



North East Lincolnshire Local Involvement Network (LINK)

A Report on their findings on Transport in North East Lincolnshire

**Linda Green
Secondary / Tertiary Acute Health Provision
and Patient Transport Lead
North East Lincolnshire LINK Governing
Body**

April 2010

Contents	Page
Introduction	4
Questionnaire results	7
Amvale	15
Dial-A-Ride	17
Phone `n` Ride	20
Taxis	24
Ambulance Service	26
Public Transport Buses	29
Community Care Transport	38
Social Care Transport	39
Miscellaneous Comments	41
Discussion	42
Conclusion	43
Special Thanks	45
 Resources	
 Appendix 1 – Questionnaire	
Appendix 2 – Survey Results	

Introduction

North East Lincolnshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) undertook this transport survey with the purpose of finding out what LINK members and non-members in North East Lincolnshire thought of the services on offer within the county. This piece of work was identified from members of the LINK and the community.

The survey also provided an opportunity for people to make a contribution by way of their suggestions and comments to improve the services that are provided.

The following services were reviewed:

- 1 Amvale** - Amvale are a well established company with comprehensive transport cover. They provide transport on a local and national level meeting the needs of the public.
- 2 Dial-A-Ride** - Dial-A-Ride provides accessible transport for people who find it difficult to use public transport due to illness or disability.
- 3 Phone 'n' Ride** - Phone 'n' Ride has no fixed route or timetable and can be used by all residents of North East Lincolnshire.
- 4 Taxis** – Taxis are a privately run transport service monitored by North East Lincolnshire Council.
- 5 Ambulance Service** – The ambulance service is currently provided by East Midlands Ambulance service (EMAS) to provide 999 and non emergency transport to the hospital.

- 6 Public Transport Buses** - Most of the public transport within North East Lincolnshire is provided by Stagecoach.
- 7 Community Car Transport** – Community car Transport is used to provide cover for medical reasons when passengers are termed “non emergency” therefore avoiding the expense and time of Ambulance crews.
- 8 Social Care transport** – Social Care Transport is for a wide range of residents from the very young to senior citizens, who are classed as “special needs” or in need of “TLC” (tender loving care) when accessing education or social care requirements.

The survey ran from July until October 2009 and 153 surveys were received back. The survey that was distributed can be seen at Appendix 1.

The following questions were asked for each mode of transport:

- Q1 Have you ever used any of the following transport services to access health or social care?
- Q2 If you had to pay did you feel that they were value for money?
- Q3 Were you satisfied with the service you received?
- Q4 If you needed to pre-book your transport, were you able to get this at the time you required?
- Q5 Was the transport you used clean?
- Q6 Did you feel that the staff were friendly and helpful?

Q7 Did you feel safe? E.g. were you reminded to put seatbelts on?

Q8 If you were not satisfied with the service or if you had the opportunity to make changes, what changes would you make?

From the survey there were a total of 142 comments made regarding the transport types which were surveyed. These were:

- Dial-A-Ride (12)
- Phone 'n' Ride (26)
- Taxis (13)
- Ambulance service (10)
- Public Transport buses (71)
- Miscellaneous responses (10)

The numerical results of the survey can be seen as Appendix 2.

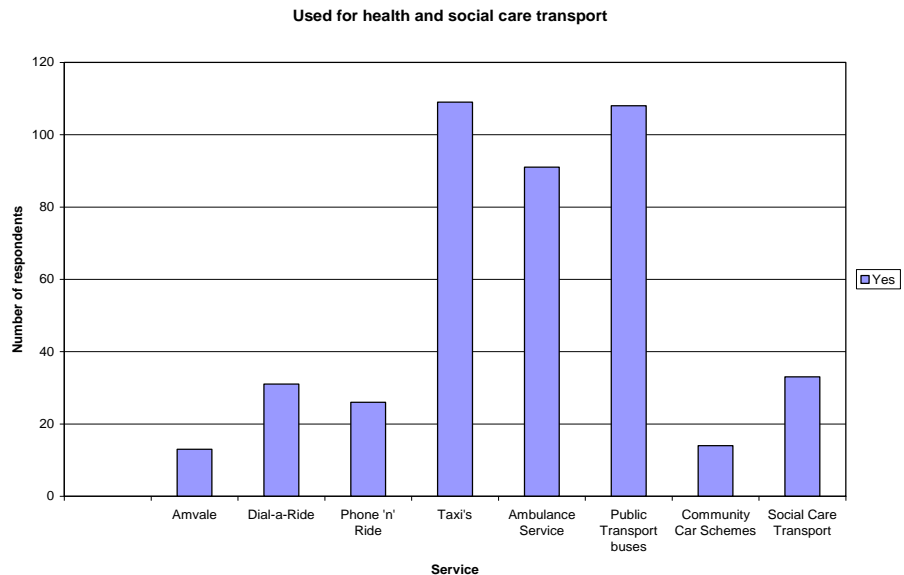
Since the questionnaire has been completed, LINK is aware that changes in service continue and that there is an active transport group who meet on a monthly basis where issues are raised and actions taken to resolve these.

From the 142 comments made by the public, it is apparent that changes could be made to improve customer satisfaction. Those involved in transport issues like Eng-Age and LINK will endeavour to campaign for changes to provide better services.

Results

Q1

Have you ever used any of the following transport services to access health or social care?



A graph to show the number of respondents who have used the transport types surveyed to access health and social care

From the survey results it was apparent that residents of North East Lincolnshire who responded to the questionnaire mainly used taxis, the ambulance service and public transport to access health and social care services.

As all residents will not have the same level of disposable income to pay for expensive transport needs to access Health and Social Care, they should not be excluded. It is very important no individual should be put at a disadvantage in leading fulfilled working and social lives due to lack of transport.

The graph shows that Taxis and Public Transport are used the most while other forms of transport are not so widely utilised. The "value for money" aspect doesn't reflect the whole picture where

those on low incomes are not able to access taxis on a regular basis and live in areas not serviced by Public Transport. If they do not fall within the remit of other specialised forms of transport they are put at a disadvantage.

Dial-A-Ride is a door-to-door form of transport for the less able and wheelchair users and shows value for money. However, voluntary drivers are depended upon to attain this.

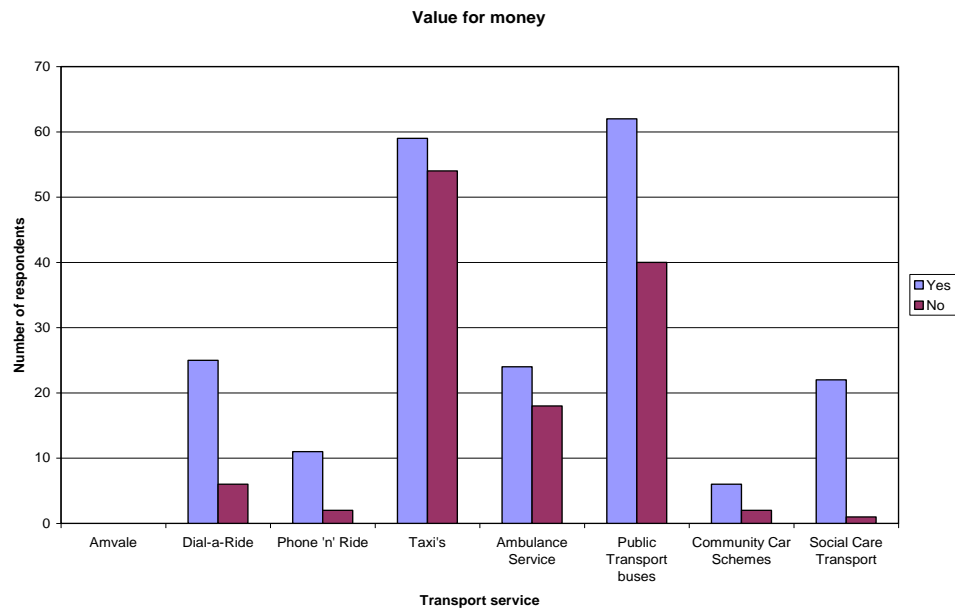
Phone 'n' Ride is available to most residents in North East Lincolnshire and with escorts the very young can travel on these buses. This service is again door-to-door and shows value for money. Drivers are paid but the service is limited by not providing late evening and Sunday operating hours.

The Ambulance Service is paid for from taxes and shows about even value. When value was not given, it was the Non Emergency Service. Emergency Service Ambulances on the whole were excellent value for money.

Community Car Schemes were slightly regarded as good value for money. This too reflects on the use of voluntary drivers who are trained to a high standard. They provide a supportive role to Non Emergency Ambulances.

Amvale was not shown to be a service that is widely used or that the public is aware of. The cost of this mode of transport is perhaps a hidden one, so value for money is not clearly shown.

