



Community Car Schemes in Devon: A Review of Activity 2019-20



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February 2021

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A year in review

Welcome to the review of Community Car Schemes' activity April 2019 to March 2020.

This report has been considerably delayed by the impact of Covid-19 and so much has changed that a full report is unnecessary. An in-depth report of the sector's response to Covid-19 will be produced as soon as possible. However, it is important to recognise here the significant achievements of the sector in 2019-2020.

This report demonstrates that Community Car Schemes (CCS) continued to be exemplars of community support as people responded to the needs of the vulnerable in their area. As a result, people who would otherwise be at increased risk of isolation and deteriorating health were able to attend vital appointments and social events.

Key Information

The statistics and information were provided by the Full Members of the Devon County Car Forum (DCCF) and collected and collated by Devon Access to Services (DAS).

In Devon during 2019-20:

- 46 Car Schemes told us they provided over 131,000 journeys.
- Some 1900 drivers travelled over 1.4 million miles.
- 90,778 (68%) of the journeys were to health appointments.
- 42,220 (32%) were to social welfare activities.
- Only 3,027 requests could not be met.

They saved the NHS an estimated £3.7 million.

- £3,608,425 million in "Did Not Attends" by patients not missing appointments.
- £106,611 saved by the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)

(See Benefits to the NHS for more details)

The number of medical journeys reduced slightly on last year, however CCS spent £52,341 managing at least 9892 re-bookings of NHS appointments.

Delivery of their services required considerable resources, taking more than:

- 133,076 volunteer hours.
- 43,732 paid staff hours.
- £1.2 million to provide.

Passengers gave £772,103 towards this cost and schemes generated a further £211,934 by fundraising. Schemes proved remarkably resilient to financial pressures even though the sector was £245,413 in deficit across Devon.

See appendix 1 for more statistics.

Issues faced by Community Car Schemes

Issues faced by Car Schemes continue to be significant and were detailed in our February 2020 Community Car Schemes Report: Social Kindness in Action, which can be found [here](#).

The main issues continue to be:

- A growing deficit that is linked to the need to increase paid staff hours to manage a more complicated and stressful workload.
- Improvements to NHS Primary and Secondary care appointment systems are costing CCS more time and money than last year rebooking journeys at short notice.
- The reliance on older volunteer drivers supporting even older and increasingly frail passengers.

Mutual Support and cooperation with Health Providers

There has been continued close cooperation between DAS, Community Car Schemes and health service providers:

- Car schemes and their local GP practice
- DAS, Car Schemes and the Patient Transport Advice Service: solving transport issues for patients that have more complicated mobility needs.
- DAS, Car Schemes, NHS Facility Teams (car parks) and DCC: the co-production of Volunteer Driver Hospital Parking Permits
- DAS and the CCG, especially with the Commissioner of Unplanned and Urgent Care
- DAS and the Lead for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise of the Devon Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP)
- DAS and the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS): participation in the
 - CCG Northern Locality Patient Stakeholder Network
 - North Devon Healthcare Trust Involving People Steering Group
- Teignbridge CVS and the South Devon and Torbay CCG and NHS Foundation Trust
- DAS, Car Schemes and the Devon County Council Transport Team. Their ongoing support and funding enabled the production of this report and has encouraged many of the developments in Car Schemes over the past few years.

Benefits to the NHS

The NHS in Devon saved at least £3,715,037 because of Community Car Schemes' activity.

- £612,752 million preventing Did Not Attends to Primary Health Care
- £3,608,426 million preventing Did Not Attends to Secondary Care
- £106,611 of savings to the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)

It is always challenging to give a financial value to voluntary effort when there is no direct reporting to the effort and the result. For example, the driver takes a passenger to their medical appointment and home again afterwards. There may be considerable knowledge and support within the Car Scheme and community there is, however, no official information on the treatments provided to the patient or its outcome.

This is as it should be, especially considering the importance of patient confidentiality, and is the essence of social kindness in action. A key motivation of CCS is that everyone in their communities should have access to a better-quality of life.

Car Scheme passengers/patients rely on their drivers to help them safely access vital health appointments because they have no other options. This is to planned GP and outpatient care, keeping them out of hospital and reducing GP home visits, urgent and unplanned emergency care.

The following figures are indicative of the scale of financial savings to the NHS and are based on the only quantifiable figures that can be directly related to Community Car Scheme activity or, more importantly, its absence– Did Not Attends and the HTCS.

Preventing missed appointments or Did not Attends (DNA's)

Primary Care (mainly GP services)

40,850 journeys were to and from primary health care (minimum 20,425 appointments). If we assume these appointments were missed with no cancellation, the cost at £30 per appointment* would be £612,750.

