

MONMOUTHSHIRE COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME

Volunteer Drivers - Barriers to Volunteering

Research Project Report



Executive Summary

Introduction

The Monmouthshire Community Car Scheme plays an essential role in providing transportation to individuals who need additional support for their daily activities, medical appointments, and social engagements. This executive summary highlights the main findings from the research project on volunteer drivers, addressing both the motivations and challenges they face, and provides actionable recommendations to enhance the program's effectiveness and volunteer satisfaction.

Key Findings

Volunteer Motivations

Volunteers in the car scheme are primarily motivated by a desire to give back to their community, maintain an active lifestyle, and form new social connections. Key motivations include:

- *Community Contribution:* Many volunteers are driven by the altruistic desire to support isolated or vulnerable individuals, especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- *Personal Fulfillment:* Volunteers report a sense of purpose and satisfaction from helping others, noting the positive impact their contributions have on passengers' lives.
- *Social Interaction:* The opportunity to meet new people and form friendships is a significant incentive for many volunteers.

Challenges Faced by Volunteers

Despite the positive experiences, volunteers encounter several challenges that impact their ability to serve effectively:

- *Logistical Issues:* Navigating to unfamiliar locations, parking difficulties, and managing tight schedules are common logistical barriers.
- *Passenger Coordination:* Handling the needs of passengers with mobility issues or specific health conditions can be complex and demanding.
- *Personal Constraints:* Balancing volunteering with personal commitments and health concerns can limit availability and consistency.

Recommendations for Improvement

Training and Support

To enhance volunteer readiness and confidence, the following measures are recommended:

- *Comprehensive Training Programs:* Develop detailed training sessions covering passenger handling, navigation, and logistical challenges.
- *Mentorship Systems:* Pair new volunteers with experienced drivers for guidance and support during the initial stages.

Enhanced Communication Tools

Improving communication between volunteers and scheme administrators can address many of the logistical challenges:

- *Digital Scheduling Tools:* Implement digital tools and apps to streamline scheduling and reduce errors.
- *Detailed Passenger Profiles:* Provide volunteers with comprehensive passenger information to better prepare for trips and foster meaningful interactions.

Logistical Solutions

Addressing parking and navigation challenges can significantly ease volunteer operations:

- *Floating Blue Badges:* Provide temporary blue badges for easier parking access at hospitals and other critical locations.
- *Navigation Training:* Offer training on navigation tools like Google Maps and What3Words to help volunteers find destinations more efficiently.

Flexible and Adaptive Scheduling

To accommodate volunteers' varying availability and enhance their engagement:

- *Flexible Scheduling Options:* Allow volunteers to choose schedules that fit their personal commitments.
- *Alternative Engagement Opportunities:* Offer non-driving roles such as administrative support or participation in community events for those who may face challenges with regular driving.

Recognition and Appreciation

Acknowledging the efforts of volunteers can boost morale and retention:

- *Volunteer Recognition Programs:* Develop appreciation events and awards to recognise significant contributions.
- *Feedback Mechanisms:* Establish robust channels for volunteers to share their experiences and suggestions, ensuring they feel valued and heard.

Conclusion

Implementing these recommendations can significantly improve the volunteer experience within the Monmouthshire Community Car Scheme. By addressing the identified challenges and enhancing support structures, the scheme can ensure a sustainable and rewarding environment for volunteers. These efforts will ultimately contribute to the continued success and impact of the car scheme, providing essential services to the community and enriching the lives of both passengers and drivers.

The research highlights the crucial role of volunteer drivers in the success of the community car scheme and underscores the importance of strategic improvements to enhance volunteer recruitment, retention, and satisfaction. Through these enhancements, the scheme can continue to thrive and support the Monmouthshire community effectively.



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