Q2 If you had to pay did you feel that they were value for money?



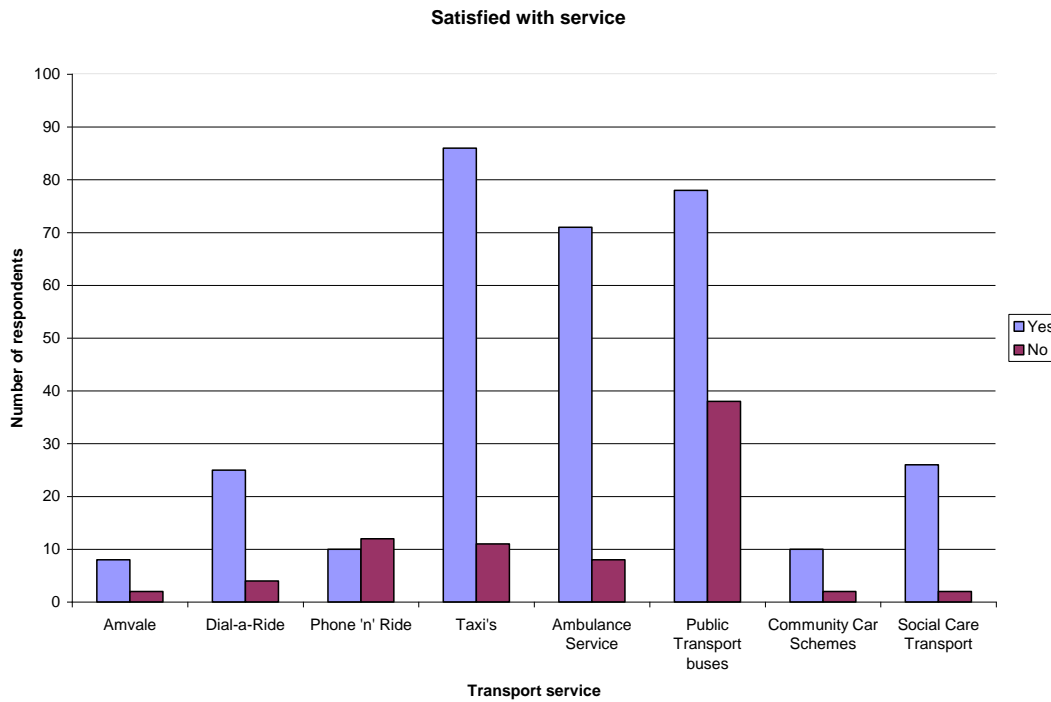
A graph to show the number of respondents who paid to use the transport types surveyed to access health and social care and whether they felt they were value for money

For value for money, Dial-A-Ride and social care transport appeared to be the best value for money for people accessing health and social care services.

When asked about taxis, 59 people thought they were value for money, compared with 54 who did not.

Similarly, 62 people thought public transport buses were good value compared with 40 who did not feel that the service was value for money.

Q3 Were you satisfied with the service you received?



A graph to show the number of respondents who were satisfied with the service they received

From the results it is clear that the majority of the services used people were overall satisfied with all the services provided.

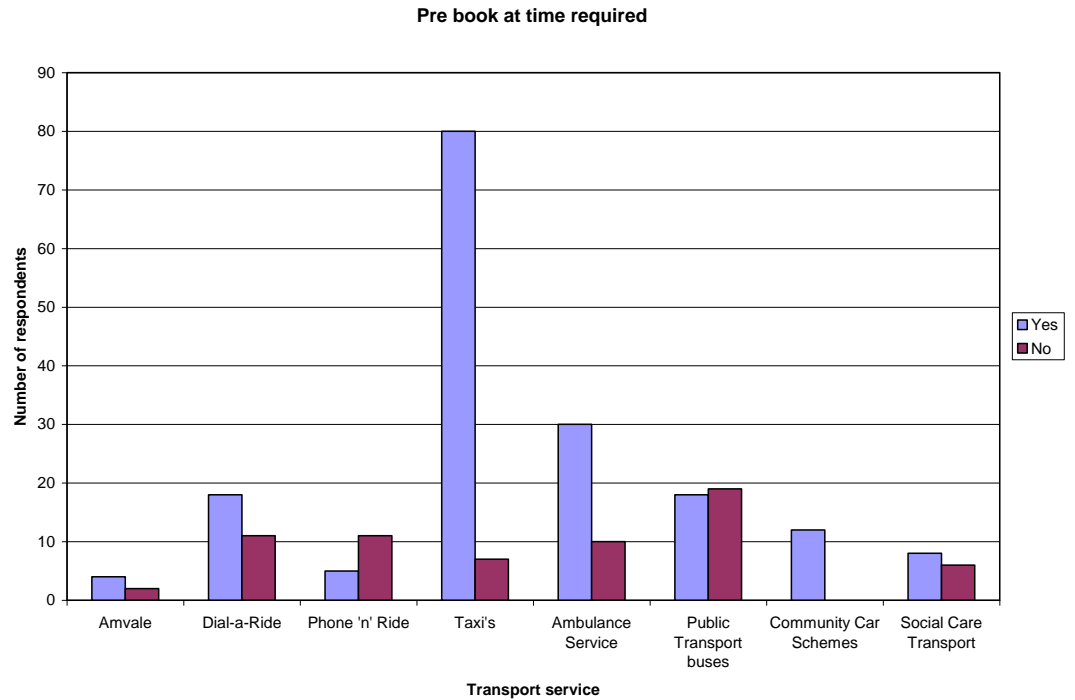
More people who responded that used Phone 'n' Ride did not appear to be satisfied with the service that was provided to them. 26 individual comments were received about this service.

These comments were mostly about booking arrangements and difficulty to get through to an operator on the switchboard. Pick up times are not adequate leaving some passengers waiting well over the agreed ten minute window.

All the other methods of transport the general public found covered their needs quite well apart from Public Transport. This service leaves a lot to be desired. Although cheaper than taxis, the service doesn't reach all of the populated areas.

Q4

If you needed to pre-book your transport, were you able to get this at the time you required?



A graph to show the number of respondents who were able to book their transport at a time they required

There was a good response to this question with Taxis being the most reliable form of transport that people were able to book for a time that they wished to travel.

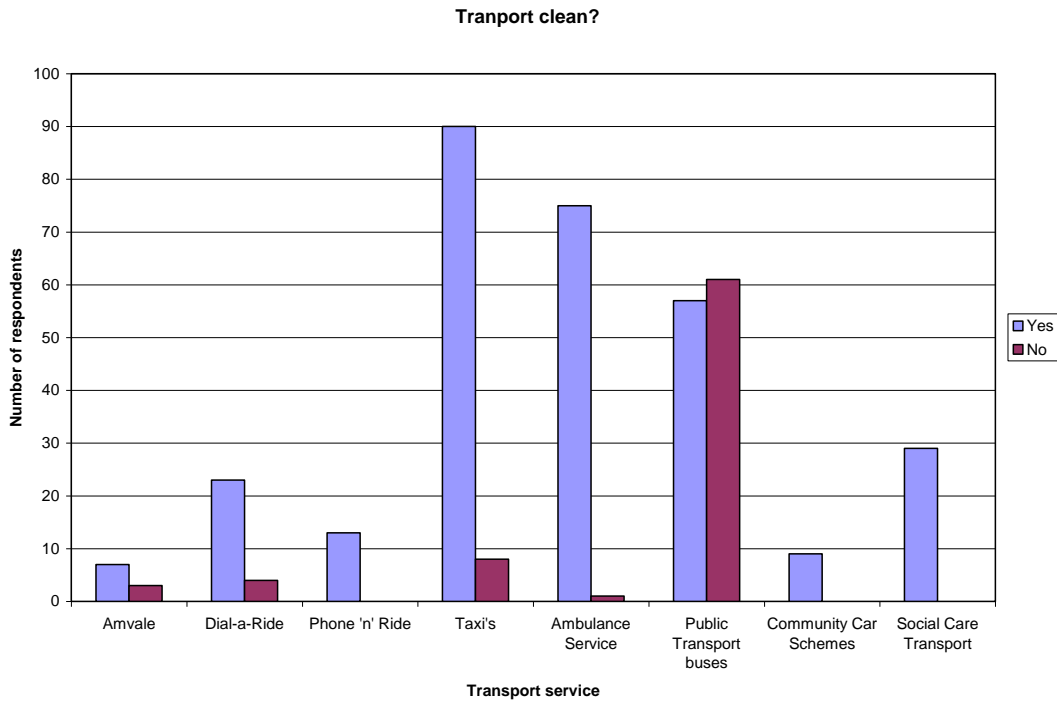
Although people are not able to book public transport buses they still responded to this question and it can be concluded that the service does not (and can not be expected to) meet everyone's individual travel time needs.