*Primary Care NHS England 2nd January 2019

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/01/missed-gp-appointments-costing-nhs-millions/>

Secondary Care

49,928 journeys were to and from secondary health care, normally hospitals (minimum 24,964 appointments). If these were missed with no cancellation, the cost would be £3 million at £120 per missed appointment*

*Secondary Care NHS England 14th October 2018

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2018/10/nhs-to-trial-tech-to-cut-missed-appointments-and-save-up-to-20-million/>

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) - further savings to the NHS

Community Car Schemes provide 5,447 qualifying journeys at a considerable saving of £106,611 (estimated) to the NHS HTCS budget.

The cost of a Community Car Scheme is approximately three times less than the cost of a taxi journey (the closest allowable journey type for HTCS).

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/healthcare-travel-costs-scheme-htcs/>

In addition, Car Schemes are spending more money supporting the continuing efficiency of the NHS.

Looking ahead

Transport is the often-forgotten essential link to health care, and it is vital that Clinical Commissioning Groups, Primary Care practices and senior managers in the NHS continue to collaborate with Car Schemes and Community Transport to create and sustain mutually beneficial relationships.

This collaboration would be greatly helped by funding from the NHS who benefit a great deal from the service of Community Car Schemes. This opportunity continues to be overlooked. No financial support was provided by the NHS, Primary Care providers or CCGs to Car Schemes in 2019-2020 (compared to nearly £24,000 in the financial year 2014-15).

Devon County Council, however, has demonstrated that ongoing support with funding has encouraged many of the positive developments in Car Schemes in recent years.

Covid-19

In February 2020, the potential impact of Covid-19 was causing concern at Car Forum meetings. However, few people could have predicted how much would change.

In fact, so much has changed that it is difficult to write a conclusion for the year 2019-20 that feels relevant at the time of publication and without writing it in hindsight.

However, the pre-existing issues that were covered in detail in our 2020 report (found [here](#)) are likely to reassert themselves as services and passenger/patient confidence recover from the impact of Covid-19.

These issues will continue to be:

- Increased frailty of passengers
- Coordinator and driver stress
- Congestion at hospitals
- Funding pressures, in particular operating costs

Issues compounded by Covid-19

- The new and ongoing need for journeys to Covid-19 vaccinations.
- An urgent need to catch up with outpatient appointments and much delayed treatment.
- An ongoing and increased risk to drivers' health providing their services. What was once a relatively safe activity is now a much higher risk volunteer offer. This will lead to:
 - Reduced numbers of drivers (as older drivers lose confidence and take the opportunity to retire).
 - New and ongoing costs of effective infection control.
 - The need to recruit from a different age range/profile of drivers.
 - Ongoing and increased recruitment and training cost of these new drivers.

There will be significant opportunities to learn from the experiences of 2020.

In particular:

- Where and how community response worked well
- Where and how schemes adapted their services
- Where existing partnerships worked to share expertise and speed up response
- How community resilience can be strengthened into the future

The DAS report for 2020-21 will concentrate on these experiences and the opportunities to strengthen community resilience going forward.

Appendix 1 Statistics – Activity, Income and Spend 2019–2020

During 2019-20

There were:

- 60 members of the Devon County Car Forum (DCCF)
- 46 Full Members of the DCCF provided these statistics as part of their annual funding agreement with Devon County Council.
- 14 were Associate Members who do not provide statistical information or receive funding from DCC via the Car Forum. These figures are therefore an underestimate of activity and costs.

All members can be part of the Volunteer Driver Hospital Parking Scheme.

2 members only provide journeys to their GP Practice and are not part of the scheme.

Volunteer Driver Hospital Parking Permit Scheme	2018-19	2019-20
Number of CCS participating in the scheme	54	58
Number of permits issued in co-operation between Community Car Schemes, Acute Hospital Trusts, Devon County Council and DAS	2186	2222

Journeys	2018-19	2019-20
All health-related journeys (% of all journeys) Including travel to (approx. % based on survey 2017)	96,185 (68%)	90,778 (68%)
• GP (primary care, % of all health journeys)	43,283 (45%)	40,850 (45%)
• Hospitals (secondary care, % of all health journeys)	52,902 (55%)	49,928 (55%)
Social welfare purposes (% of all journeys)	44,751 (32%)	42,220 (32%)
Other (Not specified)	222	
Total of all passenger journeys Including journeys for people who travelled in their wheelchairs.	141,152 7300	131,414 5435

Journeys not placed	2018-19	2019-20
Journey requests not able to be placed	3433	3027

