



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN NORTH SOMERSET: STRATEGIC MAPPING REPORT 2025

Funded by **North Somerset Council**



EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Executive Summary

Community Transport (CT) is a critical enabler of health access, social connection, and independence for North Somerset's ageing population, particularly in rural areas underserved by public transport.



This report is primarily based on work, commissioned by Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) from Anne Morley independent consultant, and provides a comprehensive mapping of CT provision, identifies systemic risks, and outlines strategic opportunities for collaboration, investment, and service transformation. It is presented as a basis for discussion with all stakeholders including North Somerset Council, the NHS, Community Transport schemes and VCSE organisations to identify how we can work together to increase resilience in community transport in North Somerset especially amongst the small volunteer schemes and ensure that residents who need it are able to access a community transport offer.

Key findings include

Journeys

Over 64,000 single journeys were delivered in 2023/24, including 10,490 health-related trips and 20,000 shopping and social outings.

Volunteers

20 of 22 schemes rely entirely on volunteers, many aged 70+.

Funding

No CT schemes currently receive core funding from North Somerset Council or NHS partners, despite demonstrable impact on missed appointments, isolation, and wellbeing.

Recruitment

There is strong appetite for coordinated volunteer recruitment, strategic engagement with statutory partners and exploring collaborative working.

CT is not merely a mobility service - it is a public health asset. Without urgent investment in workforce, infrastructure, and joined-up planning, this sector risks fragmentation at a time of rising demand.

Strategic Context

- North Somerset has 98,000 residents aged 50+, and 52,700 aged 65+, with 33% living in rural areas. Public transport is limited, and access to services is increasingly centralised in Weston super Mare or Bristol.
- The State of Ageing report (2024) identified transport exclusion as a key barrier to health access and social participation.
- National trends show declining formal volunteering post-COVID, with older volunteers ageing out and fewer replacements coming forward.

Recommendations for action

1. Recognise CT as a strategic partner in public health, ageing well, and transport equity.
2. Work with VANS to develop and fund a strategic volunteer recruitment campaign. This would also serve as a model for exploring other collaborative work in the future.
3. Invest in infrastructure and governance support for schemes.
4. Convene quarterly CT forums with representation from NSC (North Somerset Council), NHS, and VCSE.
5. Identify additional sources of funding to help those schemes who want to, grow what they do.

Introduction and Context

VANS had identified transport as a major challenge to older people as part of its Ageing Well programme in 2022, in particular the reliance of older people as well as people with disabilities on community transport in areas with poor public transport provision. North Somerset has 98,000 people over the age of 50 and 52,700 over the age of 65.

The population of people over 65 in North Somerset has increased by 22% between 2011 and 2021, and 33% of these live in rural areas/villages. North Somerset has a particular challenge in that most of its older population live in more rural areas and the public transport is very poor. Consequently, they find it hard to access support and services which are primarily either in Weston, Bristol or the North Somerset towns of Nailsea and Portishead. In January 2023 VANS held a meeting of local community transport providers to discuss the issues they faced which included volunteer recruitment, managing demand, investment, administration and logistics.

In 2024, Voluntary Action North Somerset commissioned a State of Ageing report which identified that lack of access to transport is one of the major issues facing older people in North Somerset and recommended and highlighted.

"Given the impact of the variety of volunteer led transport services on health and social care outcomes - access to fresh food, exercise, and social contact for example are often considered in examining wider social determinants of health - engagement and investment from Public Health and Primary Care to understand and support these services in their broader provision is likely to be beneficial now and mitigate future risks."

VANS began a dialogue with NSC discussing community transport with both parties recognising that there was no in-depth knowledge of community transport in North Somerset in either NSC or VANS and that until this existed, it was difficult to solve the problems being raised. NSC gave a grant to VANS to employ a consultant to map the scale and capacity of community transport in North Somerset to enable a full understanding of the landscape, the challenges being faced and possible solutions.

What is Community Transport?

Community Transport usually refers to local, charitable, or not-for-profit transport services run by local people in their own community for others who find using public transport difficult due to age, disability, or poor transport networks.

Community transport often includes door-to-door transport and dial-a-ride services. This may be through Volunteer Car Schemes, where volunteers transport passengers in their own cars, or through minibus schemes. Community Transport is usually organised by volunteers, with volunteer drivers; however, some large Community Transport schemes operate fleets of vehicles and employ staff to manage this, along with drivers.

Some community transport schemes offer minibus and driver hire for other local not-for-profit groups and organisations. Community Transport is often the only means of transport for older, disabled or isolated people. (CTA)

What types of Community Transport do we have in North Somerset, and how are they organised and maintained?

There are currently:

- Thirteen Voluntary Car Schemes, solely provided by a workforce of 347 volunteers: Banwell FISH scheme, Chew Valley Community Transport, Churchill & Langford Hospital Transport Scheme, Clevedon Care, Congresbury Cars, Gordano Community Car Scheme, Nailsea Availables, Portishead Porters, Sandford Helpline, Weston Wheels, Winscombe Contact scheme, Wrington Helpline, Yatton Volunteer Cars. These car schemes are wholly run by volunteers, who use their own cars to transport people to visit health services or medical-related appointments.
- Seven localised minibus schemes, wholly provided by the teamwork of 104 volunteers, include the Blagdon Valley Minibus scheme, the Churchill and Langford Minibus scheme, the Congresbury Community Transport Scheme (Bluey), the Frankie Howerd OBE Trust, the Winford Community Transport scheme, the Wrington Minibus Society, and the Yeo Valley Lions minibus. These village minibus schemes typically operate with a single minibus, although the Churchill and Langford Society has two minibuses, and Winford Community Transport, which uses the Blagdon Village Minibus. They provide door-to-door group outings for local people, often to supermarkets or for leisure activities and day trips. Some also offer additional services to other not-for-profit groups, enabling people to access clubs (such as memory cafes, stroke clubs, and day care centres) and providing transport for organisations like scouts, school swimming clubs, and the WI.

- Two larger-scale schemes whose provision is enabled by a team of paid staff members and 21 volunteer drivers, Nailsea & District Community Transport (NDCT) and Weston & District Community Transport (WDCT). These two larger-scale schemes operate with more vehicles: NDCT (10 minibuses & 2 accessible MPVs) and WDCT (36 minibuses). They each provide different services:
 - NDCT is a membership organisation that offers weekly door-to-door shopping trips for groups from various towns and villages in the North East area of North Somerset to their local supermarket, as well as regular day trips and outings to places of interest. Their drivers are a mixture of paid individuals and volunteers. They can also offer individual, dial-a-ride services for people who need door-to-door accessible transport directly to areas such as hospitals, clubs, and other destinations. Additionally, private hire (with a suitable driver) is also possible for other not-for-profit organisations for a fee.
 - WDCT is a membership organisation that offers individual accessible, door-to-door, dial-a-ride services to its members who live in the Weston & Worle areas of North Somerset. All their drivers are paid, and they generally do not rely on volunteers for support. Members contact the organisation with details of where they need to go (e.g., the local supermarket, GP, or to meet friends), and the organisation arranges this directly with the member. Members can arrange their own group transport to shops or for leisure outings directly with WDCT, or to local clubs such as the Stroke Club or Notable club, etc. Private hire with a driver is also possible for other not-for-profit clubs and organisations for a fee).