For Dial-A-Ride 12 people did not feel that they were able to book the transport when they required it, compared to 18 people who felt that it met their needs.

For Phone 'n' Ride the majority of people who responded felt that they were not able to book the service for the time they wished to travel.

Q5

Was the transport you used clean?



A graph to show whether respondents felt the transport used was clean

All the transport services were rated as clean apart from the public transport service where just over half of people who responded felt that the transport was not clean. 5 people made individual comments on the poor standard of cleanliness on the public transport buses.

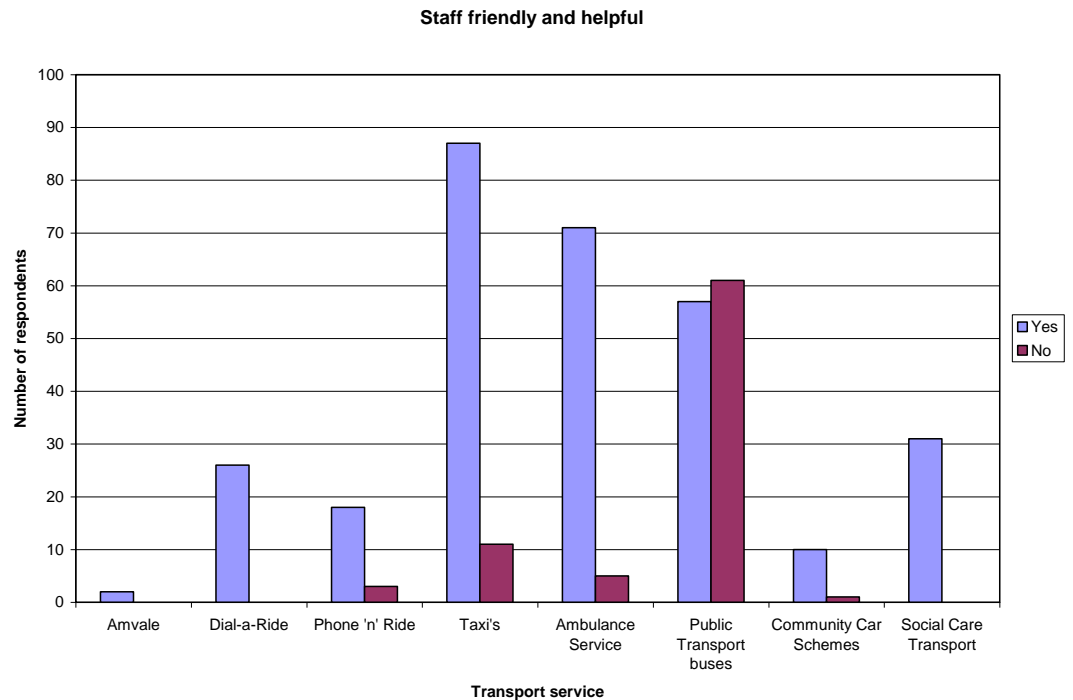
As Stagecoach buses should leave the depot in a clean condition, the cause of this result lies in the behaviour of some of the irresponsible passengers.

All the people who used Phone 'n' Ride, the Community Car Scheme and Social Transport services rated the services as clean. Congratulations to these services.

It was clear from the responses that the majority of people who used the Amvale service, Dial-A-Ride, Taxi's and the Ambulance service felt that these services were clean, however some respondents did not find this.

Only a few people who used the other services abused them by way of their untidy habits.

Q6 Did you feel that the staff were friendly and helpful?



A graph to show the number of respondents who thought staff were friendly and helpful

All respondents who used Amvale, Dial-A-Ride and the Social Care transport service felt that the staff were friendly and helpful. It is disappointing that this was not reflected across the other service providers, particularly the ambulance service where passengers often do not have to pay for this service.

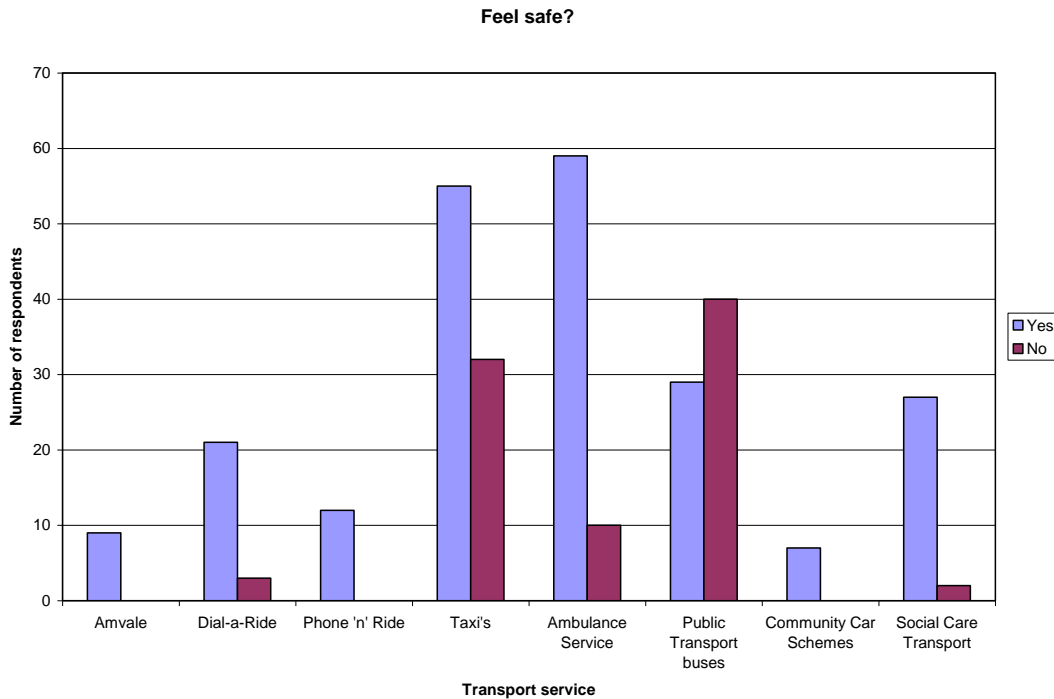
The public transport buses were identified as having the least friendly and helpful staff, with more respondents stating that staff were not friendly and helpful than were friendly and helpful.

It seems some of Stagecoaches staff could be more helpful and friendly. Even if customers are often rude and unhelpful to them, it is no excuse to respond by setting a bad example. Perhaps if the management and the company operators

provided a better service without putting too much pressure on the drivers this attitude could be addressed.

An excellent example set in most cases though and the employees can be justly proud.

Q7 **Did you feel safe? E.g. were you reminded to put seatbelts on?**



A graph to show the number of respondents who felt safe using the transport

It was reassuring to learn that people who used the Amvale, Phone 'n' Ride and Community Car services felt safe when using these types of transport.

The majority of people who used the Dial-A-Ride service felt safe however 3 individual negative comments were received.

It was of some concern that a large proportion of people who use the Taxis did not feel safe when using this service.

More worrying is the fact that 40 people did not feel safe when using public transport buses

compared to only 28 who did. As the lives and well being are literally in the hands of the drivers and related staff in the transport business, safety is of paramount importance.

The graph picks up on areas where this is not the case and these areas need to be tackled and any gaps worked out between the companies and staff in question.

Any training or re-training must be applied to reassure the general public that their lives are indeed in safe hands.

1

Amvale

A large percentage of those who took part in the survey had heard of Amvale but had never used it. Therefore the results are based on the few who had.

Amvale are a well established company with comprehensive transport cover. They provide transport on a local and national level meeting the needs of the public. Some of the areas they cover are: Patient Transport with wheelchair access vehicles. Services for the elderly, school children of all abilities and adults more agile all benefit from them. Primary Care Units and surgeries can be and are provided with services too.

Out of those who had completed the forms only a few people were dissatisfied as a whole and a couple of people thought bookings could be improved.

