



Rural bus passengers' experience

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22 May 2024

Bus passengers' priorities for improvement

Passengers in metropolitan, urban and rural areas

| Improvement | Rank | | |
|---|------|-------|-------|
| | 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 specific bus company | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| 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



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



Fflecsi – the passenger experience of Demand Responsive Transport in Wales

What we did



Online qualitative depths, pairs and trios (conducted in English and Welsh) with users and potential users of Demand Responsive (DRT) and Integrated Responsive Transport (IRT) services



84 users and potential users. 12 local authority and operator stakeholders



Final report presented on 25 March 2022



Fieldwork took place over March to August 2021 and January to March 2022



PowerPoint decks (interim and final reports)

define
INSIGHT & STRATEGY

conducted the research on our behalf



Full results on our website

Why we did it



Key Objectives

1

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

2

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

3

Understand any differences between rural and urban operations

4

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

5

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

Fflecsi – the passenger experience of Demand Responsive Transport in Wales

Key findings

1

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

2

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

3

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*



Your Bus Journey 2023

Headline results for England (outside London)

% satisfied



Year: 2023 Country: England



Your Bus Journey 2023

Headline results for rural areas

% satisfied



Year: 2023 Country: England Local Transport Authority area: Cornwall, Durham, East Riding of Yorkshire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Oxfordshire, Suffolk

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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