



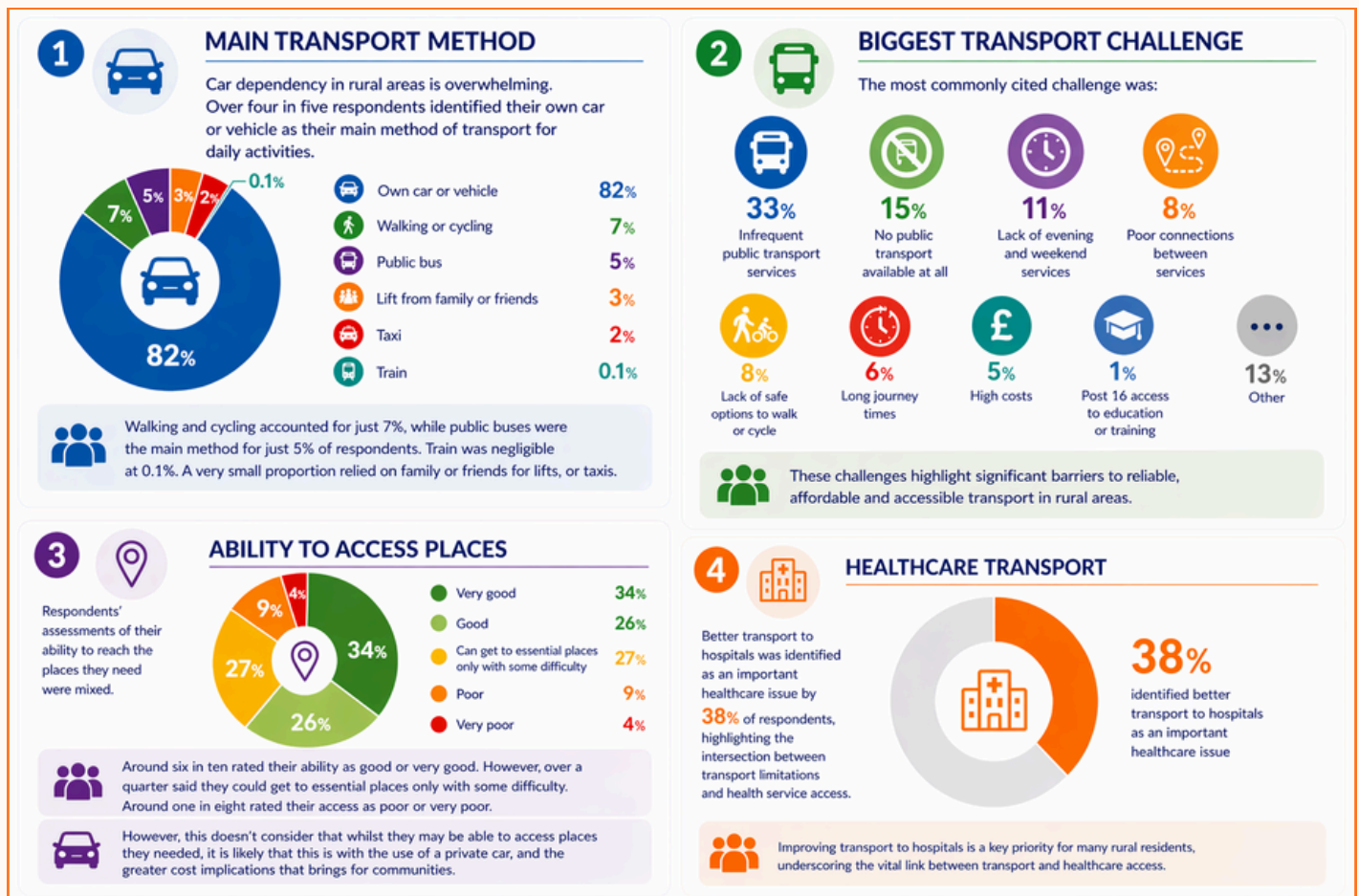
Transport is the thread that connects rural residents to employment, education, healthcare, and social life. When that thread is frayed or missing entirely, the consequences ripple through every aspect of daily existence. Yet rural transport has experienced decades of decline: bus services cut or withdrawn altogether, and a growing assumption that car ownership is the only viable option.

For those who cannot drive, the young, the elderly, those with disabilities, and those who simply cannot afford a vehicle – this assumption translates into isolation. Even for car owners, the dependency brings costs: financial, environmental, and in terms of the time spent behind the wheel simply to access basic services.

The result is a transport system that increasingly fails to meet rural needs, with consequences for economic opportunity, community sustainability, and individual wellbeing.

Key Survey Findings

The survey explored respondents' primary transport methods, the challenges they face, and their ability to access the places they need.





Participants described significant challenges with rural transport, with many experiencing reduced services or no public transport at all.

Access to essential services, including healthcare, was seen as heavily dependent on car ownership, leaving those without vehicles, particularly older residents, at risk of isolation. In response, communities have developed informal support networks, but these are not a substitute for reliable transport provision.

Limited transport options were also seen to restrict access to employment and education, particularly for younger people, contributing to longer-term demographic change as younger residents move away.

Inequalities in provision were highlighted, including variations in fares and service levels across nearby areas. Alternative modes such as cycling were often not considered safe or practical due to road conditions and infrastructure limitations. There was a strong perception that rural transport needs are not fully understood or prioritised at a national level. Participants called for basic improvements, such as minimum service levels, alongside more flexible, locally tailored solutions.

Overall, sustained funding for community-led initiatives and recognition of the diverse needs of rural areas were seen as essential to improving transport access.

WHAT RURAL RESIDENTS TOLD US ABOUT... RURAL TRANSPORT

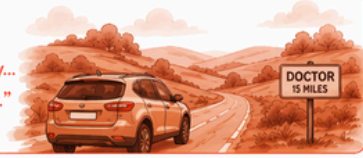
“ Can I say nought? Because we don't have any public transport where we are.”



“ I'm not going to walk 5 miles into town every day.”



“ Our doctor's is actually 15 miles away... we have to have a car.”



“ It means that people are very isolated.”



“ I've seen young people having to be ferried all over the place by their parents...”



“ He... gave up his further education and got a job, because that's all there was to do.”



“ No. I don't think they're in touch with anything in rural areas, to be honest.”



“ Providing at least a bus service to every village at least once a day would be a start.”







KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

What rural residents told us about rural transport



Rural communities want a transport system that is reliable, affordable and designed around rural realities – so everyone can access essential services, opportunities and connections.