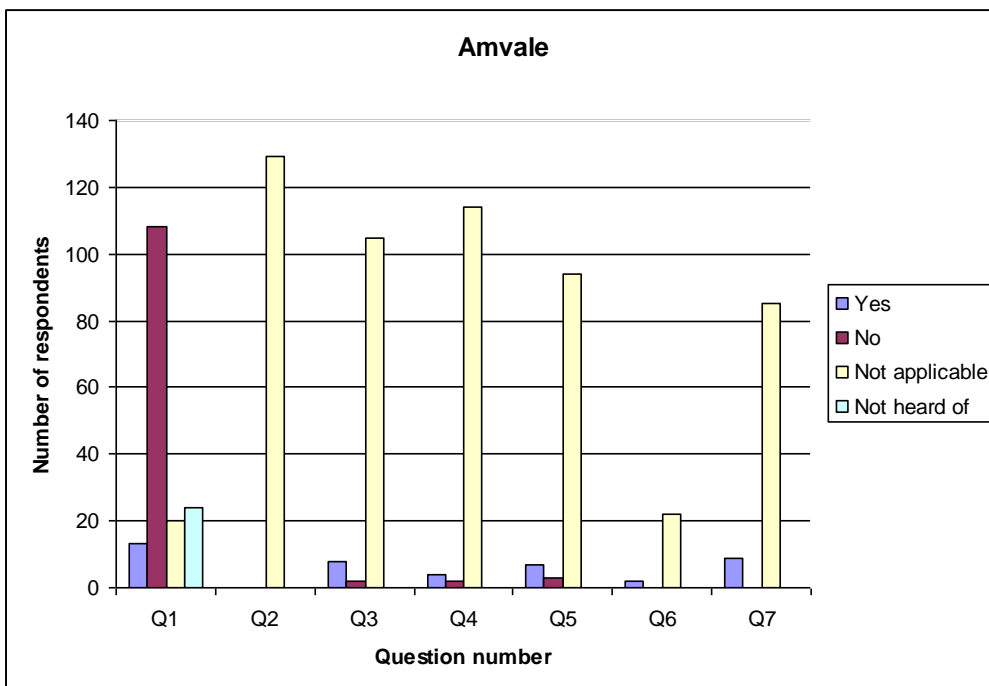
As a general rule the vehicles were clean and only a few found this not to be the case. Taking into consideration the number of vehicles on the road the percentage would be low.

Safety standards are very high and the drivers undergo intensive training which is a credit to

Amvale. The overall safety aspects need no improvements.

Friendliness and helpfulness of staff are good and their appearance is of importance to them, because these portray Amvale’s image to the general public.

This is a patchy summary as the small percentage who commented will not indicate an overall picture. Recommendations for Amvale are to keep a watchful eye on bookings and the cleanliness of vehicles in order to maintain this high standard.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for the Amvale service

No specific comments were made by respondents about the Amvale Service.

2

Dial-A-Ride

Those who use this service felt that on the whole it was good. The drivers were of a high standard which is commendable with them being volunteers.

Safety is high on the agenda with only a small percentage not told to wear seatbelts, but those travelling in their wheelchairs were securely clamped and fitted with their safety belts by the driver anyway as routine practise.

The service is good value as it is door-to-door. Distances travelled makes it even better compared to a taxi service. Even with a small yearly registration fee it still makes this service value for money. Should an escort be needed the extra cost is very reasonable.

Booking this service is required and taking into consideration the fact that not many buses are available, also volunteers are used, it is not surprising that sometimes it is difficult to book. Those asked thought a long waiting period to register would put people off. Old buses are in use which then break down and this leads to disappointment and inconvenience.

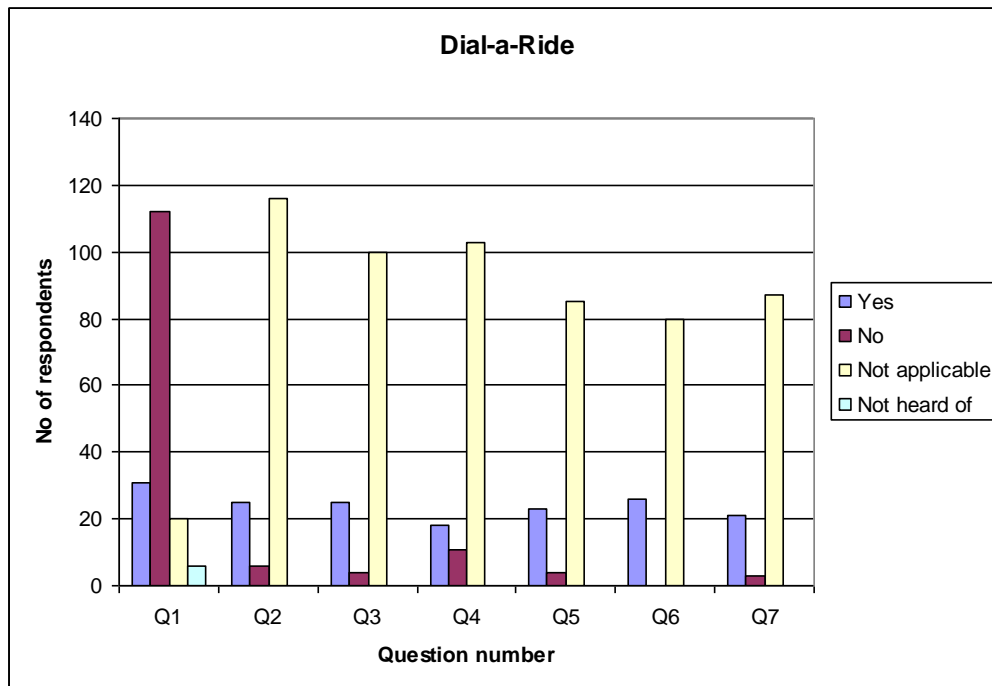
There have been cases where people don't get picked up or taken home on time; and rare occasions, they are not collected at all.

As a general rule, the service is as reliable as can be but there is obviously room for improvement.

Cleanliness in the new buses is high but not in the older ones, but most asked found it to be acceptable.

The helpfulness of staff and their friendliness was genuine and a credit to the service.

A much valued and needed service to prevent isolation of the otherwise housebound only needs slightly more attention to cleaning, bookings and membership issues.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for Dial-A-Ride

The following comments were received about the Dial-A-Ride service.

Time keeping (1)

- At times Dial-A-Ride has arrived later than arranged.

Registration (2)

- The only time I ever contacted Dial-A-Ride, I answered lots of questions, was given a number and finally was told that the transport I wanted was full up. I would have appreciated it if I had been told this at the beginning of the phone call.
- My van broke down and I (being disabled) rang Dial-A-Ride and asked for a ride and they said I couldn't because I wasn't a member. I asked to join and she said I had to

wait till September to join and it was only February, disgusting.

Booking (2)

- Please will you have an organiser on hand to book or answer questions on Fridays.
- Dial-A-Ride needs you to register and book in advance and this is not always possible.

Staffing arrangements (3)

- Dial-A-Ride could do with more drivers.
- The service needs more drivers as sometimes there are no places due to lack of staff.
- Regards Dial-A-Ride, they train their drivers to an acceptable level i.e. Public Service vehicle license level, and clean and tidy up their vehicles and smarten their drivers up.

Other comments (positive) (1)

- The service is satisfactory.

Other comments (negative) (3)

- Another bus would be a good idea as often fully booked.
- Looking at the state and the quality of the drivers and their ability to drive safely, (I am Approved Driving Instructor) I would never feel safe in a Dial-A-Ride vehicle.
- In the case of Dial-A-Ride I would never use or try to use again.

Suggested Recommendations

- All drivers are reminded of the importance of reminding passengers to secure their seatbelts before the journey starts.
- The booking system to be reviewed to provide clearer information to callers about membership of the service and the scope of the service.

- The service needs to look at options available to inform passengers if the service is delayed.
- Whilst it is appreciated that drivers are volunteers from comments made it is recommended that the drivers undergo driver training to a recognised level.

3 Phone 'n' Ride

Phone 'n' Ride is open to all residents of North East Lincolnshire; therefore it is in great demand. With only a few small buses and only one with wheelchair access, this makes it perhaps too elusive for many people. It does not operate on Sundays and this limits the service.

In order to secure a booking, one has to be fast on the phone; as early as 8am. Often it can be a task in itself to keep re-trying to get through to attain a place on a bus and at the times you wish. Comments made were: They should have more operators to take bookings, more buses to cope with demand, and sticking to agreed pick - up and return journey times. Even with the 10 minutes allowed before the agreed time of arrival being taken into account, the schedules were sometimes a problem for passengers. When dealing with the elderly or disabled this is not good practise as there may not be a comfortable, dry and warm place to wait and if they are outside, they are being exposed to the elements and possible safety risks. All these points must be taken into consideration too.

