

LEE LI MING
PROGRAMME IN
AGEING URBANISM

**Transportation
Strategies for
Ageing
Populations, UK**

Ageing and Mobility¹

Adithi Moogoor

**Part 1 – Affordability and
Availability**

Britain's population is ageing rapidly. Over the past 40 years, 1974 to 2014, the percentage of the population aged 65 or over has increased by 3.8%. At present, there are about 11 million Britons aged 65 or over.

The demographic trend means there is a continuing need for the UK Government to innovate and to design service systems that are relevant and inclusive of older adults. The Government is striving to achieve this by removing barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities. Therefore, it has set out a vision for 'Equality' to establish a fairer society. The Equality Act 2010, which

¹ This is an evolving database. We will be adding more examples and cases over time.

underpins the vision, is based on two principles:

- **Equal treatment:** includes measures to prevent age discrimination in the provision of goods and services.
- **Equal opportunity:** prohibits discrimination in employment, training and education on the grounds of age, gender, race and other criteria.

The UK Department for Transport’s (DfT) ‘Transport Solutions for Older People’ report was informed by the ‘Equality’ principles. In this report they emphasised the important role of local transport services in determining active ageing and formulated four key strategies to address the transportation needs of older people:

- Affordability
- Availability
- Accessibility
- Acceptability

In this two-part briefing note, we discuss these four strategies. In Part 1 – we discuss affordability and availability. In Part 2 – we discuss accessibility and acceptability.

Affordability

In 2016, 14% of UK pensioners live below the poverty line and 12.6% live just above the

poverty line ² . Therefore, affordable transportation is of paramount importance to older people. Some strategies initiated by DfT to make local transport more affordable are listed in Box 1.

Box 1: Schemes to initiate ‘Affordability’

- **Concessionary Travel**

Free off-peak concessionary travel is offered from 9.30am till 11pm on weekdays, and all day on weekends and bank holidays. The pension age for women represents the point at which men and women can obtain a pass (as of 2016, the pension age for women is 63).

Local authorities offer discretionary concessions over and above the statutory minimum. For example:

a: companion passes for people unable to travel alone

b: free travel on other modes of transport where bus services are limited or scarce

c: relaxation of time restriction to allow travel in peak periods.

- **Other concessions**

The senior Railcard pass offers a discount (one third of the full fare) on some tickets, such as Standard, First

² Poverty line is defined as having income of more than 60% but less than 70% of median income after housing costs.

Class Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance fares. Also, there is no limit to the number of times people can use their Railcard to avail discounts.

- **Multi-Use of Smart Cards**

Concessionary bus passes issued to older adults are ITSO³ smart cards. The cards have provisions for adding non-transport functions. For example, cards can be used for library, leisure centre and other services.

Source: Department for Transport. (2012). *Transport Solutions for Older People*. London: Government of UK

Case Studies for ‘Affordability’

In the district of Bracknell Forest, people over 60 can use an ITSO smart card to gain free access to library services, bus services and sports clubs, and can obtain discounts from over 100 local businesses. Eligible residents are able to register for any service available on the cards at any local businesses that accept them. Residents are not required to travel to the town centre for registration.

A similar scheme operates in the county of Derbyshire where discounts are available at

³ ITSO is an interoperable standard for smartcards which can be encoded to allow the same card to be used for a variety of services.

over 1,400 local businesses for ITSO smart card users. The county council is planning to expand the services associated with the cards to include, for example, cycle hire, DVD rentals and Government entitlements.

Availability

The UK Government is acting to ensure the availability of affordable transport options. Available transport is key to facilitating social activity engagement and may help to combat social isolation, particularly among older adults who do not drive and may be at risk of social isolation.

Age UK⁴ reviewed existing policies relating to transportation network and provided inputs to DfT. Their findings were published in a report titled: ‘A Review of Local Transport Accessibility Planning’ (2006). A key recommendation included promoting collaborative working between local service providers. In response, DfT has provided tools to local authorities to assist them in developing and providing for efficient transport networks in their local areas. The tools are highlighted in Box 2.

