

Rural Issues Group Survey – Making Transport a Priority

Raw Data (Sanitised for Confidentiality)

	Issues	Evidence & Other
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited public transport in rural villages Where transport is available, its expensive Public transport can take a long time for the client to get to where they want to go as often the client has to go to additional villages before reaching their drop off point For the elderly and disabled it is difficult for them to even get to a bus stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A client living in a rural village is isolated as she lives at the bottom of a steep hill and the community centre which offers lots of activities and meals in its cafe supported by the local food bank, is at the top of the hill. There is no way she can engage with the local community without a lift. Older people in particular don't like to ask for help and therefore are socially isolated.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closure of local offices (JC+, post offices, support centres) so clients have to travel Lack of understanding by those in authority of the real meaning of rural isolation Unable to get to work interviews, benefits interviews, hospital appointments etc Prohibitive costs of rural transport 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of joined up or serviced routes Cost ability to use public transport lack of inined un transport services 	<p>I think that more and more people are talking to use about re-nationalising certain parts of the transport system. Clients from all political views. I do not hear this reflected on a cita level however.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about bus services difficult to find, especially without internet • Difficult to coordinate bus services offered by different operators • Train services infrequent 	<p>personal experience. We are also developing surveys to obtain more information from our client's, and possibly from the local Job Centre.</p> <p>Connectivity will only get worse with Austerity cuts, and the view that routes must be profitable rather than providing a service.</p> <p>The service is already poor if you are reliant on it for work, or attending interviews.</p> <p>A lot of people (like me) may not use individual services on a frequent basis but rely on them being available when needed.</p> <p>Information about services can be hard to find if you don't have internet access, and sometimes websites can be confusing</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of public transport in area • access to PIP assessment centres issue for clients locally 	<p>I feel it's a good idea. Here in the Forest access to public transport is a problem in outlying villages etc. We have various local volunteer driver services but they are often too expensive for clients to use.</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in number of buses and longer route to take in more villages • Insufficient time in Newbury to do much shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I broke my arm this year and was unable to drive, My journey into Newbury usually takes 20 mins. I tried going on the local bus but I could not travel until 9.45 and would not have arrived in time to do my shift. The only two buses back to the village were at 1.45 and 5.30 meaning no sensible time for me to travel. Also the journey took over an hour! <p>One of our buses has now been replaced by a minibus which is one of three purchased by West Berks Council to provide a reduced service. Some of the services only run during school term - no help for those working in Newbury.</p>

		<p>I believe that unfortunately it is a fact of life that if you live in a small rural village you really need some form of transport be it cycle, motor bike or car. It is for this reason that the social housing bungalows in our village (4) are no longer let to pensioners but are now being let to young people with their own transport.</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxfordshire dial-a-ride no longer available in some areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly neighbours who live in a small hamlet, no longer able to drive due to failing eyesight, one disabled so cannot walk to bus stop which is one mile away. After dial up bus service withdrawn now have to rely on volunteers to get to shops, appointments etc. (I have not discussed this with them, but would be willing to approach them for more detailed information about how is affecting them.) This will be the first winter for them. <p>I am told that colleagues elsewhere in Oxfordshire have done quite a bit of work on rural transport.</p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't access jobs • Can't access services • Can't afford phone helplines • Severe rural isolation as a result 	<p>We come across clients who cannot get in to the local office as there are either no public transport services (maybe only one service per day) or they can't afford to use it. They can't afford internet access or a phone line. Very patchy mobile service across parts of our area and they cannot afford to use their pay as you go mobile to call helplines anyway. We then end up doing a costly home visit as there is no other way the client can access the service.</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor internet access / no wi-fi • off-grid houses heated by oil - very expensive to fill up oil tank and have to pay in full for full tank. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A client came to us in financial crisis last week as she couldn't afford to heat her house. She lives in private rented house heated by oil and hadn't realised when she moved in nearly a year ago that she would need to fill up the oil tank once a year at a cost of