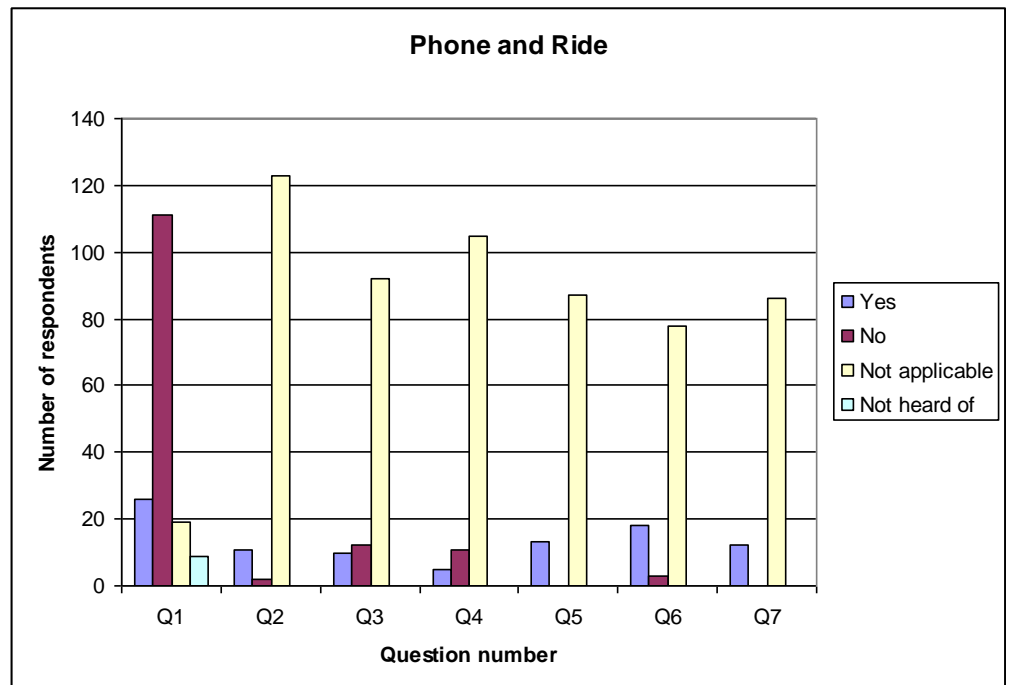
No doubt the service is value for money and concessions are given to those who qualify. The area covered is cheaper than using a taxi, but not as reliable.

Drivers as a general rule are kind and friendly, but if you don't comply with the agreed time you may get some who are not pleased, because you would put their schedules out. Most who were asked found drivers helpful and adhered to safety rules.

Buses were said to be clean, tidy and comfortable which make journeys a pleasure for the passengers.

Some made a point that this service should be limited to those who are not able to use public transport, and this would free up space and speed up bookings.

Apart from the issues raised this is a very good service but could be excellent if these points were addressed and acted upon.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for Phone 'n' Ride

There were 26 comments made about Phone 'n' Ride. These were:

Time keeping (1)

- Phone 'n' Ride are not good at getting you to clinic appointments near to your time and you have to wait in the clinic up to an hour prior to the appointment.

Booking (9)

- Fully booked when you book 6 days in advance.
- The Phone 'n' Ride service is difficult to book.
- Not been able to book for hospital appointments 5 days in advance.
- Sometimes bookings for out of Grimsby get missed.
- Only twice have I been able to book for my hospital appointments. So I had to get taxis which were very expensive.
- Sometimes I have difficulty booking and when I did they could not provide a return journey.
- The service gets booked quickly. So I have to get a taxi.
- I have had complaints from service users when trying to pre book to get to activities, that when they try to book in advance that it has to be day before, then when they try and book its full.
- The Dial-A-Ride and Phone 'n' Ride need you to register and book in advance and this is not always possible.

Telephone Lines (2)

- The telephone lines seem to be busy when I try to book and they need more people to man the switchboard.
- The lines are very busy and it is a problem to book.

Buses (6)

- More buses please so they don't have to turn people away.
- More buses so you don't have to be turned away.

- They need more buses as I have had to get a taxi very often to get to the hospital.
- This service should only take passengers who are not able to use public transport. Then I could get a booking.
- Why don't they provide service after 7:30pm?
- Why don't they provide service on a Sunday when public transport is bad?

Other comments (positive) (3)

- The service is good.
- Very satisfactory!
- A very good service.

Other comments (negative) (5)

- More buses for wheelchair users.
- I would make better provisions for wheelchair users instead of the school children and the fitter people.
- I would like to see this service just for the vulnerable and disabled people.
- Please don't use it for school runs.
- Please use this service just for wheelchair users.

Suggested Recommendations

- Due to the problems experienced by passengers wishing to book the service we recommend that the service is supported to review its booking arrangements.
- The service needs to be supported to look at options available to inform passengers if the service is delayed.
- Due to the volume of people who wish to use the service but were unable LINK suggests that service should consider limiting passengers to those unable to use public transport.

Taxis

A high percentage of people who took part in the transport survey used taxis. There was an almost even split on the value for money by the people who responded. It depends on priority needs and income in certain circumstances, so perhaps this reflects on the divide.

Most of those asked thought the tariffs varied from firm to firm. Also drivers tended to go the long way to destinations passengers reported. This practise can be avoided if road conditions permit. It was suggested that a fixed tariff could be introduced within an agreed radius of the town centre to cut down costs and encourage more usage to benefit both parties.

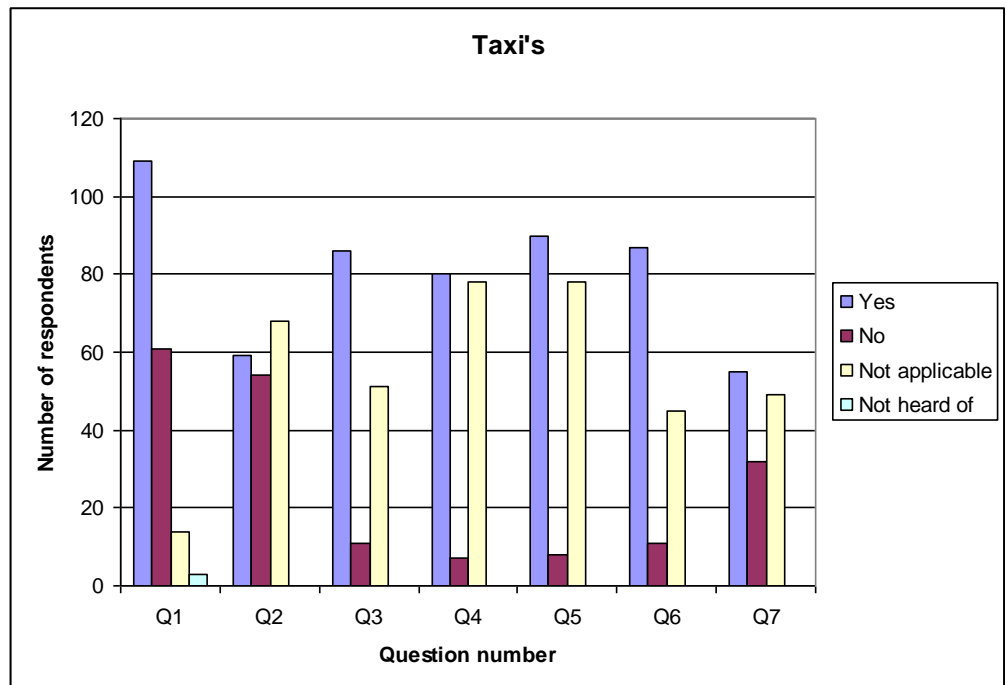
Bookings were generally quick and easy to do, with only a few people being let down. Those operating the switchboards were most helpful and friendly and seldom rude and impatient.

Most drivers were found to be very helpful and friendly but an improvement in courtesy to passengers when getting in and out of their vehicles could be better. Especially towards those ill, elderly or special needs. Standards could be raised to support the good service already being provided.

Taxis seldom picked up or dropped off late considering road and traffic conditions. So the service was found to be reliable in the majority of cases.

Vehicles were of a clean and tidy condition and only older cabs a bit tatty with wear and tear. Seat belts complied with legal requirements, but some drivers assumed you would wear them. So more verbal reminders are needed, even if the signage is clear, to put on seat belts. No smoking signs in taxis are complied with.

Limitations occur when called to areas of high crime and limited access, so sometimes passengers don't get door-to-door service. Summing up the Taxi Service is a good one with only a few areas for improvement thus giving more passenger satisfaction and better public relations.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for Taxis

There were 13 comments made about Taxis, these were:

Time keeping (3)

- Sometimes late.
- Taxi was late but not by much
- Taxis are good, sometimes they take too long but that's generally traffic and not really their fault.

Staffing arrangements (3)

- Very helpful.
- Don't always help with bags when you are having problems i.e. injured or elderly.
- All the taxi drivers I've met have been fine.

Other comments (positive) (3)

- Good service
- Reliable service
- Good value.

Costs (2)

- As I am disabled I could not afford these transport costs.
- I feel taxis are too expensive.

Other comments (negative) (2)

- I got a taxi once and they took me to where I wanted to go but didn't tell me there was no one that day to fetch me back until I wanted to get home!
- All taxis or most should be capable of taking wheelchairs

5 Ambulance Service

This very vital service it has to be stated was appreciated by those who were in need of it.

The Emergency Service in particular most rated as excellent. Although some asked thought the response times could have been quicker.

Non Emergency could improve on a few things which are: quicker response times, bookings made easier, cutting down waiting times before pick-up and dropping off and sending the correct transport for their needs.