Box 2: Schemes to promote ‘Availability’

⁴ Age UK is a charity organisation, which is dedicated to help older adults to attain a better quality of life.

- **Accessibility Planning** - refers to systematically assessing the mobility of local residents to desired destinations. DfT is working in partnership with organisations such as Primary Care Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local education authorities, local Learning and Skills Councils, and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to identify accessibility issues through mapping and providing transportation solutions to older adults based on their needs.
- **Integrating Services** - is the pooling of resources to enhance the availability of transport services. County councils and local government authorities have established Integrated Transport Units (ITUs), which provide a common platform to plan, procure and deliver all passenger transport services. For example, ITUs integrate the functions of local buses and conventional school transport services. School buses maximise their revenue by allowing councils and community transport groups to 'sell' the time when a vehicle is not normally used. This ensures continued availability of local transport services for older residents while at the same time achieving cost efficiencies and service improvements.
- **Community Transport** - is a local

passenger transport service, which is coordinated by voluntary organisations, community transport groups, and other non-statutory bodies. This service is organised on a non-profit basis, and is flexible and demand responsive. It is popular in rural communities where buses have fewer passengers and destinations can be more diverse.

Source: Department for Transport. (2012). *Transport Solutions for Older People*. London: Government of UK

Case Studies for 'Availability'

To identify and provide for local services to people living in isolated areas, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council developed an access strategy in collaboration with other organisations. The services include transportation through schemes such as 'Wheels to Work', and 'Tram Services to Healthcare' for many groups, including older people.

The 'Metro' scheme, which was initiated by West Yorkshire's Passenger Transport Executive, combines the journey to school for students with neighbourhood bus services. Buses services operate as school transport services in the morning and afternoon peak. During the day, they are designed to provide accessibility to local health, community and

shopping facilities. This service, provided in a partnership between local authorities and local area committees, aims to improve the quality of life for local residents, particularly those of advanced age, restricted mobility, as well as parents with school age children.

West Midlands Special Needs Transport (WMSNT) is the largest provider of door-to-door transport services in the UK, called the 'Ring and Ride' service. It is available to individuals who have disabilities and difficulties using conventional modes of public transport.

Transportation for Greater Manchester (TfGM) runs 'Local Link' services, which is a door-to-door transportation service within a specified geographical area.

Lincolnshire InterConnect/CallConnect is a public bus service that operates in response to pre-booked requests. The pick-up and drop-off points are in designated locations with the flexibility of a door-to-door service for passengers with mobility constraints.

The Norfolk Integrated Transport Model utilizes existing transport network to facilitate access to health and social care services for people in isolated rural areas. The model has:

- a: streamlined the booking and journey service for passengers by providing one central booking centre and one contact number

- b: provided referrals to passengers who need to commute to health care and social services for free

- c: introduced a central pool of drivers and vehicles from local services and voluntary organisations to enhance the delivery of transport services to appropriate users.

Sources:

AgeUK. (2016, July 11). *Money Matters*. Retrieved from ageuk: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources-home/policy/money-matters/poverty-and-inequality/>

AgeUK. (n.d.). *Loneliness and Isolation - Evidence Review*. Retrieved from Age UK: http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/evidence_review_loneliness_and_isolation.pdf?dtrk=true

Anderson, J. (2016, April 19). *Senior Living Blog*. Retrieved from A Place for Mom-Connecting Families to Senior Care: <http://www.aplaceformom.com/blog/help-seniors-avoid-social-isolation-8-14-2014/>

Department for Transport. (2012). *Transport Solutions for Older People*. London: Government of UK.

Government Equalities Office. (2010). *The Equality Strategy- Building a Fairer Britain*. London: Department of UK.

Government of UK. (2006, March). *Accessibility Strategy*. Retrieved from Nottinghamshire County Council: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/transport/public-transport/plans-strategies-policies/accessibility-strategy>

Government of UK. (2016, February 26). *Overview of the UK population: February 2016*. Retrieved from Office for National Statistics: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/february2016>