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of public transport 	<p>several hundred pounds. Living on benefits with a small child, she now can't afford this. We helped her to join the local credit union to get instant access to a loan to pay for her fuel and also to set up a savings account so that she can save for next year's oil costs.</p>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor bus service connecting outlying villages to local towns • Southern rail service which is exacerbating the situation with constant strikes • Slow broadband and poor mobile telephone coverage 	<p>Although highlighting the problems is really good and very worthwhile there needs to be a massive involvement in infrastructure which is extremely unlikely to happen with government (both local and national) funding as it is.</p>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of service • Choice of location and time available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bus service to a local town did not leave enough time for traveller to have a hair appointment • The day of service does not always tie up with local markets or available hospital clinics <p>Some local people would be happy to provide transport as part of their normal travel arrangements but concerned on the implications on their car insurance in the event of an incident.</p>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost - clients in Amble pay £6.40 to get to the job centre to sign on for benefits. teenagers can get a teen card but each journey is £1 and can't use on teacher training days or before 4pm weekdays • frequency - clients have difficulty with appointments when buses are every 2 hours or less often. Local train services are also very limited outside of peak work times. • early last bus - last bus from Newcastle is around 7pm which limits social activities / visiting friends and 	

	<p>relatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more and more villages have their bus service withdrawn or frequency reduced so much that they cannot use public transport at all 	
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural isolation due to shortage of bus services 	
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercialization of services leading to : sudden large increases in bus fares • Reduced number of bus services • School transport issues - including post 16 transport - prohibitive fare increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus services in Uttlesford have been scarce for many years. However, problems became far more acute in September when Essex County Council commercialized many services carrying school children. Little or no notice was given to parents; services disappeared; fares increased, sometimes by as much as three times; routes were merged, leading to overcrowding and children left stranded, changes in route times resulted in children arriving late for school. <p>This is an extract from a press release we sent out in October.</p> <p>Uttlesford Citizens Advice Facebook account has been busy this week with problems parents and young people have been sharing about school buses. Issues seem to be numerous and wide-spread.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Bus services used by children having insufficient capacity for all those who need them, regularly leaving children stranded at both the start and end of the day. · Services used by children not entitled to free school transport being withdrawn without notice or consultation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Children being directed to use services that do not get them into school on time. · Children being directed to services that leave up to an hour after school ends. · Primary and secondary children whose catchment school is not their nearest school being left without funded transport. · Buses being late and unreliable · A lack of a child rate for single journeys being is being offered on some public services · Demand Responsive Transport, which is meant to replace some bus services, does not have enough capacity at peak times, such as the start and end of the school day. · Examples of prohibitive ticket price increases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case studies below are taken from comments left by parents on our facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/UttlesfordCAB/ • My twin daughters attend Forest Hall School which is out of catchment as we only had one choice of school in our area.
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		<p>We accepted that we would have to pay for transport out of area and got places under the 'spare seats' private ticket arranged with Acme transport. Since year 7 (now year 11) the annual fare has been between approx £475-£552 per child for the first three years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This year at one weeks notice we were told that it would now be £867 each per year - a rise of 58%!! Acme tell us that it is because ECC have changed the way that they fund the 'entitled' children and the private tickets are now not subsidised. ECC say that the council are not obliged to make any arrangements or subsidy for non entitled children and the price rise was entirely down to Acme.• To add insult to injury the service we are getting is worse than it was before with the girls having to take two different buses each way with a 15-30 minute wait in Hatfield Heath.• This is impacting many people who have had a huge rise in fares, not to mention Forest Hall school who have already lost pupils because of it. In normal business practice an increase of 58% would not be allowed to happen without at the very least consultation with customers. Why are Acme able to do this to parents who often can do little about it except drive their children to school therefore adding to congestion on the roads and pressure on parents who need to work. It is a disgrace!• The service is shocking. The prices have been hiked with very little notice. The buses get the children to school late;
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		<p>sometimes they don't turn up and sometimes they break down (water leak today).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It will cost my 17 year old £25 a week to travel to school for year 13. She has no choice but to catch a bus: both her parents work; the train station is too far away from the school and the paths are unsafe. She, of course, wants to do her A levels but, even if she didn't, she'd still have to attend full time education until she's 18, in line with government policy. Unfortunately, our local school has no 6th form of any description. All the local 16 to 18 year olds rely on public transport in order to abide by the law. Then our government (at local level) chooses to make it prohibitively expensive for its future workforce to go to the 6th forms it provides. Truly inexplicable; truly unfair; truly inexcusable.• Our catchment school is not our nearest school, distance wise, but I chose our catchment school as the 1st choice for my son knowing full well he would not get into the nearest school as it is over subscribed. We live over 7 miles from any high school, so should get free transport, but we were told we don't qualify as we didn't put the nearest school as our first choice.• Children in higher years still get free transport under the old school transport policy , but we are forced to pay up to £1000 for our son to travel on the same bus as those travelling for free. We are a one wage family and we are
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		really struggling.