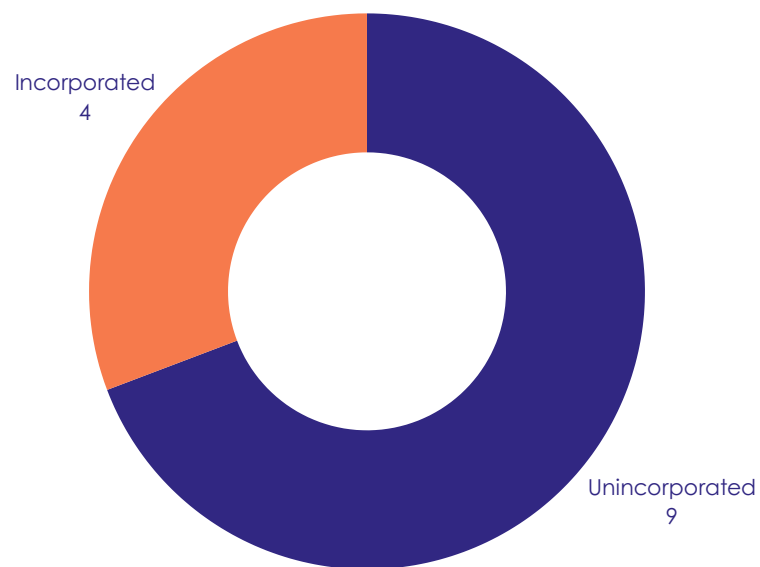
Larger Community Transport schemes, such as NDCT and WDCT, have higher running costs, as they employ paid operational managers and other staff e.g. finance to provide day-to-day management responsibility for the organisations. Both have a management board of volunteer trustees. Both organisations also employ administrative staff and drivers. Both need to pay for suitable office premises with space to park many vehicles.

The effect of this is that it is hard to talk about a single community transport sector in North Somerset. The two large schemes operate very differently and have very different needs to the wholly volunteer led and delivered car schemes for example.

The Background and Structure of Community Transport in North Somerset

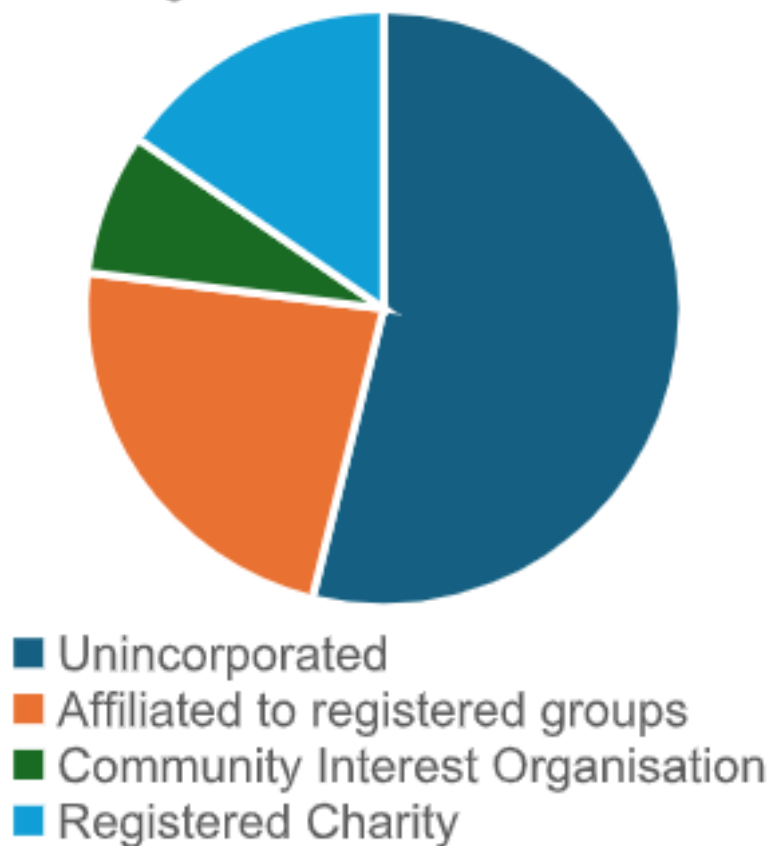
- Many community-led transport schemes have been supporting local communities for decades, with several having been in operation for over 30 years, including one that has been running for over 50 years. Some volunteers have also been supporting these schemes for over 30 years, as both volunteer drivers and organisers/trustees. Volunteers are the very heart of Community Transport. It isn't easy to imagine how successful journeys to medical consultations and health appointments, in addition to the opportunities for social interaction, would be possible for so many North Somerset residents without Community Transport.
- There are several types of community transport in North Somerset, and the legal structure of a CT provider benefits from clarity. Without this, organisers of the group might have liabilities for which they are unaware. They may struggle to secure financial support. There are various legal structures that a community-led transport organisation can adopt, including: unincorporated (with or without a constitution), or Incorporated, with a constitution – such as a Registered Charity, a Company Limited by Guarantee, or a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, all of which are not-for-profit organisations.
- A Registered Charity is a type of not-for-profit organisation that is run solely for charitable purposes and is registered with the Charities Commission.
- Not-for-Profit type companies are a broader category for organisations whose primary goal is not to generate profit, but rather to achieve social or community benefit. Companies House often registers them, and they usually have fewer restrictions than charities. Both types of incorporation offer limited liability to the management committee and its members. Without this incorporation, people involved with the group may have liabilities of which they are unaware.
- An unincorporated group is an organisation or community group formed for a shared purpose but not for profit. They are governed by an agreement or written constitution that outlines their operation, but they are not classed as separate legal persons and do not have a separate legal entity. It does not need to be registered. Being an unincorporated group with a constitution is the quickest way to establish a presence; however, it does not confer any legal status, meaning the management committee may be held personally liable for any issues that arise.
- Some voluntary car schemes in North Somerset are affiliated with RSVP-West (an organisation that is part of the registered charity Volunteering Matters), which provides recruitment support and some insurance for the scheme's volunteers.

Number of car schemes in North Somerset



N.B. We are awaiting confirmation from RSVP whether they classify the small car schemes affiliated to them as part of their 'incorporated group/charity- currently we have them classed as unincorporated groups as they are generally small groups keen to keep their own identity.

Legal structure of car schemes



Volunteer car driver schemes in North Somerset

13 small car schemes cover North Somerset, which have a combined total of 347 volunteers. These schemes are typically small organisations consisting of volunteers who give their own time and use their own vehicles to transport patients to medical and health appointments, shopping or social activities. Small car schemes are door-to-door, and some are affiliated with other local Community Transport schemes. Typically, remuneration is limited to the cost of expenses, at 45-50p per mile (CTA, 2020), as stipulated by HMRC (2025).

Our research indicates that in North Somerset, car schemes are either Registered charities, registered not-for-profit companies, or unincorporated. All are used solely for transport for medical and health purposes. Three car schemes (Gordano Cars, Portishead Porters, Nailsea Availables) are booked only through requests made via the GP surgeries, although the GP surgeries do not provide funding for this. The remaining schemes all take telephone booking requests, with some also taking email and online bookings.

Presently, some car schemes, particularly the smallest, are not advertising locally due to limited capacity to take on extra journeys. However, some schemes are at a very high risk of ceasing services. The coordinators who have been instrumental in setting up and running these schemes for many years are at a point in their lives where they no longer feel able or want to continue running these schemes but cannot find anyone to take over in the future. There is a real concern that without new volunteers to take over coordination, a number of schemes will cease to exist.

