

MONMOUTHSHIRE COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME

Volunteer Drivers - Barriers to Volunteering

Research Project Report



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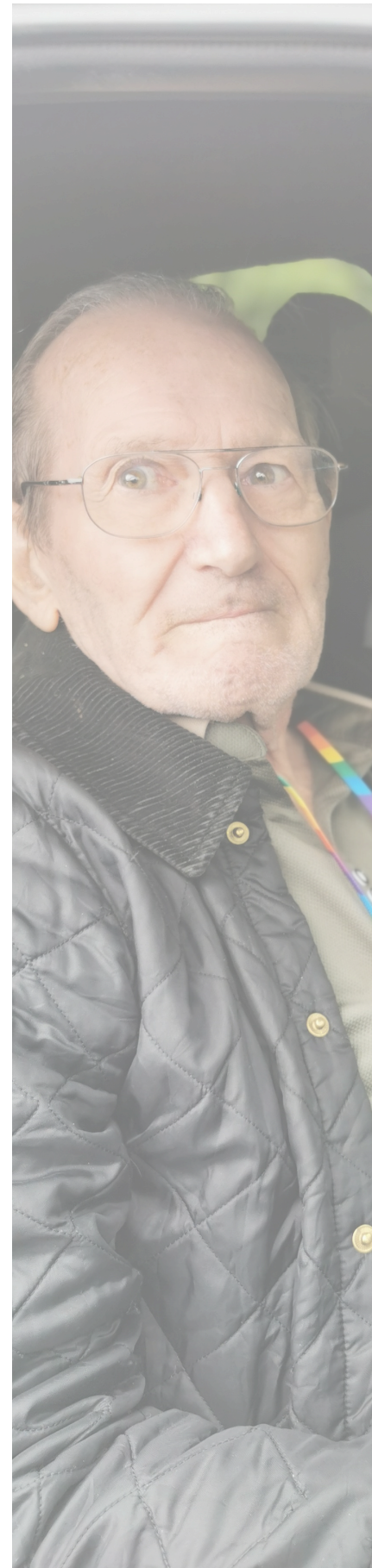
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Summary

The community car scheme has been a vital resource for many individuals, providing essential transport services to those who need it most. Volunteers who participate in this scheme have shared a wealth of insights about their experiences, highlighting both the rewarding aspects of their involvement and the challenges they face. This report aims to summarize these experiences and provide actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the scheme and improve volunteer satisfaction.

Volunteer Motivations and Positive Outcomes

Volunteers are driven by a strong desire to give back to their community, stay active, and meet new people. Many have found that volunteering offers a sense of purpose and fulfillment, as well as opportunities to form meaningful connections. One volunteer noted, "Meeting different people and realising the benefits it brings for a lot of them," while another shared, "I get satisfaction from knowing that I have helped people get to appointments they may otherwise find difficult to attend."

Challenges Faced by Volunteers

Despite the positive experiences, volunteers have encountered several challenges, including:

- **Logistical Issues:** Difficulties with parking, navigating to unfamiliar locations, and managing tight schedules are common. One volunteer highlighted, "Finding the location in rural areas can be challenging. What3Words would solve that problem."
- **Passenger Coordination:** Managing passenger needs, especially for those with mobility issues or specific health conditions, can be complex. A volunteer suggested, "It would be very useful for the driver to have a bit of info about passengers to initiate conversation."
- **Personal Constraints:** Balancing volunteering with personal commitments and health issues can affect availability. As one volunteer mentioned, "Additional demands from my own parents might limit my availability."