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transport in rural villages • Distance to travel to the job centre • Cost of travel to the job centre • Problems accessing work 	<p>Poole Job Centre serves the Purbeck area. Clients experience problems where either there is no bus or train service to Poole from where they live or it is prohibitively expensive to travel there regularly. We often see clients who need to travel to the job centre to sort out an issue and do not have the money to do so. Clients living in rural villages with no transport find it almost impossible to secure work as they do not have the means to travel to where the work is. Bus services are going to be cut and there has been a consultation which we have encouraged clients to get involved in. We are awaiting the outcome of the consultation but it is likely that the situation for our clients will get worse not better.</p>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First bus is at 8am through my village so people unable to get into Bridgwater/Taunton to work if they start before 9.30am/10am.Puyrbeck • Last bus is around 7.30pm (in the winter) which makes it difficult for people who work in the village to get home if they work late shifts. 	
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequent Services • Fares too expensive especially for those on benefits • Bus journeys often complicated because of changes and waits between connections 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clients having to go to Luton and Ilford from Buntingford and other East Herts villages for ESA medicals find the journey virtually impossible and totally impossible if the appointment is early in the morning 2. Clients having to go to Hertford to sign on from Buntingford and nearby villages often have unreasonable waits to return home, plus the expense involved

		<p>3. Clients with mental health problems and needing to keep health appointments find they cannot cope with the journey by bus which is the only available public transport</p> <p>4. Client finding it difficult to cover the cost of transport to school for their children</p>
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting of bus services from 3+ an hour to 2 an hour (erratically) • Very erratic bus services - buses not arriving on time / sometimes departing early • Cutting local bus routes • County Council failure to prioritise public transport • At a minimum, bring back a local transport forum, enabling a dialogue with the local authority - at the moment it appears nobody is addressing these issues for clients in Sedgemoor - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus service 67 Burnham to Wells being stopped at the end of the year - Clients based in Mark, Wedmore and surrounding areas will not be able to get access to support they previously managed to access on the bus • Bus service 21 has gone from every 20 minutes to two an hour. However this is erratic and there has been a frequent failure of them turning up - additionally sometimes they turn up then depart early. • In less than a week two clients who have been late for appointments at Job Centre, meaning they have to make a fresh appointment and then will face the possibility/likelihood of being sanctioned. • Loss of service through Brent Knoll/East Brent
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transport • Disability 	<p>Disabled clients can really struggle to access local amenities in rural areas, the extra time needed to be planned into their journeys can be as much as five or six times it takes to get into your car and "pop into town".</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I myself rely upon a disabled bus pass to travel to work, First buses have now changed to their less frequent winter timetable, on top of halving the number 21 service, which now travels from Taunton to Burnham-on-Sea instead of Weston-Super-Mare, and from January the bus ticket price will have increased by approximately 40% since the same time 2016. • If I wasn't able to get a lift to the nearest bus stop, a simple journey from Burnham to Bridgwater, return, would take me two hours (without waiting times) for a total journey that would only take 45 minutes by car, and I am not wheelchair bound. • The changes First have put in place for all bus pass users, only allowing to be used after 9.30am, means that I cannot get to work using my bus pass before 10.40am, not a very helpful start time for the majority of business hours. <p>Many clients to the Advice Line service also refer to rural locations and public transport provision, as being a major reason as to why they are forced to use the service as getting to their local office or satellite branch to "see someone", which is usually imperative to their issue, is so problematic for them particularly at the time of their most need.</p> <p>I understand that rural provision of public transport is problematic</p>
