

Community Transport Association Passenger Survey 2024

Average Scores &
Insights from
250 Respondents

The Community Transport Association have been working with several operators over the past year to conduct an on-vehicle survey with Community Transport (CT) passengers. We wanted to discover more about the journeys that passengers were making and see what they would do if they weren't able to use Community Transport.



As a wheelchair user, without Community Transport I would not be able to get out at all

I can't use public transport - I'd be devastated without Community Transport

No day out, I'd be stuck at home

46%

of passengers would not travel without Community Transport

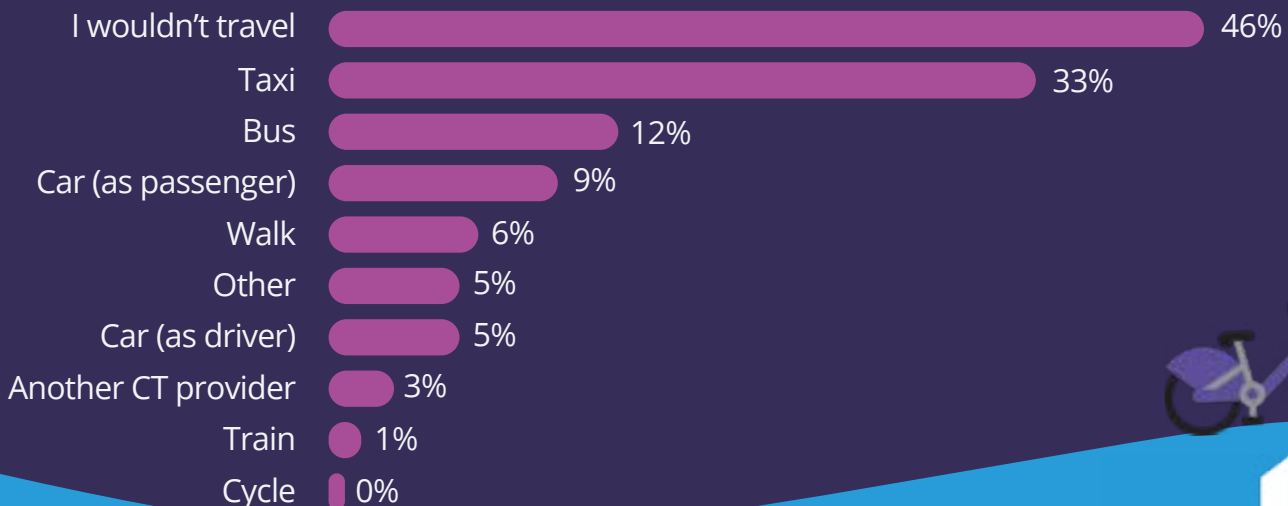


46% of passengers said that they would not travel on the day they were surveyed, if it weren't for Community Transport.² This reinforces the findings of CTA's evaluation of the Tackling Loneliness funding, that a key impact of Community Transport is to reduce isolation and improve access for those who would not otherwise travel.

This finding also highlights that Community Transport is for passengers who would not be able to access other forms of transport, either because of accessibility needs or due to a lack of other transport in their area.

² Q. "How would you make this journey if the service you are using was not available?" Base =249.

How would you make this journey without Community Transport?



33%

would rely on taxi provision if Community Transport wasn't available

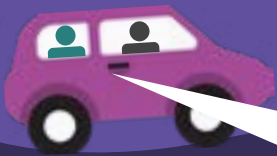
Isolation, as the cost of taxis is extremely expensive. Loss of ability to take part in exercise classes and mix socially with others

Not being able to see my husband as often. Less friendship and help from volunteers. Much more costly to use a taxi



Passengers with a disability were **significantly more likely** than those without a disability to say they would use taxis if Community Transport was unavailable.

Equally those travelling to a health appointment were significantly more likely to say they would use a taxi if Community Transport was unavailable, compared to other journey purposes. This illustrates that passengers for whom the journey is imperative are likely to be forced to use costly taxi provision without Community Transport.