Recommendations for Improvement

To address these challenges and improve the overall experience for volunteers, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Comprehensive Training and Support:** Develop enhanced training programs and a mentorship system for new drivers. Regular check-ins and active engagement from scheme management can provide ongoing support and boost morale.
2. **Enhanced Communication Tools:** Implement text reminders and digital scheduling tools to reduce scheduling errors and improve coordination. Providing detailed passenger profiles can also help drivers better prepare for their trips.
3. **Logistical Solutions:** Introduce floating blue badges and identification cards to alleviate parking issues. Offer training on navigation tools like Google Maps and What3Words to help volunteers find locations more efficiently.
4. **Flexible and Adaptive Scheduling:** Provide flexible scheduling options and alternative engagement opportunities for volunteers with varying availability. Recognize and reward volunteers through appreciation programs and robust feedback mechanisms.

By addressing these areas, the community car scheme can ensure a sustainable and rewarding experience for its volunteers while continuing to deliver invaluable services to the community. These recommendations, derived from the firsthand experiences of volunteers, aim to enhance the efficiency, satisfaction, and overall impact of the scheme.

Background

About the Car Scheme

The Bridges Community Car Scheme offers friendly, flexible, door-to-door transport for people who require additional support getting to local shops, social activities, medical appointments or visiting family & friends.

The scheme is more than just a transport solution. The friendly volunteer drivers offer support and extra care to the passengers - a journey, but much more.

The drivers are provided with advice and training on how to assist passengers into and out of the care and how to appropriately support passengers with additional needs.

Car Scheme Passengers

All passengers are pre-registered to join the Car Scheme. The team at the Bridges makes home visits to meet and assist the passengers transport needs and requirements, both big and small.

Once registered, the passenger can call the booking line and request a journey. The opening hours are Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm, with the scheme taking bookings between 10am - 2pm.

Car Scheme Drivers

The scheme has a network of volunteer drivers who support the operation of the car scheme using their own vehicles. Mileage costs are reimbursed to the volunteer driver.

The team at the Bridges meet with potential drivers to discuss how the Car Scheme works, and to complete the registration process. All drivers are required to have an enhanced DBS check, which the scheme pays for.

New drivers are supported by a small team who will assist with induction, ongoing training, and continued support. From then on, the drivers are contacted with possible bookings. Drivers can opt for regular bookings or have the flexibility to support one-off journeys.



The car scheme is fantastic and has enabled me to feel more positive about my future.



Introduction

The community car scheme in Monmouthshire plays a vital role in providing transportation to those in need, fostering social inclusion and improving the well-being of local residents. However, the recruitment and retention of volunteer drivers remains a significant challenge. This report aims to assess the barriers faced by potential volunteer drivers in this rural community, understand the factors influencing their decision to participate, and develop strategies to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the scheme.

The primary objectives of this research are to:

1. **Assess Barriers:** Identify and understand the barriers that potential volunteer drivers face, which impact their recruitment and participation.
2. **Identify Influencing Factors:** Explore the motivations, concerns, and perceived benefits that influence individuals to become volunteer drivers.
3. **Analyse Impact:** Examine how these barriers affect the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the community car scheme in addressing transportation challenges in Monmouthshire.
4. **Develop Strategies:** Formulate targeted recommendations to overcome these barriers and enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer drivers.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for assessing the barriers faced by potential volunteer drivers in Monmouthshire involves a multi-faceted approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

Research Team

Our core research team was made up of 4 employees at the Bridges Centre:

- **Pritipal Dosanjh-Paul & Megan Frige** - Community Car Scheme Coordinators
- **Mike Logan** - Wellbeing Director
- **Rhian Hathaway** - Lead Researcher

Literature Review

Initially, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken to identify existing research and best practices from similar rural communities.

Data collection

Data collection was carried out using our online system RoadXs, to capture quantitative data such as number of journeys, number of drivers and passengers, etc.

Survey Design and Pilot Testing

The process began with drafting a set of survey questions aimed at capturing a wide range of volunteer experiences.

Survey Types

Several surveys were created in an online format using Microsoft forms for current, former and prospective volunteers. Volunteers were offered a variety of ways to engage in the survey:

- Online (self-completion)
- Telephone interview (form completed by researcher)
- Face-to-face interview (form completed by researcher).