Otherwise a very good service meeting the requirements of those asked.

Staff, as a general rule, were found to be smart in appearance, friendly, helpful, and competent. Therefore most said they had a good service with many saying they were very grateful.

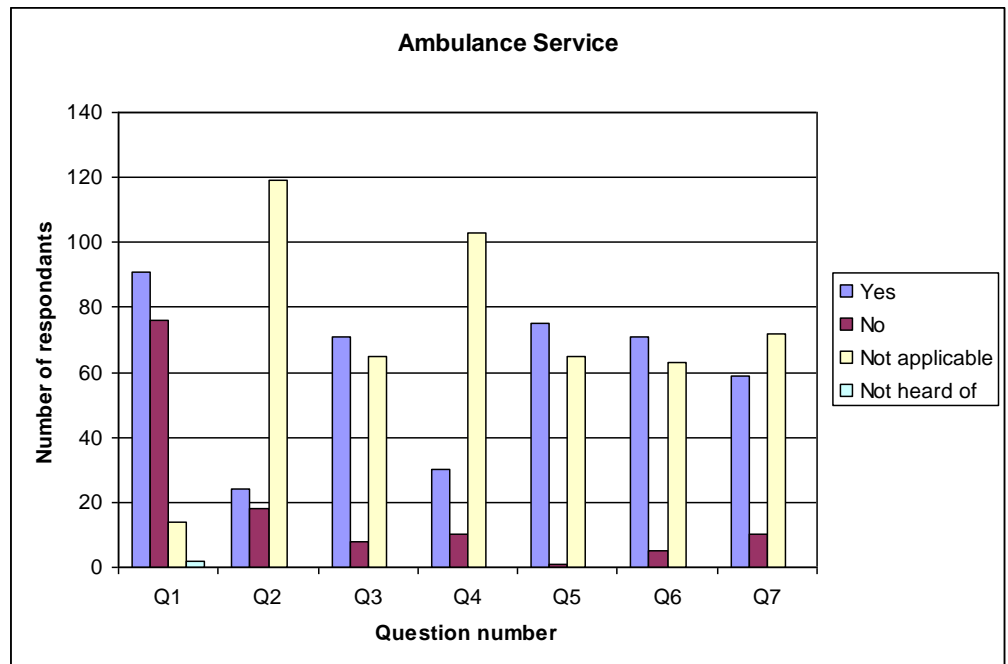
Passengers were satisfied with safety standards

and were fitted with seatbelts where applicable and if able to do so, asked to fit their own.

Clean and tidy Ambulances were the rule with only a few on occasions the opposite.

The age of some of the vehicles leaves a lot to be desired and some look shabby but don't compromise safety standards. All new Ambulances would be a bonus to bring the service up-to-date.

Generally, the public are satisfied and hold the service in great regard and seldom had reason to complain. Hopefully the issues raised will be addressed to enhance the services.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for the Ambulance Service

Time keeping (4)

- Improve punctuality please.
- A later pick up time for hospital appointments.
- The ambulance service is very good as is busy service, however not always on time for the appointments.
- The ambulance service is sometimes late due to over work.

Booking (2)

- The ambulance did not turn up to take me to Hull for my operation. N.B. Please will you double check that transport to other area hospitals is okay for the service user and the pick up. Maybe phone call on the day if a late pick up or the previous one for an early pick up.
- I feel that the staff doing the bookings should take care when doing this as the ambulance went to Stallingborough Lodge for me TWO MONTHS AFTER I had left their care. The result was I missed an important appointment with the Stroke Consultant. Also I had to pay £14.50 for a taxi to the hospital on a subsequent occasion when transport failed to turn up.

Other comments (positive) (2)

- 999 - Excellent care!
- Only used ambulance service for emergencies

Staff (2)

- Very good service overall, although a few ambulance personnel can be quite abrupt and offensive.
- The ambulance service and paramedics were superb

Ambulance services are very vital to us all and their staff are held in great regard by the majority of residents.

Therefore high expectations are placed upon their services and skills. Not surprising when lives are in their hands, they have to meet high standards. It is very rare that complaints are made against this service but when they do they must be investigated thoroughly. Some survey comments have stated their dissatisfaction.

Issues are mostly around areas of waiting, travelling times and bookings but also staff not being as friendly and helpful to patients and wrong information being given or confused messages. Understandably, staff caught up in life and death situations could come across as abrupt or unfriendly but otherwise a little more care could be exercised.

Suggested Recommendations

- Either the verbal or written complaints procedure should be made freely available in vehicles and in waiting clinic and hospital areas. Clearly written and explained with the correct line of approach to deal quickly and efficiently with any customer complaints.

6 Public Transport Buses

Within North East Lincolnshire public transport buses are provided by the company Stagecoach.

Regarding the attitude of the staff it was clear that some drivers could be more understanding towards the passengers, especially those with disabilities, the elderly, those with baby carriers and wheelchairs. Heated words between people could be avoided with a little more thought. Disputes regarding priority in the cases of wheelchair users and those with baby carriages are ongoing issues. These need to be addressed and rectified by clear codes of conduct between drivers and passengers alike. It must be said many drivers are most helpful in their treatment to passengers.

Some bus users get angry or are responding rudely to drivers who shut the doors and pull away from stops just as they get there. Drivers try to keep to timetables and have safety regulations to follow.

However if safety rules would not be breached, a few extra minutes to take on board someone in these circumstances will lead to a friendlier image and less frustration on the part of the passengers. It must be said that rudeness on the part of both parties in these and all other circumstances is not helpful towards mutual respect.

Those drivers who don't wait for elderly or the disabled to sit down before pulling away from stops could cause them injury. This is not good practice, as this may lead not only to suffering but ill feelings too, along with costs to Stagecoach, so it makes sense to avoid being impatient. The majority of drivers are considerate and kind to the above mentioned.

Cleanliness of buses leaves a lot to be desired but there is only so much Stagecoach can do to prevent passengers from making a mess. Maybe revised notices, well placed and in large print on buses, will encourage travellers to be more considerate to others on board.

Other recommendations include keeping ticket machines in good working order and bus drivers setting good examples, by not throwing down lengths of ticket after a machine fault. Accidents can occur when the less agile passengers encounter empty bottles, cans and plastic bags.

Pricing of journeys on the whole are considered good value. Some return journeys were priced differently for the same distance covered, which passengers could not understand.

Reliability of the services could be improved a great deal as some users were made late for work or appointments.

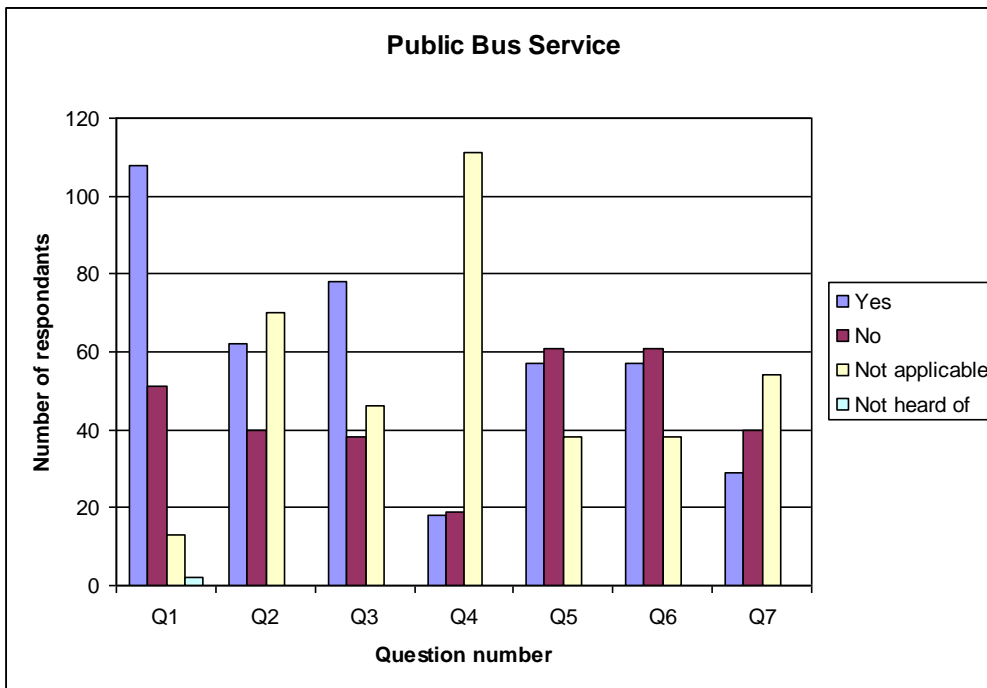
Buses missed out or very late and old type buses used with steps, preventing passengers boarding who have wheelchairs, walking frames and child

carriages. Not only causing them discomfort and distress waiting for long periods but loses the company revenue and a good caring image. There are definite issues here that need thinking through and acting upon for the benefit of all.