Community-led Minibus schemes in North Somerset

Community Transport minibus schemes must be registered as Charities or not-for-profit organisations to operate under authorised permits.

Volunteers or staff of a not-for-profit or charitable organisation, who passed their driving test before January 1997, can drive minibuses with up to 16 passenger seats on their driving licence (with D1 category automatically given). In addition, most community-led minibus transport organisations also provide MIDAS (Minibus Information and Driving Awareness) training and assessment to promote the safe operation of the vehicles, supporting passengers with a variety of needs, including the safe securing of wheelchairs (and their users) in the minibus.

Winford Community Transport does not have its own bus. Instead, it works collaboratively with and hires Blagdon Valley Minibus, a registered group, on an informal basis to provide leisure trips to people living in Winford, Regil, and Felton.

Funding sources for schemes come from several areas:

- Fares. Some operators do not charge anything for any journeys, and others charge a nominal fee for day trips. The larger operators charge between £8 and £10 for a return trip to the local supermarket. For day trips, excursions, or longer distances, Dial-a-Ride fares are higher.
- Membership costs
- BSOG (Bus Operators grant)
- Donations
- Legacies
- Quartet Community funding.
- National Lottery funding
- Fundraising undertaken by organisations directly (giving talks, raffles, charity events, etc).
- Parish or Town council funding.
- Other local sources such as Thatcher's Cider, Bristol Airport, National Grid, and Wessex Water.
- Contract work – i.e. North Somerset Council home to school transport.
- Funding from West of England Combined Authority (in Partnership with North Somerset Council & Voluntary Action North Somerset) to provide scheduled local bus services (this ceased in March 2026)
- Providing MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training for other not for profit groups.

Currently, no community transport schemes in North Somerset receive core funding funding from North Somerset Council, BNSSG Integrated Care Board or any North Somerset Primary Care Networks. However, the larger two schemes receive payment for home-to-school transport, scheduled local bus schemes under relevant CT permits and some daycare transport contracts from North Somerset Council.

Health effects of transport isolation

Loneliness and social isolation come with a multitude of health risks (North Somerset Council, 2024a), with some studies suggesting it is as bad for one's health as smoking (Sustrans, 2022). Moreover, socially isolated individuals and those who identify with feeling lonely, report that these feelings have exacerbated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (North Somerset Council, 2024a). Addressing social isolation and loneliness through building and maintaining strong social connections is also outlined in the North Somerset Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024b). Although loneliness is not limited to the older population, a large proportion of them are affected, particularly due to the reduced mobility that comes with ageing and the reduced ability to drive. Transport-related social exclusion – limitation of people's participation in society and community as a direct result of lack of transport access – has been identified as a factor since the 1970s (Sustrans, 2022).

For example, many people use transportation to socialise if they do not drive, and the loss of convenient access to places to meet may stop them from doing so, causing them to remain in their own homes instead. As such, a strong argument can be inferred that the lack of transport access could be viewed as a public health issue, which has become more prominent since the pandemic, and should be addressed for the sake of improved public health and emotional well-being.

Highlighting the need for community transport, official statistics highlight that 8 million patients, did not attend planned health appointments 2023/24. Travel and accessibility issues were cited as one of the top reasons for people being unable to attend health appointments- with distance, unreliable transport, and costs being specific hindrances (Whicher, 2025). This coupled with “The [UK Infrastructure Strategy](#) and the [NHS's 10-Year Health Plan](#) both set out a clear shift: moving care from hospitals closer to home Stackhouse (2025), but only if people can reach the care they need. Closer to home doesn't automatically mean more accessible.”

There is a clear demonstration of a need for a joined-up approach from healthcare and transport providers, to ensure easier transport solutions for patients to reduce the amount of missed health appointments and improve efficiency in the NHS.

North Somerset has a higher percentage of people aged 65 and above, as well as those aged 75 and above, 85 and above, and 90 and above, compared to both the regional and national averages. (State of Ageing Report 2024) Therefore, it is essential to examine and look to support suitable community transport options now, especially with new legislation regarding older drivers due to be announced in the Autumn of 2025, which means an increased number of older people in North Somerset may find themselves unable to drive. This will undoubtedly affect people who are volunteer drivers, thereby reducing the number of volunteers further, but also increasing the number of people who need community transport to remain independent for longer in their local community.

Our Research Findings

Methodology

Surveys (Appendix 1) were distributed to all schemes and Community Transport organisations. A complete list of participating schemes that received a survey is shown in Appendix 2. Fortunately, all schemes returned the surveys, providing the requested information in full, either through email or phone call.

Two North Somerset Community Transport Forums were held on 7th May 2025 and 16th July 2025, open to community transport organisations operating within North Somerset. Representatives of all categories of Community Transport organisations well attended both forums. The forums introduced the mapping process and report, as well as providing stakeholders with the opportunity to voice any challenges and recommendations from their organisations.

Additionally, a questionnaire (Appendix 3) was distributed in paper form to local community groups (as listed in Appendix 4), alongside an online version of the questionnaire via SurveyMonkey, which was distributed to community transport organisations for distribution to their members. The questionnaire outlined the use and views of community transport organisations. A total of 101 papers and 3 online questionnaires were completed.

Out of scope: it was recognised that in addition to the schemes outlined in this report that there are numerous other organisations that own minibuses in North Somerset including scout groups, churches and care homes. It was not possible in the timescale to include these assets in the research.

The impact of Community Transport in North Somerset

We endeavoured to be as accurate as possible when acquiring figures; however, some organisations use estimates.

Trips enabled by community minibus schemes			
Trip type	Large minibus schemes	Small minibus schemes	Small car schemes
Social trips	5325	6840	N/A
Shopping trips	4491	5208	N/A
Medical/health appointments	1412	20	9068
The approximate total number of single journeys, per person, to people living in North Somerset provided by community transport in North Somerset within one year - 64,728 (this does not include one scheme that does not count journeys, and other schemes that do not keep numbers have given an approximate number.			

A total of over 10,490 medical and health-related appointments were enabled by the support of community-led transport in North Somerset; this was facilitated by 20,980 single passenger journeys to and from a range of hospitals and medical/health-related centres by the volunteer workforce. This inevitably reduced pressure on healthcare providers to use their transport services (such as non-emergency ambulances) and will have reduced appointment cancellations from transportation issues. Additionally, it will promote access to timely support for medical issues, thereby enhancing the health and social care needs of individuals by enabling them to receive support in the community.

Of the 10,490 appointments, 1,412 were medical and health-related appointments enabled by a Dial-a-Ride service from one of the larger community transport minibus schemes, and 9,068 were provided by volunteers using their own cars to transport patients. The car drivers are offered a base remuneration of up to 50p per mile to cover their expenses. They will often wait up to 2 hours for the patient to arrive at their appointment, in addition to the time it takes for the patient to travel.

The total number of people enabled to join a social gathering, which includes days out provided by minibus schemes (such as memory groups, stroke groups, etc.), supported through North Somerset, is 5,325, provided by district minibus schemes, and 6,840 supplied by village minibus schemes. There is an undeniable social aspect to the >9699 shopping trips enabled by bus schemes in North Somerset. This increase in social contact, enabled by Community Transport, undoubtedly helps reduce loneliness and social isolation, which are key issues among many older people.