Survey Questions

1. Why did you decide to become a volunteer driver for the community car scheme?
2. On average, how much driving do you do for the community car scheme?
 - Less than 1 trip per week
 - 1 – 2 trips per week
 - 3 or more trips/week
3. Is this amount of driving:
 - About right for you
 - Too much
 - Not enough
4. What positive outcomes have you gained from your involvement in the community car scheme?
5. Please tell me about any specific challenges you have faced while volunteering as a driver? (e.g. personal challenges; difficulties with passenger journeys).
6. How have these challenges affected your willingness to continue as a volunteer driver?
7. How did you resolve these challenges?
8. Please tell me about any suggestions you have for how the car scheme could help volunteer drivers overcome challenges.
9. Can you think of any changes in your personal circumstances that might affect your ability to continue volunteering?
10. What could we do, that would help you to carry out your role with the car scheme more effectively?
11. Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, how likely you are to recommend the car scheme to others (1 = highly unlikely to 10 highly likely)?

Pilot

To ensure the questions were clear and comprehensible, we piloted the survey with a small group of volunteers. Their feedback was invaluable in refining the questions, making sure they accurately addressed the aspects we intended to explore and were easily understood by participants. This step added robustness to our methodology by minimizing misunderstandings and ensuring the data collected was relevant and reliable.

Thematic Analysis

Our thematic analysis involves identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Here's how we conducted our analysis:

Familiarisation with the Data: We began by thoroughly reading all the survey responses multiple times to become deeply familiar with the content. This immersion helped us gain an initial understanding of the recurring ideas and sentiments expressed by the volunteers.

Generating Initial Codes: Next, we systematically highlighted and coded significant words, phrases, and sentences that captured key aspects of the volunteers' experiences. For example, phrases like "strong sense of purpose" and "help others" were coded under initial themes related to motivation.

Searching for Themes: We then reviewed the codes to identify broader patterns or themes. Codes were grouped into potential themes based on their similarity and relevance. For instance, codes related to "altruism," "community spirit," and "personal fulfillment" were grouped under a theme called "Volunteer Motivations."

Reviewing Themes: At this stage, we refined the themes to ensure they accurately reflected the data. We checked that the themes were coherent and distinct, and that all relevant data had been captured. If a response didn't fit neatly into an existing theme, we considered whether it indicated the need for a new theme or sub-theme, or if it was an outlier that did not significantly impact the overall analysis.

Defining and Naming Themes: Finally, we defined and named each theme, providing a clear narrative that explained what each theme represented and how it related to the volunteers' experiences. For example, the theme "Challenges Faced by Volunteers" included sub-themes such as "Logistical Issues" and "Passenger Coordination."

Examples of Thematic Analysis

- *Fitting into a Theme:* A response like "Meeting different people and realising the benefits it brings for a lot of them is very fulfilling" was coded under the theme "Volunteer Motivations" as it clearly reflected the altruistic drive and community spirit of the volunteers.

- *Not Fitting Neatly into a Theme:* A response such as “Sometimes, the directions are confusing, and I get lost” initially didn’t fit neatly into the broader themes of motivation or personal fulfillment. However, it was crucial for understanding logistical challenges, leading to the creation of a sub-theme under “Challenges Faced by Volunteers.”

By systematically applying this method, we were able to extract meaningful patterns from the survey data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the volunteers' perspectives. This structured approach not only highlighted the positive aspects of volunteering but also uncovered the practical challenges faced by our drivers, offering valuable insights for future improvements to the Monmouthshire Community Car Scheme.

The thematic analysis methodology allowed us to transform individual volunteer responses into actionable insights. By piloting the survey and iteratively refining our approach, we ensured the robustness and reliability of our findings. This meticulous process has laid a solid foundation for enhancing the volunteer experience and improving the overall effectiveness of the car scheme.

The above approach captured quantitative data on common trends and qualitative insights into personal motivations and concerns. Statistical analysis of survey responses was undertaken to reveal any significant patterns and themes affecting volunteer recruitment and retention.