Income	2018-19	2019-20
Passenger contributions	£655,439	£772,103
DCC Car Forum funding, social services etc.	£45,209	£56,724
Health funding	£8,541	£0
Other fundraising	£206,760	£211,934
Total income generated by Car Schemes	£915,949	£1,040,761

Spend	2018-19	2019-20
Cost of organising these journeys (overheads)	£576,797	£703,703
Reimbursing drivers' vehicle mileage costs	£539,132	£582,471
Total spent by schemes providing their services	£1,115,929	£1,286,174

Deficit	2018-19	2019-20
Total income less total spend	£199,980	£245,413

Total miles travelled	2018-19	2019-20
Some 1900 drivers travelled	1,500,532	1,446,141
Volunteer hours and contribution	2018-19	2019-20
Number of volunteer hours gifted to the Car Schemes	134,378	133,076
Notional value at National Minimum wage (£8.21 from April 2019)	£1,171,776	£1,092,554

Average journey distance (miles)	2018-19	2019-20
Average return journey	21.29	21.75

Average passenger spend on journeys	2018-19	2019-20
Average return journey x 45 pence per mile	£9.58	£9.79

Average cost to organise a journey	2018-19	2019-20
Total no of journeys divided by overheads	£4.09	£5.29

Staff hours	2018-19	2019-20
Paid staff hours	39,393	43,732

Cost of managing cancellations/rebookings	2018-19	2019-20
Number of cancellations and rebookings	12,975	14,493
cancellations x overheads (Most cancellations are rebooked)	£53,101	£76,684
% of operating costs	18.41%	10.9%
Number of cancellations associated with health transport	8855	9892
% of rebookings that are health related	68.24%	68.25%
Cost of managing NHS rebookings	£36,240	£53,341

Did Not Attends (savings to NHS because patients turned up)	2019-20
Primary Care (21,110 appointments @ £30 per appointment missed)	£612,752
Secondary Care (24,964 appointments @ £120 per appointment missed)	£199,674
Total	£3,608,426

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme	2019-20
Number of eligible HTCS journey requests	5447
Savings to the HTCS (if CCS did not provide these journeys) Average CCS return journey cost multiplied by number of HTCS journey requests multiplied by three (estimated extra cost of a Taxi)	£106,611

Appendix 2 Devon Access to Services (DAS)

Connecting People to Services

The purpose of DAS is to research, develop and help to deliver affordable and practical solutions that enable especially vulnerable and isolated people to access appropriate services across Devon.

DAS aims to develop and promote partnership working among service providers to benefit isolated and hard-to-reach individuals and communities.

DAS works to achieve its aims by providing infrastructure support, guidance and other practical help to Community Car Schemes and other local groups across Devon by:

- Developing partnerships, cooperation and co-production between public and third sector service providers to improve access to services for those in greatest need; e.g. disabled, older and/or isolated people, carers and young people
- Working to develop trust between these often-disparate groups; developing a safe environment to meet and acting as an honest broker
- Working with all its partnerships to develop consistent evaluation and measurement systems that enable the development and implementation of a strategic overview
- Ensuring the development and sharing of best practice within the groups it supports
- Identifying and promoting funding opportunities for the work and groups it supports
- Supporting with the recruitment, training and ongoing development of the role of volunteers

DAS is a project hosted by NDVS North Devon Voluntary Services, funded by Devon County Council and now in its 13th year.

Appendix 3 Methodology

DAS collect and collate the data cited in this paper through:

- Standard quarterly returns submitted by all the participating Schemes
- Feedback collected during regular Car Forums meetings
- One-off questionnaires to the Devon County Car Forum
- Research projects carried out with the Devon County Car Forum
- One-to-one support work with individual Car Schemes

Due to the diverse nature of the sector the figures cited are considered indicative but do give a good a representation of the activity of member Schemes.

Voluntary work, by its very nature, is often under-reported and it is likely that the figures are low in respect of:

- actual work carried out
- hours given by volunteers
- costs incurred

Journeys are defined as a single journey to an appointment and a single journey returning from an appointment.

Appendix 4 What is a Community Car Scheme?

Community Car Schemes come in many shapes and sizes and work in different ways depending on local circumstances, their founding purpose and levels of funding available. They are groups of people who have come together to solve a particular problem in their local community.

- For a Community Car scheme or larger Community Transport organisation that need is local people getting where they need to go and the solution is giving them a lift.
- With other community support groups, perhaps based around a local GP practice, they run other services and find the need to form a Car Scheme to help people attend their activities.

Over time they can grow to be quite sizeable organisations and cover large areas (perhaps with 80 or more drivers, paid coordinators, premises, and scheme-owned vehicles). Equally they may decide to stay local, small, and easily manageable. Both approaches are equally valid as they meet the needs of the people who use the scheme and match the abilities, motivations and aspirations of the people who run the scheme.