Volunteer recruitment

Volunteers are the heart of Community transport. Without vast numbers of willing and capable volunteers, Community Transport would not and could not exist. Other than the two largest minibus schemes, which employ staff, all 13 voluntary car schemes and seven village minibus schemes in North Somerset rely solely on a volunteer workforce. Well over 42,000 single journeys were managed and facilitated exclusively by volunteers. This is a conservative number, as not all organisations keep data on the number of journeys, often due to time constraints: “we are just getting on with driving” or “our value is not in data, it's in the work we do”.

The most major issue identified was the ability to recruit new volunteers, with almost all car and minibus schemes considering this as one of their main difficulties. Typically, these schemes are lacking in drivers; many schemes also identified a shortage of administrative volunteers, too (with admin workload generally increasing). However, as research shows, encouraging enough volunteers to continue the valuable work of community transport in North Somerset is a key challenge. There has been a decline in volunteering, as highlighted in the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) - Time Well Spent study, a national survey on volunteering experiences. People who formally volunteer reported positive impacts on their lives; however, due to various factors, formal volunteering has been in decline and has not fully recovered since the COVID-19 pandemic. This is having a sustained effect on the Community Transport that can currently be offered in North Somerset.

One factor affecting driver recruitment in minibus schemes is the ability to find volunteers with a D1 motor licence, which was automatically added to car licences prior to January 1997, enabling people to drive minibuses with up to 16 passenger seats if not used for hire or reward. Furthermore, the age of volunteer drivers in some schemes is unsustainable, with some drivers in their 80s and 90s.

As these individuals eventually lose the ability to drive and there is a lack of recruitment of new volunteers, this will likely lead to a further reduction in volunteers and the ability to provide services. At least two car schemes mentioned a reluctance to advertise their service, as they did not want to be in the position of having more journey requests than available volunteers. Some car schemes are concerned about forthcoming government changes, to be announced later in the year, which will impact older drivers. All schemes have identified that it is far more difficult to recruit suitable volunteers in recent years, which is supported by national research from NVCO. Without more volunteers being brought into the voluntary schemes, it is difficult to see how organisations can continue to provide the services they do let alone, provide any additional support to their local communities. However where these schemes are supported with increasing numbers of volunteers who are happy to transport passengers or to coordinate the facilitation of this, there is more hope of the sustainability of these schemes for the future and also the ability to provide more support in their local communities by growing their schemes or more schemes in areas that CLT does not currently cover - which is ultimately why communities have set up these support systems initially and how some have been running for 30- 50+ years.

Increased demand for Community Transport in North Somerset

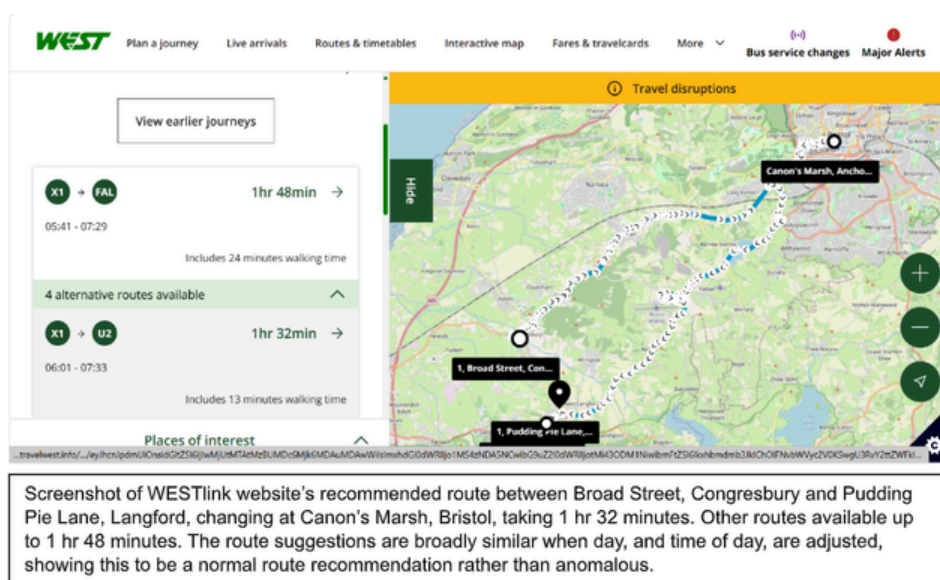
All schemes that provide hospital transport had to reluctantly turn down requests for transport, as, despite their best efforts, they were unable to find a volunteer driver. Therefore, it is concerning that an increasing number of health professionals, as services are being centralised and criteria for home visits tightened, are referring patients to voluntary community transport that is overstretched. This is unsustainable without dealing with the current issues. Sirona (NHS Community services provider for North Somerset) have requested an up-to-date list of community transport providers (as they want to signpost patients to community transport when new criteria are rolled out), so that patients are encouraged to attend clinics to reduce the amount of home visits in areas such as podiatry. The benefits of patients attending clinics rather than receiving a home visit, if possible, are tangible. For health services, this approach is more time-efficient, which in turn will help reduce waiting lists. Additionally, the clinician will have access to better facilities, and the environment may be more hygienic. There is also the social aspect for the patient, both in terms of getting out of the house and meeting other people. However, this is only possible with adequate and supported community transport provision that is both sufficient to meet the needs of people with mobility needs who do not meet the non-emergency hospital transport criteria, and is affordable for the passenger, who may be living on a basic pension.

Case study: Pudding Pie Lane

Mendip Vale Medical Group have centralised their services to provide more services at singular sites, including the transfer of several services from Congresbury to its health centre at Pudding Pie Lane in Langford, 3.1 miles away.

Congresbury Surgery has been closed since 2021 on an initially temporary basis, the building has been deemed unviable and unlikely to reopen (NHS Mendip Vale, 2025). Congresbury Surgery was within walking distance for village residents, allowing for generally easy access for all. Since centralisation, access to health services at Langford has become more challenging for less mobile Congresbury residents and/or those unable to drive.

There is no direct bus service between either Congresbury and Langford or Congresbury and Yatton surgeries. WESTlink do not appear to provide a service between Congresbury and Langford, even when prebooked, as the route is doable by existing bus services. However, the route suggested by WESTlink's Journey Planner is a First X1 bus service to Hotwells (Bristol), crossing over the road and taking a U2 to Langford (stop at the petrol station), with an average journey time of 1 hour 22 minutes to travel a distance that is 7 minutes by car. Even when adjusted to different days of the week and times of day, the route planner also suggested four alternative routes, taking up to two hours- however, no WESTlink direct option was clearly available.



Screenshot of WESTlink website's recommended route between Broad Street, Congresbury and Pudding Pie Lane, Langford, changing at Canon's Marsh, Bristol, taking 1 hr 32 minutes. Other routes available up to 1 hr 48 minutes. The route suggestions are broadly similar when day, and time of day, are adjusted, showing this to be a normal route recommendation rather than anomalous.

This route is clearly impractical for anyone needing to take the route between two surgeries as it not only requires allocating up to three hours or more for travel; this is without the extra considerations of bus delays, traffic, mobility constraints of crossing road junctions (at both Hotwells and Langford to reach the surgery). For those without the app or unable to reach WESTlink by phone to check for viable alternatives, they would likely be put off from this route. Quoted taxi costs were between £40 and £77 return from Broad Street Congresbury to Langford surgery.