Literature Review

Community Car Schemes are essential in rural communities for providing transportation to individuals who lack access to reliable transport, such as the elderly, disabled, or those without private vehicles. These schemes, rely heavily on volunteer drivers to function effectively. This literature review examines existing research on volunteer driver programs, the barriers to recruitment and retention of volunteers, and best practices for addressing these challenges. The review also explores motivations, concerns, and perceived benefits of volunteer drivers.

Volunteer Driver Programs: Importance and Challenges

Volunteer driver programs are critical in rural areas where public transportation is limited or non-existent. They ensure that vulnerable populations can access essential services, healthcare, and social activities, thereby promoting social inclusion and enhancing quality of life (Lough et al., 2019). However, sustaining these programs is challenging due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteer drivers.

Barriers to Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment Barriers

Research identifies several barriers to recruiting volunteer drivers:

- **Time Constraints:** Many potential volunteers are deterred by the time commitment required. Retirees, who are often targeted for these roles, may have busy schedules filled with other volunteer activities, family obligations, or personal hobbies (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991).
- **Awareness:** Lack of awareness about volunteer opportunities can significantly hinder recruitment. Potential volunteers might not know about the existence of these programs or how to get involved (Holdsworth & Brewis, 2014).
- **Perceived Complexity and Responsibility:** The perceived complexity and responsibility of the role, including concerns about dealing with vulnerable passengers and the legal implications of volunteering, can be daunting for many (Snyder & Omoto, 2008).

Retention Barriers

Retention of volunteer drivers is another significant challenge, influenced by:

- **Burnout and Stress:** Regular and intensive volunteering can lead to burnout, particularly if volunteers do not receive adequate support and recognition (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

- **Lack of Recognition:** Volunteers may feel undervalued if their contributions are not adequately recognized, leading to dissatisfaction and eventual dropout (Brudney & Meijs, 2009).
- **Financial Costs:** Although volunteers are not paid, the out-of-pocket expenses for fuel and vehicle maintenance can be a deterrent, especially if these costs are not reimbursed (Smith, 2017).

Motivations and Benefits for Volunteer Drivers

Despite these barriers, many individuals are motivated to volunteer for community car schemes. Key motivations include:

- **Altruism:** A strong desire to help others and give back to the community is a primary motivator (Clary et al., 1998).
- **Social Interaction:** Volunteering provides opportunities for social engagement and building new relationships, which is particularly appealing to retirees and those seeking to expand their social networks (Omoto & Snyder, 1995).
- **Personal Fulfillment:** Many volunteers report a sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment from knowing they are making a positive impact on others' lives (Wilson, 2000).

The benefits of volunteering extend beyond the recipients of the service.

Volunteers often experience improved mental health, a sense of purpose, and increased social connections (Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, & Sherraden, 2001).

Best Practices for Overcoming Barriers

Recruitment Strategies

- **Targeted Outreach:** Implementing targeted outreach campaigns that specifically address the interests and availability of potential volunteers can enhance recruitment. Using local media, community events, and social networks to spread awareness about volunteer opportunities is effective (Hager & Brudney, 2004).
- **Simplified Onboarding:** Streamlining the onboarding process to make it less intimidating and more accessible can attract more volunteers. Providing clear information about the roles, responsibilities, and support available is crucial (Ellis, 2010).
- **Incentives:** Offering incentives such as mileage reimbursement, training opportunities, and small tokens of appreciation can make volunteering more attractive (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Retention Strategies

- **Support and Training:** Providing comprehensive training and ongoing support helps volunteers feel confident and valued in their roles. Regular check-ins, feedback sessions, and support networks are beneficial (Volunteer Canada, 2012).
- **Recognition Programs:** Implementing formal recognition programs to celebrate volunteers' contributions can enhance satisfaction and retention. This can include awards, public acknowledgments, and volunteer appreciation events (Brudney & Meijs, 2009).
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Offering flexible volunteering schedules allows volunteers to balance their commitments more effectively, reducing the risk of burnout (Wilson, 2000).