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		<p>for financial feasibility.</p> <p>But for those of us whose disability stopped our chosen careers and we have needed to retrain to get back into the job market, to then find that the local provider has made it impossible to attend regular office hours can be such a blow to their confidence.</p>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working parents paying for sixth form students to go to school on a bus and initially told they would have to pay one year's cost in advance. extra curricular activities mean the bus is missed and parents having to travel from work early or leave their child there until they can get there Poor mobile phone signal. Children/teenagers cannot be allowed to walk home long for many miles along dark country lanes as it's simply not an option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My daughter's difficulties working in Dorchester full time, living in Buckland Newton and a 15 and sixteen year old in school in Sherborne. Her husband works in Poole. My daughter is currently struggling to hold down a job and meet the needs of her young teenagers and keep them safe especially in the dark which is an added worry. Loyalties between leaving work early and family commitments places the parents in an impossible situation. Also, the cost went into hundreds for the school bus for the year, which my daughter simply couldn't afford and only through fighting this and raising it with her mp was she able to get monthly payments.
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor provision of public transport Inconsistency in infrastructure Inconsistency in provision for older people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As someone who lived in a rural area (Llanrwst), where provision of public transport was already patchy, the news some six months ago that Arriva, the main provider of public transport, was ending its service entirely came as a bitter blow. Having recently changed employment proved very fortunate as I would not have been able to continue in that post and would have faced the prospect of having to give up work.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My grandmother who is Registered Blind has also experienced the problems faced with very patchy transport facilities. She does not live on a main bus route and her disability means she requires taxis etc to even reach a service which is problematic.
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our rural clients effectively receive less benefits than their urban counterparts - people who live in towns and cities can walk to sign on, or take frequent, quick, reliable and inexpensive public transport. Our clients often end up paying more than 10% of their money just to get to the job centre to sign on, . • Journey's that take less than an hour by car can take several buses and the best part of the day, making journeys very stressful for clients and leaving a very small window in the middle of the day to get somewhere, complete an appointment and catch the many buses home again. Makes simple tasks like visiting your doctor or JCP difficult and daunting - the knock on effect of this is that people end up having their support removed and experiencing massive difficulties. • There are parts of the community that are completely cut off and clients struggle to access basic services if they do not own a car/cannot drive. This stops people from being able to see their doctors etc. • There are big gaps throughout Shropshire were there just isn't a job centre - south Shropshire clients have to go to a different county to sign on and for other 	<p>Case studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin is homeless and is currently living in a tent after being kicked out of his friends rented accommodation where he was previously staying. As a result he could no longer continue working at his job and has had to move away to a different town. Martin has no money to travel the 24 mile round trip to the Jobcentre to sign on to receive Universal Credit and attend subsequent appointments. Martin was advised to sign on at a local library and will walk the 24 mile round trip to attend the jobcentre initial meeting to begin receiving UC as he is desperate. Because he hasn't been able to begin this process previously Martin has no money, is hungry and had to have meal vouchers and a food parcel made up of food that needed no more than boiling water to prepare as he does not have a home or access proper cooking facilities. • Sophie lives in a village in south Shropshire, and is claiming ESA. She was asked to attend a work-focused interview in Shrewsbury, which involves an expensive 60 mile round trip and 3 buses to get there and 3 buses to get back (taking 2 hours each way).