This highlights the value of community car schemes, which can travel door-to-door within a much more reasonable timeframe. However, the local car scheme – Congresbury Care – is run solely by Margaret Leimdorfer, 82 who may need to cease services very soon, as they are struggling to continue, mainly due to age, desire to retire (they have already had to stop new passengers from registering for their services), and increased demand which they simply cannot fulfil despite best efforts (Permission kindly given by them to be mentioned in this report). When Langford Surgery was contacted on 19th August 2025 about how an individual with mobility issues who cannot drive would get to Langford, they cited Congresbury Care showing that the car scheme is the main provider suggested if someone makes a request about transport. Where someone is assisted twice weekly, for example, with transport to have their ulcerated legs treated and bandaged, there would be more of a burden on community nursing if they are no longer able to reach their surgery through the loss of this car scheme. This situation shows clearly the abundant value of volunteer car schemes to provide efficient services where a user may otherwise struggle.

Weston Wheels is another example of how Community Transport volunteer car schemes make a huge difference but are at risk. Weston Wheels was started as a successful pilot project and was set up after a request and funding by NSC to the trustees of WDCT. This was very successful and has been running for a number of years; however, the current volunteer coordinator (who has been there since its inception) is unable to continue. Last year, Weston Wheels enabled 552 people to attend hospital or medical appointments outside of the local area, including places such as the Bristol Royal Infirmary and Southmead Hospital. This was enabled by 1104 single journeys. Suppose they do not receive swift support to continue. In that case, this will have a significant impact on the ability of Weston and Worle residents who lack mobility to attend hospital appointments outside of the area. Many of these people do not meet the criteria for non-emergency hospital transport, such as 'Gladys' (not her real name), who Weston Wheels has highlighted as being partially sighted and lacking mobility. She walks with a frame and, therefore, is unable to walk successfully to the local bus stop on her own. She is partially sighted, which presents an additional challenge. Without Weston Wheels, she would be unable to attend hospital appointments in Bristol, which are vital to her well-being and independence. The quoted taxi cost we sourced for a return journey from Winterstoke Road in WsM to the Bristol Royal Infirmary was £116 return. This would be a huge loss not only to Gladys but also to other people in similar situations, which would have a knock-on effect on their health and well-being, and whether they would then require regular health and social care, as well as additional medical support in the future.

Lack of recognition and appreciation from external organisations

As has been outlined above, Community Transport schemes in North Somerset undertake a phenomenal amount of journeys per year supporting some of the most isolated and vulnerable members of the community. Without them, the NHS would have to spend money on organising patient transport or providing more home visits.

Isolation and loneliness would impact further on social care and public health. Despite this there seems to be very little recognition, understanding or appreciation of their work at a strategic level. The loss of the Community Transport forum mentioned elsewhere in this report where schemes could talk directly to the council is still very much felt. Given how poor public transport is in the rural parts of North Somerset particularly, it cannot be overstated how much difference these schemes make and that there should be far better awareness at strategic level of the role they play.

Community Transport administration

Most schemes are accessed by passengers using the telephone; some have duty coordinators who take turns receiving calls, and some have a nominated organiser who receives all the requests. Three of the voluntary car schemes (Gordano Cars, Nailsea Availables, and Portishead Porters) only accept requests via their local GP surgery, which comes with some benefits, as it generally means a good working relationship with local surgeries. It can be difficult for patients who require transport to contact the surgery to request journeys, and it can also be challenging for the schemes to reach the surgery in case of any patient queries. A few schemes accept requests by email or via an online form, but this is the minority.

All schemes require advance notice, typically 1-2 weeks, to arrange transport to medical appointments. This gives schemes time to administer the request and find a volunteer driver who can fulfil the journey request. This is suitable for arranged hospital appointments and regular appointments; however, where patients need timely, short-notice or urgent appointments, such as to their GP, community transport is generally unavailable. One scheme identified that when they were able to assist an older, unwell patient to an urgent GP surgery for an on-the-day appointment recently, the patient was admitted to hospital urgently. If this scheme had not provided the patient with this transport, the patient would not have received swift treatment; however, this is not something schemes are able to offer.

An administrative challenge for smaller schemes (run by volunteers) is the upkeep and storage of data, ensuring they are GDPR compliant and aware of data protection changes.

Whilst telephone calls are the predominant communication tool of preference for passengers currently, many are now using computer systems and email to communicate with volunteers. Some schemes report using Google Docs and Microsoft Excel for recording purposes. One scheme uses software available through communitycarschemes.org. Another car scheme uses Road XS; however, this can incur costs as journeys accumulate, and car schemes are generally self-funding or run with minimal costs.

However, specialist computer systems and software can aid compliance with GDPR, as the bulk of community transport is currently enabled by maintaining paper diaries, written forms, and sharing data through personal email addresses, and some organisations use WhatsApp.

Schemes work in several ways to assess and mitigate risks; the two largest schemes, which employ staff, have policies and procedures in place for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers. Potential volunteers and paid staff complete application forms, undergo a Disclosure and Barring check (DBS), provide references and have interviews before being accepted as part of the workforce. These schemes provide employers' liability insurance, public liability insurance, and offer MiDAS training for minibuss drivers, along with multiple safety procedures to ensure the safety of both passengers and the workforce. The small schemes all have very different methods that they follow when recruiting and assessing potential volunteers, as well as passenger and driver safety and insurance.

Many organisations have identified that they feel they would benefit from continued Community Transport forums, especially when they can see the benefits for their individual schemes. This seems a good route for them to explore the potential for closer collaborative working in the future. All schemes we have spoken to about the possibility of a county-wide campaign to recruit desperately needed volunteer drivers have thought this would be very useful. Some car schemes independently organise their own Community Transport scheme insurance, and some schemes are affiliated to RSVP-West, which is part of the 'Volunteering Matters' charity.

Schemes are keen to maintain their own autonomy and work in ways they believe best meet the needs of the communities and passengers they serve. They all have different ways of working, and if new volunteers can be brought on board, some will have different skills, ideas, and therefore, working practices will change over time, particularly as the volunteer workforce becomes younger and more used to working with technology. Investing in community transport schemes and volunteers with software skills will undoubtedly encourage the use of more cost-effective specialist computer systems/software, which may aid improved compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations; however, this will require funding and training.

Some schemes have highlighted that it would be helpful to have access to training, this could be useful to be arranged collectively and in areas such as Safeguarding awareness (due to the numbers of people being supported through this channel, and speaking to passengers often on a one to one basis in cars they may benefit from this), GDPR, first aid, website development – few have a website which could prove a useful tool for attracting volunteers and as an additional way for passengers to contact them, software then can reduce admin and calculate mileage. An opportunity to speak together to find out what works for others in similar schemes could be a proactive use of time.

Hospital parking

Moreover, some of the schemes/organisations that provide transportation to hospitals (in Bristol, the car schemes noted challenges with hospital parking, particularly with availability. There is a significantly reduced number of driving volunteers willing to travel to Bristol Hospitals (Bristol Royal Infirmary and Southmead Hospital) due to a lack of available drop-off points and the need to park and wait for up to two hours while the person is in their appointment. One scheme suggested a 'green badge', like a Blue Badge, which identifies volunteer drivers transporting patients with mobility needs, as not all disabled people have a Blue Badge, particularly if they don't drive themselves. Additionally, there have been barriers to accessing Blue Badge disability parking permits, which at least one car scheme has struggled to overcome. Some passengers have highlighted that the needs of their loved ones are higher than those that Community Transport can assist with, for example, people living with dementia or people with sensory disabilities who may need extra assistance in supermarkets.