“


The car scheme drivers are all so wonderful, thank you for everything you do.


”

Background Data

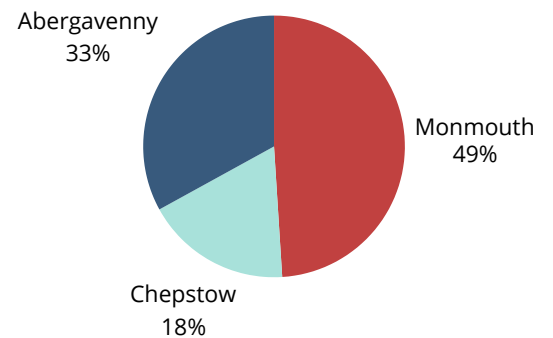
The Bridges Community Car Scheme uses Road XS programme to efficiently gather data on passengers, drivers, and journeys. The reports and data available on this system has allowed us to gather a great amount of qualitative data about our drivers and passengers and the type of journeys they have been making. The data presented below, was collated from data gathered at the end of **2023**.

Drivers

 **61** active drivers


 **5944** top driver (number of miles)

Drivers by area

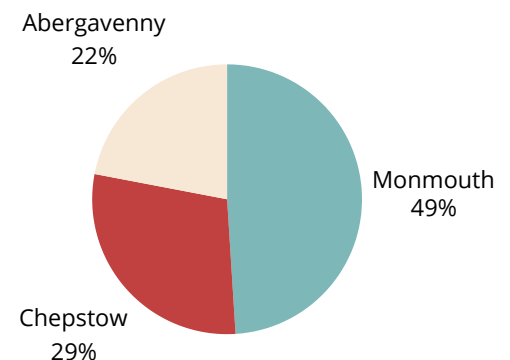


Passengers


 **975** registered passengers

 **4351** top passenger (number of miles)


Passengers by area



Journeys

 **3130** total journeys booked

 **2196** completed journeys

 **927** cancelled journeys



Reasons for Cancellations

- 1 Passenger Cancellation
- 2 Journey no longer required
- 3 Hospital Cancelled
- 4 Passenger too unwell to travel
- 5 Third party cancellation

Research Findings - Current Drivers

These research findings aim to present a comprehensive overview of the volunteers' experiences and suggestions to enhance the program's effectiveness. We received 49 replies from 64 current drivers, achieving a substantial response rate of approximately 76.6%. This high level of engagement reflects the strong interest and commitment of our volunteer drivers, underscoring the importance of their contributions to the Community Car Scheme.

The majority of our volunteers demonstrated their preference for digital engagement by completing the online form, with 46 out of 49 participants opting for this method. Only a small fraction, specifically 3 out of 49 volunteers, chose to complete the form via telephone with our researcher. This indicates a significant inclination towards the convenience and accessibility of online forms among our volunteers.

Motivations for Volunteering

Desire to Help the Community

Many volunteers expressed a strong commitment to giving back to their community. They wanted to assist individuals who might otherwise struggle to attend essential appointments.

- **Community Support:** A common motivation was the desire to support less fortunate individuals in the community. For example, one volunteer stated, "I reduced my working hours to part-time and like to keep busy in the community helping others less fortunate than myself."
- **Personal Stories:** Some volunteers had personal connections that inspired them to contribute. One volunteer noted, "My mother-in-law used the service for many years, so I felt inclined to help."

Spare Time

A significant number of volunteers were retirees who had spare time and wanted to stay active.

- **Retirement:** Many volunteers found themselves with more free time after retiring. One volunteer shared, "I had retired and had some spare time, and a friend suggested it to me."
- **Flexibility:** The flexibility of the car scheme appealed to those who did not want a fixed commitment. As one volunteer mentioned, "I have spare time to do voluntary work as I am retired. I used to take my elderly parents to hospital, so it was natural to continue similar."

Personal Satisfaction & fulfillment

Volunteers often found personal fulfillment and satisfaction from their roles.