	<p>clients the 'nearest' job centre is so difficult to get to clients often don't manage to hitch a lift or aren't up to walking 20+ mile round trips and are unable to attend to get the money they are entitled to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophie suffers from anxiety and depression and experienced a panic attack on the day of the interview triggered by the stress of the impending journey to the jobcentre plus. As she failed to attend the interview, Sophie had her ESA withdrawn and is currently ineligible to claim Universal Credit. Because of this when Sophie came to see us she had been experiencing financial hardship for a number of weeks. • Dev lives and works on his landlord's rural farm. When he started experiencing back and shoulder pain he got treatment from the GP who is based in the nearest market town. Unfortunately Dev is rarely able to get to see his GP due to a lack of available appointments and a total lack of public transport, and he struggles to ring them as he doesn't have credit on his mobile phone – sometimes he can borrow a friend's phone but not always. • Dev had successfully applied for ESA but this stopped in July as he was unable to provide a recent sick note from his GP, this had a knock on effect and his housing benefit stopped too and now he is experiencing considerable hardship. He is reliant on the generosity of his friends and help from local food banks to keep himself fed and clothed.
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural clients having difficulty accessing services because of transport costs • Specific services are delivered in a way which disadvantages rural clients or adds to their costs • Organisations are centralising services as they can't 	<p>Rural clients having difficulty accessing help from foodbanks because they can't get to the foodbank and the foodbank can't always deliver.</p> <p>Clients having to walk for miles to access services e.g. signing on, because they can't afford the bus fare.</p>

	<p>afford the costs of maintaining face to face access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural clients can face difficulty access advice 	<p>Local authority emergency support service (local social fund replacement) won't fund replacement washing machines except in very limited situations (e.g. medical reasons) but people in rural areas limited in terms of access to a launderette.</p> <p>Range of organisations, including local charities, are moving out of rural towns and centralising services in urban areas. Some will offer to go out to rural areas to deliver the service but only if they can get enough people together at the same time.</p> <p>We currently operate from 13 sites across Northumberland but we know that some people have difficulty accessing our advice because they can't get into an office and telephone advice is not always suitable.</p>
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenses Fares in comparison to urban areas Limited service - some villages only have two buses in a day at best. Service can be late or withdrawn leaving people stuck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients have complained about the cost of fares especially when they are unemployed and have to travel to the Job Centre - Costs average around £6.50 for a return. This is quite a substantial chunk of JSA. The number of buses servicing some rural communities are often very limited. A client could only come to an appointment on a Thursday as this was the only day there was a bus from her village into Alnwick. She had a two hour window to go things in Alnwick before the last bus back to the village. Clients have mentioned being late to sign on as the bus was

		<p>either late or did not turn up - this can result in benefit sanctions if the JC do not believe client.</p>
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequent bus times. Bus times have been recently cut again. • Cost for people under pension age. • Getting into work on time and at a reasonable cost. • Getting to further education both time and cost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents struggle to support children in further education because of the cost of transport, for example Newcastle college are over is 65 miles away there is a main line train service but this is expensive. Also this limits access to apprenticeships because current bus services do not meet bus timetables. • There are no big employers in rural areas so need to use public transport to access work. Often the buses do not get into the towns on time to be able to find or keep work. This leaves them with only options of short term seasonal work locally with sometimes poor employment practices and zero hour contracts keeping them in the poverty trap. One client who was sanctioned for not applying for a job could not get into the town on time for the job so had not applied. For those without access to the internet they have to come into the towns to access a computer to look for work or apply for benefits. • Shift work and seasonal work and public transport do not mix. One highly skilled worker had to change buses twice in order to get to work but had to leave as could not get there on time. Some journeys have many stops on the way making journeys slow. It is difficult to move house because of the shortage of affordable housing.