Case study Devon

The Volunteer Driver Hospital Parking Permit Scheme 1,976 permits were issued to 54 participating car schemes. This is an example of 10 years of partnership work between the NHS, Devon County Council and the Devon Community Car Forum. It is highly valued by the drivers and passengers and has been a good recruiter for schemes to join the Car Forums. It is also good to know how supportive the Facilities and Parking Teams are of the drivers. They have always been helpful and will rescind parking penalties, especially for confused drivers who have just made a mistake. DAS administer the system, Devon County Council design, print and distribute the permits and DAS works with individual hospitals and NHS Trusts who all have their own variation of parking systems including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). DAS has noticed an increase in workload managing the Scheme and we produce an annual guidance document, now 8 pages long and covers 32 NHS sites.

Source <https://ndvs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-Devon-Community-Car-Forums-More-Tha-a-Journey.pdf>

Funding

The larger minibus schemes, which have higher operating costs, rely on external funding and employ some drivers. This year, North Somerset Council, due to cost pressures, has not renewed its annual funding for Larger Community Transport funding, leading to larger minibus schemes taking on home-to-school transport contracts to support community needs and bolster their income.

Long-term, sustainable funding opportunities are difficult to find, enabling these schemes to plan for the long term. As such, one primary concern is this reduced funding, as well as the need to change the premises of operation, due to struggles with space for the number of vehicles owned. The smaller minibus and car schemes did not identify space and external funding, as they typically do not operate in this manner.

However, it also must be said that one of things that curtails the ability to recruit volunteers is having the resources to carry out marketing campaign to recruit new volunteers. New systems also cost money as does training. Therefore although small schemes may not identify funding as an issue, a lack of funding does impact on their ability to do the things they recognise need doing.

Journey times and access

Problems with access and road closures were raised, as this makes journey planning and timing more challenging. Additionally, the centralisation of local healthcare services and speciality-specific healthcare services being relocated to a single surgery within the Primary Care Network (such as DVT services in St George and vaccination services at Pudding Pie Lane) has led to increased demand for community transport journeys.

Community Transport – The passengers' views

These are quotes from passengers or people who may need to use them in the future:

- "The car drivers that I have had have been lovely, kind and helpful. Well done!"
- "Volunteer drivers are in short supply, which means the service is not always available when needed. "Those of us who are of the older generation and don't have access to the internet often find it difficult to negotiate and are often unable to get information about public transport and timetables, etc."
- "Cannot access Lidl, which is where I would like to shop. Stuck with Waitrose – expensive. Days out are not always available as booked early."
- "I have a bus pass, so any other method has a cost implication. The service I have used has proved very useful, being 'door to door' for medical appointments with very friendly drivers. Some destinations are very difficult to access on public transport, e.g. Bristol Airport, Portishead and Cribbs Causeway."
- "I wouldn't be able to get to medical appointments; I find the drivers supportive, helpful, and informative – good communication from coordinators and drivers. They help carry my mobility aids into their car boots."
- "Village community transport has been invaluable"
- "I now volunteer to provide transport to people in the village who need it for medical and other reasons. Public transport times make using buses and connections unsuitable/unavailable."
- "At the moment, I can drive, and so can my husband. I do worry about how we will manage if that changes with limited bus service to access buses into Bristol."
- "Perhaps a proper bus service in Wrington would be a better idea."

- "Enables me to get out and meet people."
- "I have used community transport when I was not able to drive due to a fractured arm."
- "Although I am a car driver, I'd happily use the bus (I used to go to Bristol, and even when the bus stopped going there, the bus would go to the airport, after which I could use the Flyer). Now it's all from Wrington to Weston!"
- "I enjoy travelling with CT as the volunteers, drivers, and staff are so helpful, friendly, respectful and professional. I always feel safer and secure when anchored in a CT bus than when in a wheelchair space on a public service bus. Due to the poor provision of fully accessible taxis in the area, the few available to me are also involved with school transport and, therefore, not always able to accommodate me. The infrequency of the bus service (1 per hour) and the restricted routes available limit my use of public transport, and if the wheelchair space is already occupied, I have to wait another hour and miss appointments, etc. I have a concessionary disabled travelcard, which means I can travel for free on buses, but for reasons listed above, this is unreliable. To use taxis or CT is too costly. If the government would subsidise CT so disabled people could use the travelcard for CT this would be a great help. The trains are not available as an option (enough said!) so I am restricted to travelling by my own wheelchair accessible vehicle which I have to pay the running costs for and I can only travel when my husband is available to drive me, which often means he has had to take time off work to do so, and when he had serious health problems of his own we were both unable to travel."
- "I have good friends who help with shopping and doctor appointments (through church) but do feel isolated at times."
- "I have recently had to give up driving. I have used a voluntary car service in the past because I am a carer for a loved one. I don't know how to find out about community transport nowadays."
- "I find the community bus invaluable. The drivers are helpful."
- "When I used it for my husband's medical appointment at the eye hospital, it was a very good service."
- "As I can still drive, I do not need the community minibus. However, I am sure I will be grateful for it in the future."
- "Some people think the community bus is expensive. I am able to meet friends in Exmouth and Sidmouth. Made local friends on the bus."
- "Used to use WSM van transport when I lived in WSM. Now I live in Congresbury, I have to rely on X1 bus on A370. A very painful walk for me down the road to Congresbury Bridge. I only get a taxi when necessary, as it is too expensive for me. The local community transport minibus scheme would be useful, but they struggle to get drivers."

Recommendations

Investment

One of the key challenges is finding investment to implement the recommendations in this report. It is acknowledged that currently NSC faces significant funding challenges of its own as does the ICB and the local PCNs. However, without some investment none of the suggestions proposed in this report can be carried out. In particular there is a need for a named individual to work with the community transport schemes, facilitating forums, providing advice and support and linking up with opportunities around e.g. training or funding.

VANS is concerned that without investment, Community Transport schemes particularly the volunteer car schemes may struggle to continue resulting in many patients being unable to access medical and health services and impacting on the well-being of many residents who are unable to access public transport.

Recruitment campaign for increased volunteer workforce – one contact for all schemes
All schemes we have spoken to about the possibility of a county-wide campaign to recruit desperately needed volunteer drivers have thought this would be very useful. Most schemes do not feel they have the capacity to undertake this on a broader scale themselves now; they are busy maintaining their existing schemes and providing transport, and they are doing so well. However, without bringing in more volunteers and coordinators, it seems impossible to envisage how community-led transport will continue to provide the same level of service to the community that it does now.

The recommendation is for a funded county-wide, multi-channel, well-coordinated recruitment effort to drive support for all schemes. It is envisaged that there will be a central point of contact for prospective volunteers (contact number, email and associated website), where people can access information on roles available, expectations etc. If a volunteer is interested they would go through a safer recruitment process which would include completing an application form, provide information regarding their driving licence (for driving volunteers), provide references and undergo a DBS check. Once they have completed the volunteer vetting process and been offered suitable training, they are introduced to schemes that match their skills and preferences. If they are willing to drive a minibus, this recruitment process could also involve undergoing MIDAS training.

Case study: Lincolnshire

“The Community Transport programme is funded to work in the local authority districts in Lincolnshire of South Holland, Boston Borough and East Lindsey with existing schemes and any potential new ones, to develop community transport availability and accessibility especially in some of the most rural areas.

