pretty stuck without it here to be honest transportfocus



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Rural Enhanced Partnerships

- BSIPs and EP Plans underpinned by extensive analysis and passenger engagement, helping to define objectives and priorities
- However, funding for EP Schemes has been limited and uneven
- Some initiatives in rural areas but early days to see results
- Cornwall Bus Pilot: substantial increase in patronage following introduction of low, flat fares – need to demonstrate sustainability/exit strategy



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