Excluding people who unfortunately live in or have to travel to an area with no bus service at all is restrictive to them. On a work and social level puts them at a disadvantage, so here due consideration is not apparent.

Safety of passengers is of a good standard as a general rule although some drivers could be reminded they are driving a bus in built up areas not on a racetrack. The responsibility they have with the lives of so many in their hands is a credit to them. Attaining such a position in the community in the first place it is a shame to spoil it. Perhaps "mystery shoppers" could be used to identify drivers in need of more training.

It will be not only in the driver's best interest, but of Stagecoach as a company, to ensure their standards and services are high and that the customer's needs are met because the customer is paying to use their services.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for public transport buses

Public Transport Buses (71)

Many passengers stated their dissatisfaction with this service.

Time keeping (5)

- On some services you have to wait up to 30 minutes for a 10 minute service. Also the old type buses are still being fobbed off to this area and those who have wheelchairs have to wait ages in all weathers!
- On some services you have to wait up to 30 minutes for a bus
- Please keep to the time tables.
- Please don't miss as many buses out.
- Please try to keep to the normal service.

Timetables (1)

- Being able to view a timetable at a bus stop would be helpful instead of using a mobile to phone up first!

Access onto bus (2)

- Buses are often dangerous because of all the buggies wheelchairs and shopping trolleys, all at the front of the bus. I often miss my stop due to no clear exit!
- The bus drivers often close the doors on you as you get very close or pull way even if you are old or struggling.

Drivers (17)

- I have found some bus drivers very discourteous and rude towards elderly passengers with free bus passes.
- Please don't be in so much of a hurry and wait for people to be seated.
- Drivers should be more courteous.
- Drivers sometimes move off before you get sat down and you lose your balance and fall.
- The drivers are not too friendly at times.
- Bus drivers not very friendly.
- Moving off before you sit down.
- Be more considerate of older people's needs.
- Polite drivers welcome!
- I do not feel safe on the buses, very bad drivers, hard on the brakes.
- Please approach bus stops slowly, to prevent accidents on the bus.
- Please wait until the elderly are seated.
- Less grumpy drivers, customer friendly please.
- Some of the bus drivers are non communicative to the point of being rude, others are of course fine.
- Do something about the drivers - they usually look so bored!
- Public transport bus service is particularly bad. Few of the drivers are friendly and some are downright rude. The ride is particularly uncomfortable as the buses are not particularly clean with horrendous jerking motions as the vehicle accelerates through

the gears. Is this a result of bus design or aggressive driving?

- I have comments from service users that bus drivers are often impatient and do not consider an older person age and abilities.

Specific Routes (23)

Number 16 (2)

- Not a good service on the number 16 route as some buses are very late and often get missed out!
- The number 16 bus was missed off today at lunch time and the driver said it was missed because the previous one had broken down. Where were the spare or standby buses? I missed my appointment!

Immingham/Number 45/46 (7)

- The Immingham route does not connect you to Cleethorpes often and you have to change and they get more money for a poor service!
- The Immingham bus is not a very good service and not value for money. Also, they get full at peak times and you have to stand for a good deal of the journey.
- The number 45/46 is a very bad service. Even worse now after the revised time table!
- The morning services in this area are not always punctual.
- More buses on the 45 route please.
- Please could you make the 45 bus more frequent and to go through Healing village. Now the new houses will have more people who need this service. It is greatly missed.
- The 45 buses are not reliable.

Numbers 13/14 (3)

- The number 14 bus which I always get every Friday morning to take my young son to play school always turns up 20 minutes late at the Trawl Pub stop. 8:45am.

Why is this? I have to be at the school at 9am and I get to the stop before the scheduled time...

- The number 14 and 13 buses are turning up more than the 12 minute service. I find they have been up to 20 minutes late.
- Please get the number 14 bus timetable sorted. Three turn up at once very often.

Scartho (1)

- I find the Scartho service okay.

General (10)

- Any chance of running buses to and from some supermarkets?
- An up to date service to the new Medical centres.
- Also no buses to the St Hugh's Hospital, Peaks Lane.
- Sparse service to St Hugh's Hospital, only the Number 3 and the Humber flyer.
- The Public Transport buses should be more regular and there should be a bus connecting Waltham and New Waltham.
- The Heneage Area is not serviced well by the bus company.
- I have to get two buses to the new Medical Centre and I had a long way to walk as well.
- More local out of 9-5 buses for later appointments, my doctor's surgery is some way from my home and it's a pain when I get a late appointment as the buses don't run as often and can result in an hours wait. They also don't run as published and seem to run when they want which again has caused me to be late or attend to be told I need to rearrange and re attend.
- Better access to buses in the first place especially for people in rural areas with no transport, across North East Lincolnshire.
- Services from public transport not regular enough only one bus per hour from where I live and there are lots of older people who

find it difficult to travel to hospital or doctors and back because of the lack of public transport.

Cleanliness (5)

- I nearly fell in the bus on empty bottles and lots of litter. Also empty cans rolling about on the floor.
- The rubbish! Why not place litter bins on the exit of the buses?
- Cleaner bus interiors and allowing you to be seated before they pull away from the stops.
- A cleaner bus service
- I would make the buses a lot cleaner

Buses used (6)

- All low floor buses please.
- Make sure you have a few standby buses double and single Decker please.
- Put all modern buses on please Stagecoach to give a good service.
- I don't feel safe standing up on a bus or if seated sitting side – ways or facing backwards.
- Not all buses are low loaders
- Need buses with disabled access for wheelchairs, prams and those people with walking aids both for young and older people.

Fares (5)

- Buses are costly and the others are not known to me or I'm not in the correct age range or criteria to qualify so you have to rely on buses and your own cash to attend.
- Lower costs for the children.
- Public Transport should be more regular and cheaper for students.
- The fares are high and I would generally avoid this mode of transport.
- I would introduce cards for under 16s so that they did not have to pay adult prices

Other comments (negative) (7)

- The bus company get as much money out of us for a very poor service.
- Sometimes when a bus is re – routed, passengers have to walk a long way to get to their stated stop.
- More buses to service this area please.
- I don't feel that the bus service is as good as it could be
- Please stop people drinking alcohol on buses. Also the loud music.
- Benches for people to rest when they are not able to stand for a long time.
- I will not use the bus unless mobility is good.

Suggested Recommendations

- If drivers are not rushed to keep to a timetable which is too tight for comfort it would improve the service, not only for themselves but for passengers too.
- A friendlier atmosphere could be attained. The service would get a better image and customer relations would improve. This may lead to more people using the service and bring in extra revenue.
- Perhaps if drivers are expected to keep to unattainable schedules it may account for the rudeness of some staff. Although there maybe good reason for buses being late, it doesn't mean it is an excuse for their conduct.
Stagecoach perhaps needs to draw attention to the conduct of some of their staff and give extra training in the art of "Customer Relations"
- Maybe a few more visible, well-placed signs to help both drivers and passengers alike to treat others with respect. The ones used are

perhaps too long worded and in small print. Even "voice Messages" now and then on journeys could make the travelling on buses a much nicer experience.

7 Community Car Schemes

Out of those surveyed only a small percent had heard of this form of transport.

The service works well carrying passengers between hospitals or other premises for medical reasons. Reliable and clean cars are used and driven by competent staff.

It is a non-emergency service but retains all the criteria needed, such as being respectful, helpful and confidential relating to the patients.

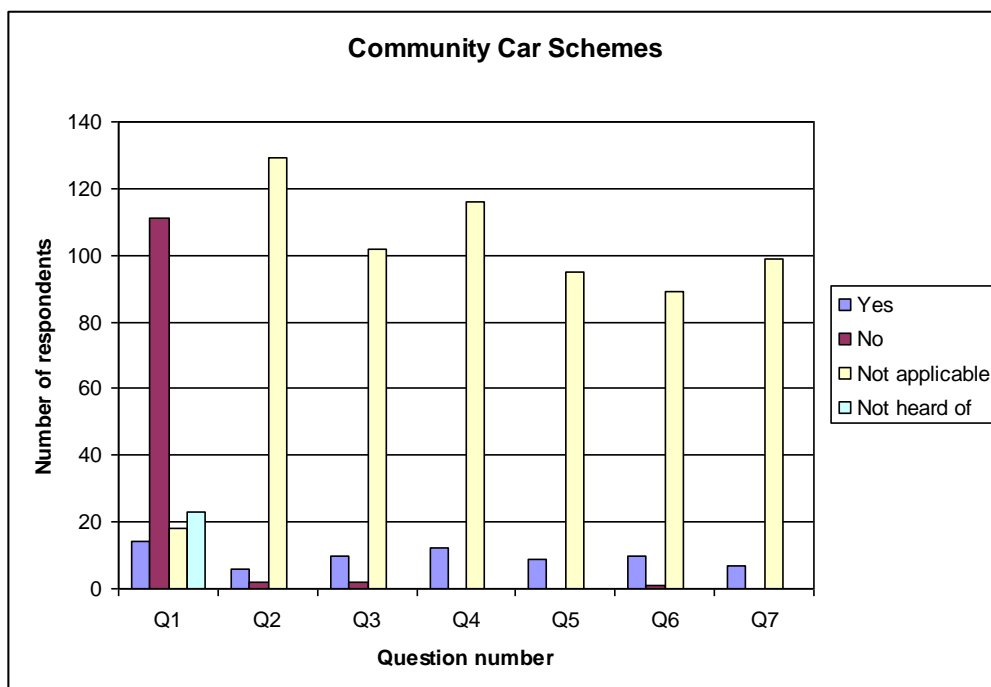
Those asked thought the service was a valuable one and safe to use. On the whole the drivers were friendly, helpful and of smart appearance.