Currently most of the community transport available is via voluntary car schemes who presently focus on offering their service for medical appointments only. This leaves a lot of unmet need surrounding social and mental wellbeing, as many members of the community are isolated and without access to transport to maintain relationships, attend groups to support their hobbies and interests or access their local high streets easily.

We need to increase the number of volunteer drivers within existing schemes and support new ones to enable them to cover both medical and social journeys.

We are fully committed to supporting schemes. By following this link to our online volunteer platform you can promote volunteering opportunities, right through to following this link to use our DBS service, we provide for suitable candidates, all through the Community and Development and Volunteering team who can also assist with group support and exploring funding options"

<https://lincscvp.org.uk/community-transport/>

Community Led Transport Forums - quarterly

Many organisations have identified that they feel they would benefit from regular Community Transport forums, especially when they can see the benefits for their individual schemes. This seems a good route for them to explore the potential for closer collaborative working in the future. Forums would also provide opportunities to liaise directly with NSC and NHS representatives. It would also provide opportunities for CT to look at modernising the ways they work in the future. Although telephone calls are the predominant communication tool of choice at this time, many are now using computer systems and email more frequently. specialist computer systems and software may aid compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations now and in the future. The opportunity to discuss various successful ways of working and suitable systems to help their work will be a proactive use of time and resources.

Additional training could be helpful to be arranged collectively such as safeguarding awareness (due to the numbers of people being supported through this channel, and speaking to passengers often on a one to one basis in cars they may benefit from this), GDPR, website development – few have a website which could prove a useful tool for attracting volunteers and as an additional way for passengers to contact them, software than can reduce admin and calculate mileage. An opportunity to speak together to find out what works for others in similar schemes could be a proactive use of time.

These initiatives would require funding and support, including coordination, especially for setting up. However, it is possible that a community organisation could, at some point, become responsible and attract additional funds to continue this task into the future.

Closer Integrations between statutory organisations transport and health and social care departments

This will help integrate North Somerset residents transport needs to enable as many people as possible to continue to use community resources to manage their health and social care needs. Especially where people have unique characteristics that make travelling by public transport very difficult or impossible, or where public transport is not available.

Community transport business growth and sustainability

There are potential ways in which the larger minibuss organisations could investigate business growth, where sustainable longer funding is becoming more difficult acquire:

- Increasing the hours of operation to cover evenings and weekends. Some survey respondents highlighted that they can generally only access the larger community transport during daytime hours, Monday to Friday. This may be when family and friends are unavailable due to work, and family events often occur at weekends, as do many faith services.
- Utilising vehicles as much as possible, to ensure maximum community transport support is available for passengers. This will also increase available finances through fares. Previously, people have highlighted that they were unable to secure a place on trips as they have sold out.
- WDCT & NDCT have additional vehicles for home-to-school transport that could be used to enable older people to travel out for lunch between 10 am and 2 pm. If volunteers were to support this initiative, the costs to provide these journeys should not be onerous and would further enable people living in the community to access community facilities and nutritious meals, promoting the health and well-being of those attending.
- Some larger organisations may benefit from looking to see if their business models could encompass more journeys that support passengers with more complex needs who presently find community transport difficult. This may be enabled by providing an enhanced service for people with needs (such as significant sight loss) who may need some guidance in shops or on day trips, or for people living with dementia or who may become more confused or people who can become easily overwhelmed (anxiety). Minor adjustments may make a big difference in enabling more people to access community transport.

It is essential for business growth to ensure that using CT is affordable for those living on modest incomes. If people are repeatedly put off using larger schemes due to the cost (and are unable to use concessionary bus passes), or if other charitable organisations find the cost of private hire prohibitive, this feels counterproductive to the charitable aims of these organisations. Additionally, vehicles are not being used to their maximum potential, and organisations are missing out on needed income.

Organisations sharing key staff, such as CT advocates, business managers, and volunteer managers, to liaise and work with statutory organisations, such as NSC/NHS, would save overheads by sharing costs between organisations. These organisations are not competing against each other, as they all cover different areas. Working together to share other overheads, such as IT software, insurance, and training costs, would be a cost-effective approach.

In addition to the above:

- It is recommended that support with IT and website development is available for each scheme who would like it, and an interactive website where people who need transport can get up-to-date and reliable info. This information will then be available to potential passengers and anyone who supports them, and it can also be printed by such individuals for those who are unable to access the internet.
- North Somerset Council has a list of Community Transport schemes on their website, detailing the services each provides and the geographical area it covers, which is kept up to date.
- Community transport providers who need it are helped with governance and legal structures.
- Other voluntary organisations that rely on volunteer drivers, such as faith groups and lunch clubs, are researched and supported as above.
- Larger Community Transport schemes and NSC to discuss the possibility of passengers being able to use concessionary bus passes in the future.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – consultancy brief

About VANS

VANS is an independent charity that has championed the voluntary sector and volunteering across North Somerset for over 25 years.

We represent, develop and empower the voluntary community and social enterprise sector in North Somerset to be at the forefront of positive social change and development.

Background to consultancy

North Somerset is a unitary authority in the South West of England bordering onto Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset and Somerset. The council is based in Weston-Super-Mare, the area's largest town. The district also contains the towns of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, along with several villages and surrounding rural areas. Some southern parts of the district fall within the Mendip Hills, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

North Somerset has 98,000 people over the age of 50 and 52,700 over the age of 65. The population of people over 65 in North Somerset has increased by 22% between 2011 – and 2021 and 33% of these live in rural areas/villages. North Somerset has a particular challenge in that most of its 'older' older population live in more rural areas and that the public transport is very poor. Consequently, they find it hard to access support and services which are primarily either in Weston, Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead or in some cases in Bristol.

In 2024, Voluntary Action North Somerset commissioned a State of Ageing report which can be found [here](#) which identified that lack of access to transport is one of the major issues facing older people in North Somerset.

Community Transport in North Somerset

North Somerset has a number of community transport schemes in North Somerset ranging from large scale providers such as Weston & District Community Transport and Nailsea and District Community transport, localised community minibuses such as Churchill and Langford minibus society and Wrington mini bus society, and volunteer car driver schemes which are generally focused on transporting people to medical appointments.

Appendices

Like all local authorities, North Somerset Council faces significant financial challenges and as a result has had to make significant cuts to community transport grants in 24/25. Following discussions with North Somerset Council, it was agreed that VANS would undertake to develop the skills and capacity of community transport providers in North Somerset initially by employing a consultant funded by North Somerset Council. Building on the work of the State of Ageing report, the consultant will

- Undertake a full mapping of community transport provision in North Somerset including number and scale of schemes, vehicles owned/leased, number of staff and/or volunteers, number of journeys carried out per year, legal structure, back-office processes e.g. how journeys are booked and any other relevant information
- Hold at least 2 forums for community transport providers
- Identify potential for community transport schemes to increase business opportunities
- Work with community transport providers to get feedback from communities including those who do not currently use community transport and existing customers
- explore potential for collaborative working e.g. around volunteer recruitment, shared back-office working including booking systems to make it easier for customers to access services

Consultant will be expected to engage with a range of key stakeholders including:

- Community transport schemes
- Older people
- Local communities
- VCSE organisations
- North Somerset Council
- Local funders such as Quartet

Due to the complex nature of the work, consultants will be expected to hold at least some meetings face to face in North Somerset.