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an Island in North Northumberland, Lindesfarne where tides have a bearing on transport issues and schooling. • There is a chronic shortage of affordable housing in the towns and this means that people have to live in the rural areas with cheaper rents even if this is not their first choice to live in the country but then there are additional costs of transport. • The young or the long term unemployed have no resources to get a car or even bicycle to get to work or look for work. For example a young cl got a job for a local store, the bus would not get him to work on time and therefore had to rely on his grandfather to take him to work. • Clients cannot access cheaper food stores such as markets, or larger supermarket chains, and many local rural stores and post offices have closed or are expensive. Cannot get access to benefits or bank accounts because rural banks are closing. Our clients cannot access the food bank because of lack of transport or fares. • The lack of public transport means it is difficult to access entertainment such as the local theatre, the older population and young parents can be isolated isolated. • There seems to be a shortage of child care available in rural areas and this limits employment options for the young
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		<p>putting them in a poverty trap. This also limits opportunities to socialise and gain different experiences for the children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To access other services for example hospital appointments means sometimes a long journey and is costly. • We now have only 2 ambulances serving north Northumberland. The A&E department for serious injury is approx 55 miles away. • There is a limit to the options of getting help and advice face to face. Clients often have mobile telephones but no money on them. • Many clients cannot access utility companies because of the cost of telephones and come to this office for support. There is also limited access to Pay Points to get meter keys in rural areas.
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty for older people to access public transport for important appointments • Lack of buses now subsidised routes have been curtailed • PIP and ATOS appointments a long way away 	
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of public transport leads to isolation and hardship. • Accessibility and affordability. 	<p>1. Fatima is a single parent originally from Morocco and speaks poor English. She has 3 children, one at the local grammar school and the others in years 2 and 4 in junior school. She suffers from stress, anxiety, epilepsy, is on ESA and was</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to appointments, work, medical assessments, court hearings - • large rural district. Few options for people living in the villages who do not have access to car or cannot drive 	<p>forced to leave the family home with her children due to domestic abuse. She was housed in temporary accommodation in Stratford and sent the two younger children to the school closest to her where they are settled and happy. She was then rehoused by the Council on an estate out of town, around 2 miles from the school. She has to take them to school by bus each day and the company providing the service, Johnsons Coaches, will not issue return tickets before 9am. So she has to buy expensive single tickets for each journey. Warwickshire County Council will not issue a bus pass as the children are not at the closest school to their new home, The school does not currently have spaces for both the children. She is on benefits and pays £25 a week on bus fares.</p> <p>2. We have a client, a young woman who lives in Stratford and has been assisted by one of our projects. She got a job at Warwick Hospital but felt unable to take it because there was no bus at convenient times and the fares would have made the job financially unviable. In the end her mother paid for her to be insured on her (mother's) car which has enabled her to take the job.</p> <p>3. Tricia is 52 years of age and has struggled with her disabilities since her early 30's. She lives with her partner in a 2 bed housing association (Orbit Heart of England) bungalow in a small village 5 miles outside Stratford upon Avon having moved there in April. Prior to this they lived with his mother for a while in a very small flat in Henley in Arden. They have had a very rocky road but with great courage and humour have stayed the course when many</p>
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		<p>may have faltered.</p> <p>Tricia was first diagnosed with severe osteo-arthritis in 2000 in her spine and hips and this is now affecting every part of her body. 6 vertebrae in her spine were very badly damaged when she was subjected to repeated assaults when younger and in a previous relationship, Her then partner used to knock her to the ground and repeatedly kick her in the spine . Her new GP has informed her that it is imperative she has a right hip-replacement as soon as possible and then the other hip will be replaced in a year's time. She has also been re- assessed by Warwickshire County Council Adult Social Care Team who are providing her with a wheelchair shortly, this having been previously refused..