Financial realities of Community Car Schemes

CCS using drivers and privately owned vehicles are limited to charging no more than the driver will receive in expenses for that journey (1981 Passenger Transport Act).

CCS that use their own vehicles under a Section 19 Community Bus Licence can charge fares to cover the full operating costs but cannot generate surpluses to support other services.

It is highly unlikely that any CCS can be fully self-sustaining on passenger contributions alone. External funding will always be required.

Appendix 5 Who is a Car Scheme Passenger?

A Car Scheme passenger can be anyone who is unable to provide their own transport or make use of public transport or taxis. They need to be in a place at a certain time and increasingly need a little extra help on the journey.

They are people who benefit from staying healthy and well at home rather than having their condition deteriorate and be admitted to hospital.

In Devon most (but not all) Car Scheme passengers are older people who, in line with the wider population, are becoming older and frailer. Most community car journeys are health-related and passengers often need assistance navigating hospitals, including remembering where they need to be. The remaining journeys are for social welfare activities and may include trips to lunch club, memory cafes and local events.

Appendix 6 Devon County Car Forum

The forum is a network of independent community organisations who provide thousands of journeys each year, mostly, but not exclusively, to health appointments.

All schemes in Devon are welcome to join the Forum provided they are a constituted organisation, and all drivers must undertake a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

The Forum provides an insight into the astonishing amount of help that a diverse range of independent charities provide to their passengers. Is an opportunity to collect and share statistics and stories and provide mutual support. It provides a unique opportunity to ask questions and share best practice in a safe space, it has also helped reduce the sense of isolation felt by many groups.

There are two levels of membership:

- **Associate membership** gives access to:
 - Volunteer Hospital Parking Permit Scheme
 - Forum meetings
 - information sharing and mutual peer support
 - DAS infrastructure support and advice
- **Full membership** gives all the above, plus funding in exchange for common statistics on their activity.

Reasons for Schemes not being full members include:

- They are outside the DCC area and cannot receive DCC funding (Plymouth and Torbay unitary areas for example)
- They do not have the capacity or desire to complete the Car Forum data returns.
- They do not need to receive extra funding from DCC.

This report has only been possible because of everyone's active participation, regardless of membership level, and Devon Access to Services gratefully acknowledges their contribution.

Appendix 7 - Community Car Forum Members

Organisations that contributed data used in this report:

North Devon & Torridge Car Forum

- Age Concern Barnstaple & District
- Braunton Volunteers
- Combe Martin & Berrynarbor Car Scheme
- Cancer Care Car (Go North Devon Ltd)
- Holsworthy Rural Community Transport
- Ilfracombe Community Car Service
- South Molton Volunteer Bureau
- Torridge Volunteer Cars

Exeter, East and Mid Devon Car Forum

- Blackdown Support Group
- Budleigh Salterton and District Voluntary Car Scheme
- Clyst Caring Friends (Pinhoe and Broadclyst Surgeries, Exeter)
- Colyton Link
- Mid Devon Mobility (Crediton)
- Culm Car Service (Cullompton).
- ELF (Exeter Leukaemia Fund)
- Estuary League of Friends (Topsham)
- ECCS (Exmouth Community Car Service)
- Heavitree Health Centre - Friends of
- Ide Lane Surgery - Friends of
- Lower Axe Valley
- Ottery Help Scheme
- Sampford Peverell Caring Friends
- Sidmouth Hospiscare Trust
- Sidmouth Voluntary Services
- Silverton Link Up
- Mid Devon Mobility (Tiverton)
- TRIP Community Transport Honiton

Southern Area Car Forum

- Acorn Community Support (Christow and surrounding area)
- Buckfastleigh Sharing
- Buckland Surgery Support Group (BUSS)
- Dartmouth Caring
- Dawlish Community Transport (East Teignbridge CTA)
- Ivybridge & District Community Transport
- Kings Care League of Friends (Newton Abbott and Kingsteignton)
- Modbury Caring
- Morecare Moretonhampstead
- Newton Abbot Community Transport Association
- Norton Brook
- Okehampton & District Community Transport Group
- Redfern - Friends of
- Riverside Surgery Befrienders - Bovey Tracy
- South Brent & District Caring
- South Hams Community Transport
- TASS (Tavistock Area Support Services)
- Tedburn Outreach (Tedburn St Mary)
- Totnes Caring
- Volunteering in Health
- YelverCare (Yelverton)

Contact Devon Access to Services

For more information about this report, the work of DAS, Car Schemes in your area, or if you would like to know more about volunteering for a Car Scheme please contact:

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