Outputs

Full mapping report outlining the current status of community transport schemes in North Somerset, the views of the people who use them, potential for collaboration and business growth.

Appendices

Appendix 2 - Blank survey

Mapping of Community led transport in North Somerset

Please use data between 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025, if possible.

Name of your scheme	
Main contact person/people?	
Registered address (if you have one?)	
Contact details (that passengers use to contact you) i.e. telephone number, email address.	
Are you happy for these details to be made public?	
Do you have a legal structure (i.e. incorporated group, registered charity, PLC, CIO?)	
Staff/Volunteers	
Do have any paid staff? Number of paid Drivers? Number of paid Admin staff? Number of paid Managers?	
What is the total number of volunteers that support your service (including volunteers that manage the service/drivers/administrative volunteers)?	
How many volunteer drivers do you have? How many volunteer admin staff?	
How many volunteers do you have who are willing to drive to Bristol hospitals/appointments or further afield?	
What is the age range of your volunteer drivers?	

Appendices

Passengers	
Do passengers need to be a member to use your service? If yes how many members do you have?	
How many individual people were helped by your scheme between 1st April 2024-31st March 2025?	
How many journeys did you provide (outward journey and return journey counted separately – per passenger)?	
How many total journeys did you complete the previous year of 2023/24?	
How do passengers pay for their journey?	
How much is the cost of each journey?	
Are you noticing an increase or decrease to your service in the past 2 years?	
What geographical area does a passenger need to live in to access your service?	
What type of journeys do you provide for your passengers? (i.e. Medical/health, leisure/days out, shopping)	
Organisation	
Does your organisation own any vehicles? If yes how many?	
Do you have any organisational policies (i.e. health and safety, data protection) if yes what policies does your organisation have?	
Do you have any organisational risk assessments?	

Appendices

Do you have any organisational insurance?	
Did you have to turn down any journeys in the last year due to lack of drivers? If yes how many?	
What are the main challenges to continuing to provide your service (if any?)	
Please add any further information that you feel is useful?	

Appendices

Administration of local community transport minibuses in North Somerset.

How do you take requests for transport?		
How do you find a driver?		
How do you confirm the journey and the passenger's details? Name Pick up details Destination		
How do you record the details of the journey	Paper diary Organisational computer	
How does the passenger pay the driver?	Direct to driver To organisation	
Does any money go into org finances?	yes	
Does your org have a bank account?	yes	
Do you have Public Liability insurance	Yes	
Do you have employers' liability insurance?		
<u>Recruitment of volunteers</u>		

Appendices

Advertising for drivers Where?	Posters in town/village Village magazines	
What is your recruitment process?	Written application no Driving assessment?	Midas through C& L Mentor scheme Licence check Drive to chat about what is required
Do you check your driver's licence?		yes
Do you do a DBS check on potential drivers?		No – if vulnerable people or children, then teachers or carers with them
		Self funding

Appendices

If there was a funded (or very low-cost) support to undertake some of these admin tasks and volunteer recruitment for you, would that be helpful? such as

A whole of North Somerset recruitment drive for volunteer drivers, where any applicants get given the details of their nearest volunteer car scheme or minibus scheme (if they are also happy to drive a minibus)

Yes:

Funded (or very low-cost) volunteer checks:

Volunteer references

Yes:

Disclosure and barring checks (DBS formerly CRB)

(DBS checks prevent identified unsuitable people from working or volunteering with people who are classed as 'vulnerable' due to age, illness or disability.)

Yes:

Volunteer driving licence checks for volunteer drivers?

Yes:

Please feel free to add comments:

Would you be interested in a volunteer driver scheme, where a volunteer has been fully recruited to support Community Transport schemes (as above)?

This could reduce administrative tasks for organisers of local schemes, who take on volunteers after they have undergone appropriate safeguarding checks, and will not incur an additional cost to the individual car scheme.

Yes / No

Appendices

Any comments:

Appendix 3 – collaborating schemes

- We would like to thank the following organisations, who have been generous with their time and effort to provide information for this report:
- Banwell FISH
- Blagdon Village Community Association
- Chew Valley Community Transport
- Churchill and Langford Hospital Scheme
- Churchill and Langford Minibus Society
- Clevedon Care
- Congresbury Care
- Congresbury Community Transport
- Gordano Cars
- Nailsea and District Community Transport
- Nailsea Availables
- Portishead Porters
- Sandford Helpline
- Weston and District Community Transport
- Weston Wheels
- Winford Parish Community Transport
- Winscombe Contact Scheme
- Wrington Helpline
- Wrington Minibus Society
- Yatton Volunteers
- Yeo Valley Lions

Appendix 4 – Questionnaire regarding use of community transport and volunteer community car schemes in North Somerset

Questions regarding use of community transport and volunteer community car schemes in North Somerset

Voluntary Action North Somerset has commissioned a report into community transport schemes in North Somerset. As part of this, we are looking to find out the views of local residents. We would be very grateful if you could complete the questionnaire below

Appendices

1. What area of North Somerset do you live in?

2. What is your age? (please tick)

Below 60

60-70

71-80

81-90

90+

3. Do you have your own transport? Yes/No

4. Are you able to use public transport/local buses? Yes/No

5. Do you ever find you cannot do the things you want to because you can't get there?
Yes/No

6. If you do not have your own transport, are not able to use public transport or feel you can't do the things you want to – Please answer the below questions:

Do you feel you would benefit from being able to use a
Community Transport Scheme (a local community minibus service)? Yes/No
and/or a Volunteer car scheme (a car driven by a volunteer)? Yes/No

7. Do you currently use a community transport minibus service? Yes/No

What do you use it for: (Please tick those which apply to you)

Accessing medical services

Food shopping

Leisure shopping/ days out/socialising

Other – please specify

8. Do you use a volunteer car service? Yes/No

What do you use it for (Please tick those which apply to you):

Accessing medical services

Food shopping

Leisure shopping/ days out/socialising

Other – please specify

9. Please use this space to tell us about any comments you have using community transport and car schemes in North Somerset

Appendices

I.e. Where do you go if you use community transport? Where would you like to go if you don't? What community transport is needed in your area? If you can't use community transport, why not? If you do use community transport what are the benefits to you?

10. If you don't use community transport or volunteer car services – why not? Please tick those that apply to you.

I don't need to; I am able to use the transport I need in other ways (I e. family/friends).	
I don't know of any community transport or voluntary car services that serve the area that I would need them to.	
I am unable to use the community transport/volunteer car schemes as I need to use mobility equipment i.e. wheelchair/scooter.	
I am unable to use the community transport/volunteer car schemes that serves the area, due to the cost.	
I need more help than community transport/voluntary car schemes can offer (i.e. I need physical/emotional support when accessing shops or community facilities as well as the transport).	
Community transport/voluntary car schemes are not available at the time I would like to travel.	

Appendices

Please add any further information/comments you would like to make

You do not need to leave your personal details, but, if you are happy for us to contact you, please feel free to leave your name and contact details.

Name

Contact Details

Your name and contact details will not be passed to anyone else and will be used in the strictest confidence, they are only available to the project coordinator, for use in the mapping of community transport in North Somerset 2025 project anonymously.

Thank you.

Appendix 5 – Groups that received questionnaires to distribute to their service users:

- Nursing patients of Sirona Care
- North Somerset Access Group
- Backwell Meeting Point
- Walk Tall

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