- **Sense of Purpose:** Many volunteers experienced a sense of purpose and worth. One individual remarked, "It's a way that I can help other people whilst doing something that is in my comfort zone (i.e., driving)."
- **Positive Interactions:** The interactions with passengers provided a rewarding experience. A volunteer stated, "I've met some lovely people and get satisfaction from knowing that I have helped people get to appointments they may otherwise find difficult to attend."

Extent of Involvement

The amount of driving varied among volunteers:

- **Less than 1 Trip per Week:** 24 volunteers (49%) did fewer than one trip per week, which suited their schedules well. For example, "I cannot volunteer often as I am self-employed, so less than one trip per week is about right for me."
- **1-2 Trips per Week:** 22 volunteers (44%) managed one to two trips per week. One volunteer explained, "I do about 1-2 trips per week, which adds variety to my schedule and allows me to meet interesting people."
- **3 or More Trips per Week:** 3 volunteers (7%) undertook three or more trips per week. One volunteer mentioned, "I enjoy driving and meeting people, so I do three or more trips per week, which is about right for me."

Of the 49 respondents, 9 individuals (approximately 18%) indicated that there wasn't enough driving for them. This presents an opportunity for the Car Scheme to utilise its current volunteers more effectively. While the general consensus is that most respondents found the amount of driving to be "about right," the feedback from those who desire more driving indicates potential for increased engagement and optimised use of volunteer resources. By offering more driving opportunities, the scheme can better meet the needs of these volunteers and enhance overall service delivery.

Positive Outcomes

Volunteers reported several positive outcomes from their involvement in the car scheme.

Personal Fulfillment

- **Sense of Contribution:** Volunteers felt they were making a meaningful contribution to their community. One stated, "Meeting different people and realising the benefits it brings for a lot of them is very fulfilling."
- **Social Interaction:** The social aspect was highly valued. A volunteer shared, "I've built up a relationship with many regular customers, which gives me a nice 'tingly' feeling from doing the job."

Learning and Growth

- **New Perspectives:** Volunteers gained new insights into other people's lives. One volunteer mentioned, "It makes you realise how difficult some people's lives are in comparison to my own. It's interesting to chat with members of the public about their lives, experiences, and struggles."

Community Connection

- **Building Friendships:** Many volunteers formed new friendships through their roles. As one volunteer noted, "I've met some really interesting people and feel as though I'm being useful."

Challenges Faced

While the experience was largely positive, volunteers did face some challenges.

Logistical Issues

- **Parking Difficulties:** Several volunteers highlighted issues with parking, especially at hospitals. One volunteer explained, "Parking in the Royal Gwent Hospital can be challenging."
- **Uncertainty with Passenger Timings:** The unpredictability of appointment durations could be frustrating. A volunteer stated, "It can be a bit frustrating when you don't know how long the passenger will be, so you can't really go for a walk whilst they are at their appointment."

Personal and Health Challenges

- **Health Concerns:** Some volunteers mentioned health issues that could affect their ability to drive. For example, "Only if my back issues (fibromyalgia) stopped me from driving more than it currently does."
- **Family Responsibilities:** Balancing volunteering with personal commitments was sometimes difficult. One volunteer noted, "Additional demands from my own parents might limit my availability."

Communication with Passengers

- **Passenger Information:** Having more information about passengers' conditions could help. One volunteer suggested, "It would be very useful for the driver to have a bit of info about passengers, such as their conditions and what they did before they retired, to initiate conversations."

Overcoming Challenges

Volunteers employed various strategies to overcome these challenges.

Preparation and Communication

- **Preparation:** Volunteers often prepared for potential issues. One volunteer said, "I usually take a book and give my mobile number to the passenger, so they can contact me when ready."

- **Effective Communication:** Clear communication with passengers and the scheme administrators helped. As one volunteer shared, "If there were problems, I know that the scheme is available to talk to and they always respond."