Bookings were spot on and no mention of not keeping to schedules, therefore time keeping cannot be commented upon.

Most who we asked were very satisfied with all aspects of the service. Only one person complained of a less than helpful driver and two people were not satisfied at all.

As a general rule, the Community Car scheme is a good one and of value with just marginal room for improvements, making sure all drivers are adhering to high standards and reminded to be helpful towards passengers.

No specific comments were made about the Community Car scheme.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for the Community Car Scheme

Suggested Recommendations

Mostly staff are good time keepers, reliable, friendly and adhere to safety standards. Only a small number of those surveyed had cause to complain. As the drivers are volunteers perhaps a little more training could be given.

Overall a very good service especially considering it is provided by those not paid for their valued work.

8

Social Care Transport

This form of transport is much needed and well used by a great many people as a lifeline taking them to various places, door-to-door.

Those asked found the staff reliable, friendly, capable and smart in their appearance. With the majority saying the service was very good and value for money.

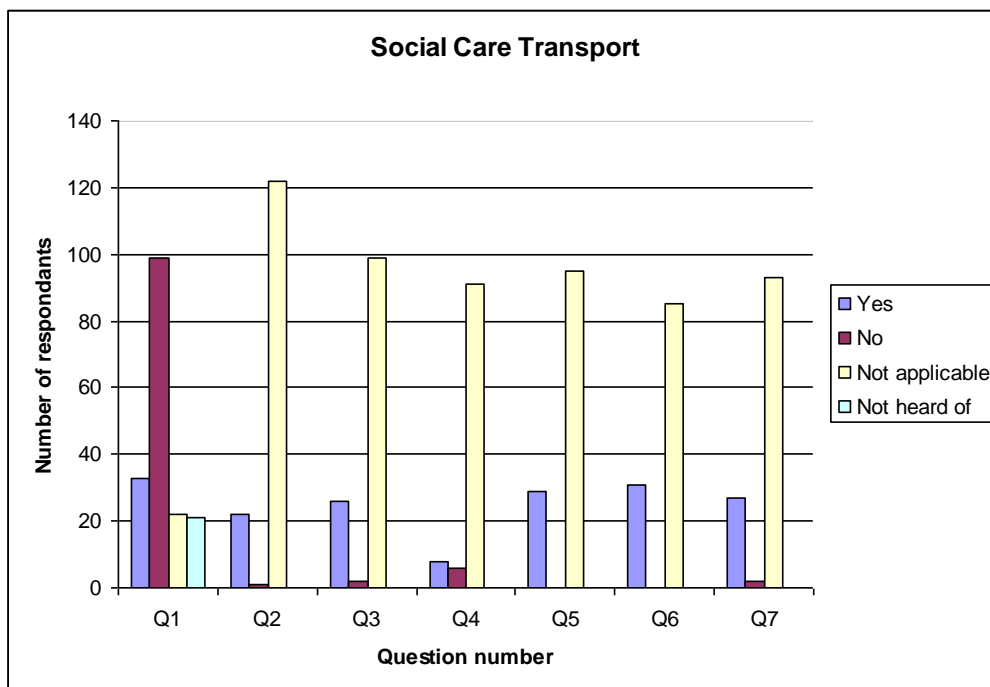
Safety is of paramount importance in this service as passengers are often elderly, disabled, or young people with special needs. Those asked were satisfied with the high standards attained.

The buses were clean and tidy and as comfortable as they could be given the age and design of some of the vehicles.

Bookings were not always available for the times and dates required, which provides an area for slight improvement. However, still a good standard given in this area.

Overall satisfaction of this service is very good with passengers seldom being let down. However, improvements could be made on their booking system.

No specific comments were made about the Social Care Transport service.



A graph to show the responses to the questionnaire for Social Care transport

Suggested Recommendations

This service provides good cover for its users and is stretched to the limit. In order to extend hours and to improve bookings and reduce waiting times for transport more resources are needed. The service is well used and respected by their passengers. Attaining this high standard is very commendable.

Miscellaneous Comments (10)

- I don't have much choice as I am not allowed to drive due to my health condition so if I require emergency care, an ambulance is the only transport that I can call upon.
- Never heard of Amvale, Dial-A-Ride, Phone 'n' Ride community car schemes or social care transport
- My van broke down and I was unable to access anyone who could take me home I am wheelchair-bound and it was in the snow this year. The RAC van couldn't believe that anyone including patient transport would not help me.
- When I need to get to the hospital for routine check-ups it would be nice to be clear as to whether I am eligible for certain types of transport (I'm 40).
- I take responsibility for putting my own seatbelt on.
- I work in Occupational Therapy and I myself do not access such facilities, my patients however do. Some patients have commented that it is not always convenient to book 7 days in advance (think Phone 'n' Ride) and Dial-A-Ride are so busy you have to be put on a waiting list. Personally, I feel there needs to be more suitable transport provided for patients, especially so they can access community activities.

- Have a flexible service and a planned service. So people can choose on the day where and when they want to go, and be available for those who have an emergency as I am sure they have them. I don't expect to book a taxi, days before I want to get a taxi when I need one like everyone else does.
- Remind people who work in these services why they are there.
- I am very grateful to all the services as I have to attend the hospital several times in a year.
- There is an urgent need to bring all the "Transport Groups" under one umbrella – e.g. North East Lincolnshire Transport Users' Action Group. The Transport Officer at Eng-Age may be able to set the ball rolling.

Discussion

A percentage of those who took part made brief comments about their finding in their own words. These have all been noted under each mode of transport, in order to bring their ideas and grievances to those companies and services so that they have the opportunity to improve their performance.

There were a high proportion of people who had never used or heard of some of the companies as they chose to use their own private method of transport. However, those who did use their own cars stated: That if a better cost effective and reliable transport network were available they would probably use it.

On the graphs you will see the outcome of the questions asked ranging from value for money, satisfaction, reliability, safety and staff helpfulness etc.

Booking transport correctly is very important and taxis are seen to be the most reliable but expensive. Dial-A-Ride and Phone 'n' Ride could improve more in their bookings. If they were supported to implement better booking systems people would not need to use alternative expensive transport methods, particularly people needing wheelchair access or on a low income.

These findings will be forwarded to the relevant companies in draft form for their attention and for them to raise any issues arising from it. After this is done, it will be presented to the LINK Governing Body for any actions in their view that need to be addressed. The aim is to bring about any change in their work practises, which will enhance their services and public relations.

Thanks go to all the staff of the listed companies, services and the LINK members along with those who gave of their time, help and co-operation in completing the surveys.

Conclusion

To conclude on the findings of the Transport Survey of the eight services covered there is obviously room for improvements within all of them to provide better services for the residents of North East Lincolnshire.

Some will not need much more effort and planning to attain this while others will need a great deal. Stagecoach had the most comments regarding dissatisfaction and it is suggested that it requires a lot more resources to reach a higher standard. However, as this is a private service this will undoubtedly come back to revenue.

To attract more customers to achieve it they need to give a value for money service that is reliable

with access for as many people as possible.

Other services will have the benefit of voluntary staff and therefore the money aspect is not so much an issue. Some of the services, for example Social Care Transport may only need slight attention to issues such as bookings. Phone and Ride may need an extra bus and a better booking system. Dial-a-Ride needs perhaps to address the membership waiting list and bookings.

Taxis could give better value by having a fixed zone payment within a certain radius of the town centre as suggested by some customers, along with all taxi firms charging the same for equal mileage.

Special Thanks to:

All LINK members and staff who distributed the survey

All the members of the community who completed the survey

All the transport companies that we have surveyed:

Dial- A-Ride

Phone `n` Ride

Amvale

Social Care Transport

Stagecoach

East Midlands Ambulance Service

Taxis

Community Car Schemes

North East Lincolnshire Council

Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire

Eng-Age transport group