</p> <p>Tricia has very limited mobility and has to use 2 elbow crutches to transfer herself from her current chair to the bathroom or to a wheel chair. She can only move with assistance and support from her partner and it is a very painful process to observe. She is in receipt of Enhanced Rate PIP, both Mobility and Daily Living and is in the Income based ESA Support Group. Patrick her partner for 7 years is in receipt of Carers Allowance and is an amazing person who devotes his life to being Tricia's support-system.</p> <p>She also has Diabetes 2, Arrhythmia and has a stent in her right kidney after it stopped functioning in 1976.</p> <p>TRANSPORT</p> <p>She has to attend Clinics/ Scans /blood Tests etc at Stratford Hospital, Warwick Hospital and University Hospital, Coventry as well as regular visits to her GP at Shipston Medical Centre. They have no transport of their own and therefore have to use the bus service which runs every 2 hours to Stratford or to</p>
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		<p>Shipston. The only way Tricia can become mobile is by using her motorised wheel chair but this does not fit through the doorway of many buses and she has been refused access on to buses because of this.</p> <p>She recently was prevented from getting on to a returning bus from Stratford to Newbold because she was told that they could only carry one wheelchair at a time and there was already one on the bus. They had to wait another 2 hours for the next bus in very bad weather.</p> <p>She cannot access UBus because the back door is not wide enough to accommodate her wheel chair.</p> <p>They have to make use of the Volunteer Driver Scheme but have been informed that VASA are cutting back the service in Shipston on Stour. There is a £2 administration fee and last week a trip to Stratford Hospital cost £7.60 each way. A taxi costs £26 each way to Stratford. Paying for transport even under this scheme is expensive on a low income</p> <p>Hospital Transport generates the highest number of complaints - it doesn't turn up at all, it is late – Tricia recently missed a 4.30pm appointment at with a Specialist at Warwick she had been waiting 3 months for – driver turned up at 10 to 5. Overstretched and understaffed drivers are sent all over Warwickshire and nobody relies on getting to the hospital on the right day or right time.</p> <p>Have emailed Tricia for breakdown of costs and we are getting more details for clients – a taxi from Stratford to Shipston is £40 one way and a client was charged £60 to go one way from Shipston to Hospital in Moreton.</p> <p>Most clients say they have to cancel appointments frequently because they don't have the money.</p>
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		<p>Designing a questionnaire to put out to clients – Tricia would be very vocal for us – she is effectively trapped in her home.</p> <p>I think our rural transport issues are real. The cost and availability of public transport coupled with our large rural district are two of the reasons why we have so many outreach offices, and succeed in getting project funding for home visiting and taking our CA service out into the community. It was a factor in our objecting to the closure of the County Court in Stratford in 2011 and it has an impact in the field of health when people have to travel to visit hospital/surgeries. Not to mention the problems around claiming benefits and signing on in person, attending Jobcentre appointments, medical assessments for ESA etc etc.</p> <p>We also see problems for people accessing school transport. The local volunteer bureau who provides drivers for people needing hospital appointments etc are having difficulty in attracting volunteers and have been increasing the cost of the service so that users are no longer able to afford it.</p> <p>The biggest local housing association, Orbit Heart of England insist on their tenants against whom they are taking possession proceedings attending court in Warwick which is often difficult if not impossible, leading to threatened homelessness.</p> <p>Some people who have difficulties with public transport might turn out to have to have health issues that limit their ability to use the buses, even though there is a service. For example we have a client couple in Mickleton, around 10 miles from Stratford who we visit in their homes because they can't get into Stratford to see us. He is terminally ill with cancer and she has health and mobility problems. They rely on their daughter</p>
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		<p>who works full time to take them to hospital etc. However there is an hourly bus service between Mickleton and Stratford, and they are retired so eligible for a free bus pass. In this case it's their health that's the main problem, making a long bus journey around the villages too uncomfortable and exhausting to contemplate. Also doctors' surgeries, hospitals etc are often not close to the bus stop. They are on Pension Credit, AA, carers etc and paying third parties for transport is expensive. They feel as though they are trapped in this village. Hope this helps. Would be interested in the results of all this and in possible outcomes as we feel that no matter how hard we try, with one-off client problems particularly we rarely get a successful result.</p>
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