Practical Solutions

- **Use of Tools:** Tools like Google Maps and What3Words were useful for navigating and finding locations. A volunteer mentioned, "Using What3Words would solve the problem of finding locations in rural areas."
- **Equipment:** Some volunteers brought their own equipment to help passengers, such as a caravan step to assist less mobile users.

Likelihood to Recommend the Car Scheme

Volunteers were generally very positive about the car scheme, with most rating their likelihood to recommend it to others as a 9 or 10 out of 10. The scheme received an average of 9.4 out of 10, an incredible achievement.

Quotes:

- Highly Likely to Recommend: "I would rate it a 10 because it's a well-organised and supportive scheme."
- Appreciation for the Scheme: "The car scheme is a valuable service, and I might appreciate it myself in the future, so I give it a 10."

Research Findings - Former Drivers

These research findings aim to present a comprehensive overview of the volunteers' experiences and suggestions to enhance the program's effectiveness. We received 5 replies from 50 former drivers, achieving a lower response rate of approximately 10%.

Motivations for Volunteering

1. Having spare time and wanting to help others.
2. Supporting lonely and isolated individuals.
3. Seeking to be useful during the pandemic, particularly in aiding people to get vaccinations.

Extent of Involvement

The amount of driving varied among volunteers:

- **Less than 1 Trip per Week:** 2 volunteers (40%) did fewer than one trip per week, which suited their schedules well.
- **1-2 Trips per Week:** 3 volunteers (60%) managed one to two trips per week.
- **3 or More Trips per Week:** 0 volunteers (0%) undertook three or more trips per week.

Of the 5 respondents, all indicated that this was enough driving for them.

Positive Outcomes

Volunteers reported several positive outcomes from their involvement in the car scheme.

- Feeling that they were providing much-needed assistance.
- Forming new friendships and creating fond memories.
- Finding joy and fun in their interactions.
- Feeling useful, especially during the pandemic when driving people for vaccinations.

Challenges Faced

While volunteering, drivers encountered specific challenges:

- Difficulty in finding addresses.
- Balancing the passenger's independence and safety due to their vulnerabilities.
- Personal challenges such as starting a new job and the impact of Covid-19.

Overcoming Challenges

Despite facing challenges, most former volunteers indicated that these did not affect their willingness to continue:

- One volunteer used Google to resolve navigation issues.
- Another maintained mindfulness about safety.
- Volunteers generally felt supported by the scheme administrators.

Suggestions for Improvement

Former volunteers provided a few suggestions for improving the car scheme:

- Simplifying the process of claiming expenses.
- Some felt no additional support was necessary, as they already received excellent support from the scheme.

Likelihood to Recommend the Car Scheme

Former volunteers were generally very positive about the car scheme, with most rating their likelihood to recommend it to others between 7 and 10 out of 10. The scheme received an average of 8 out of 10, a great achievement.



Action & Recommendations

Based on the detailed analysis of volunteer drivers' experiences and perspectives, the following recommendations aim to address the challenges faced and improve the overall efficiency and satisfaction within the community car scheme.

Training and Support

Comprehensive Training for New Drivers

- **Enhanced Training Programs:** Develop a comprehensive training program for new volunteer drivers that covers all aspects of the role, including handling different passenger needs and navigating common logistical challenges.
- **Mentorship System:** Implement a mentorship system where experienced drivers can provide guidance and support to new recruits, ensuring they feel confident and prepared.

Ongoing Support and Engagement

- **Regular Check-ins:** Conduct regular check-ins with volunteers to address any concerns and provide ongoing support. This can help identify issues early and maintain high morale.
- **Management Involvement:** Encourage scheme managers to take a more active role in engaging with volunteers, showing appreciation for their efforts and soliciting feedback for continuous improvement.

Communication Enhancements

Providing Detailed Passenger Information

- **Passenger Profiles:** Create detailed profiles for passengers that include relevant information such as medical conditions, mobility issues, and past occupations. This can help drivers prepare better and engage in meaningful conversations.
- **Privacy Considerations:** Ensure that all passenger information is shared with strict adherence to privacy regulations and only essential details are provided to enhance service delivery.

Improved Scheduling and Reminders

- **Text Reminders:** Implement a system to send text reminders to drivers on the day of their scheduled trips, reducing the likelihood of scheduling errors and ensuring better coordination.
- **Digital Scheduling Tools:** Utilise digital tools and apps to manage scheduling, making it easier for volunteers to track their commitments and receive updates in real-time.

Logistical Improvements

Addressing Parking Challenges

- **Floating Blue Badge:** Explore the possibility of providing a floating blue badge that can be used by volunteers when parking at hospitals and other challenging locations, facilitating easier access.
- **Identification Cards:** Issue identification cards to volunteers that can be displayed in their vehicles to indicate their role in the car scheme, potentially alleviating parking restrictions.
- **Road signage for passenger collections:** Mobile signage for volunteer drivers is specifically designed for use by volunteers who need to park temporarily in restricted areas to assist passengers with mobility needs, such as wheelchair users. This signage serves a triple benefit: it advertises the car scheme, fosters empathy from other drivers, and helps volunteers feel more at ease while performing their duties. The signs would be portable and easily displayed on the street next to the vehicles, clearly indicating the purpose of the temporary parking. They could include the car scheme logo, a brief explanation of the volunteer activity, and a call for patience and understanding from other drivers.

Efficient Use of Navigation Tools

- **Training on Navigation Apps:** Offer training sessions on the use of navigation tools like Google Maps and What3Words, helping volunteers find locations more efficiently, especially in rural areas.
- **Standardised Navigation Practices:** Encourage the use of specific navigation tools across the scheme to standardise directions and reduce confusion.

Enhancing Volunteer Experience

Flexibility and Adaptability

- **Flexible Scheduling Options:** Provide more flexible scheduling options to accommodate volunteers' varying availability, ensuring they can contribute without feeling overburdened.
- **Alternative Engagement Opportunities:** Offer alternative ways for volunteers to engage with the scheme, such as administrative support or event participation, catering to those who might face challenges with driving.

Recognition and Appreciation

- **Volunteer Recognition Programs:** Develop programs to recognize and reward volunteers for their contributions, such as annual awards or appreciation events.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish robust feedback mechanisms where volunteers can share their experiences and suggestions, ensuring they feel valued and heard.

Conclusion

Implementing these recommendations can significantly enhance the volunteer experience within the community car scheme. By addressing logistical challenges, improving communication, providing comprehensive training, and recognising volunteers' efforts, the scheme can continue to thrive and provide essential support to those in need. Through these efforts, the community car scheme can ensure a sustainable and rewarding experience for both volunteers and passengers.



Driver Feedback



Friendships with my passengers, enabling them to have access outside their own homes, making conversation, sharing life experiences with them and allowing them to reminisce on journeys and experiences when travelling

Sense of being useful. Satisfaction in knowing that the car scheme is so well appreciated by users. I've learnt a lot about my town from locals. I've built up a relationship with many regular customers.

A nice "tingly" feeling from doing the job.

Got to know a lot of people in my village. Positive mental health benefits.

Positive Feedback from the passenger. I can see in some cases it means more to them than just a taxi service, being able to say take them to a ward, meet them in the cafe for return journey, a chat during the journey etc. Feeling of doing good.

I've met some lovely people. I get satisfaction from knowing that I have helped people people to get to appointments they may otherwise find difficult to attend.

Makes you realise how difficult some people's lives are in comparison to my own. Interesting to chat with members of the public about their lives/experiences/struggles.

Friendships with my passengers, enabling them to have access outside their own homes, making conversation, sharing life experiences with them and allowing them to reminisce on journeys and experiences when travelling

Positive Feedback from the passenger. I can see in some cases it means more to them than just a taxi service, being able to say take them to a ward, meet them in the cafe for return journey, a chat during the journey etc. Feeling of doing good.



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