I would have to catch a bus ... then order a taxi to go and visit my son in a nursing home

Only 12% of passengers said they would use buses, suggesting little overlap between Community Transport and public transport provision. Many passengers noted that public transport was not a realistic alternative for them due to difficulty walking to or waiting at stops, or lack of direct routes to their destination

This response illustrates the vital importance of Community Transport for ensuring that passengers who would not be able to travel, can access the destinations that they need to go to at a reasonable cost and with the assistance they need.

Only
12%

of passengers would use buses if Community Transport wasn't available

Respondents were asked **what it would mean to them if they were unable to use Community Transport** for the journey they were making.

Comments illustrate the importance Community Transport for reducing isolation, accessing services, improving mental health and supporting relationships.

A quarter of all respondents stated that they **wouldn't be able to go out and would miss important activities** if they were not able to access the Community Transport service they were using when surveyed

Need help to get to get to the hairdresser so wouldn't get there without you

I couldn't volunteer, I would not get out and do something helpful

A fifth of respondents stated their **disappointment if unable to use the service**, whilst a slightly smaller proportion said that they **would miss the social aspects of group travel**, or meeting friends and family at their destination.

I would be unhappy, love this bus and to mix with people

It is the only time of the week I go out of the village and would miss meeting people on the bus

As previously noted, the cost of using an alternative provision was a particular issue for those passengers who would potentially rely on taxis if they could not use Community Transport. **One in ten respondents also mentioned that they needed to use Community Transport due to the assistance they received on their journey.**

I cannot afford to travel to Birmingham by taxi (if I could find one!) I need the support of the volunteer too

I wouldn't be able to carry my shopping home as I am 86 and need a walking stick

Economic Impact

On average, passengers who volunteered their average spend, were spending £22.89 when using Community Transport, excluding the cost of fare.²

The CTA's Mapping England research estimated that 13.8 million passenger trips were made amongst CTA England members in 2022/3. Taking this average spend for those trips provides an overall annual spend of over £317 million in local economies by Community Transport passengers.³

Given that 46% of passengers would not travel without Community Transport, we can estimate that over 6.3 million of these passenger trips would not happen by other means. The spend amongst passengers who wouldn't travel without Community Transport was slightly higher than average, at £25.52 per trip, meaning that over £162 million of annual passenger spend would be lost to local economies without Community Transport services.

Journey details

48% of respondents were travelling for shopping, 25% were travelling to meet family and friends, 18% were travelling to leisure activities and 18% were travelling to health appointments.

78% of one-way passenger trips were 10 miles or less. Most trips over 10 miles were day trips to leisure activities by minibus. Car trips were more likely than minibus trips to be 5 miles or less, although there were occasional long car trips to hospital appointments.

The type of vehicle being used for the journey was related to the purpose of the journey. Those travelling to a health appointments were significantly more likely to be travelling in a car or MPV. Those travelling to shopping were overwhelmingly doing so on group transport, in a minibus. This illustrates the importance of the mixed provision that Community Transport provides, adapting service delivery to meet the needs of passengers.⁴

² Q. "Please tell us how much you spend on an average community transport journey? (Do not include the price of the journey)" Base =223 (Don't know and prefer not say excluded from analysis, average taken from the midpoint of £10 bandings with a ceiling of £75).

³ <https://ctauk.org/section-5-journeys>

⁴ For examples of the mixed service provision of Community Transport Operators see <https://ctauk.org/section-4-services>



Conclusion

The response to CTA's passenger survey illustrates the importance of Community Transport for allowing passengers who are unable to use public transport equitable access to the destinations they need to go to. It illustrates how Community Transport enables passenger independence, encourages social interaction and brings money into local economies through passengers using local shops and services. It shows how Community Transport assists people to access vital health services and feel supported whilst doing so. Most importantly, the response shows what would not happen without Community Transport and why it is vital for passengers that these services are protected.

Method and Response details

The survey was an in-transit survey, with passengers asked about the journey they were making when interviewed. Surveys were completed between April and October 2024, following an initial pilot and subsequent survey revisions from October 2023.

Passengers completed surveys with staff and volunteers from participating operators or CTA staff. 11 operators in England provided time and dedication to ensure that passengers could complete questionnaires when in transit or shortly afterwards. CTA would like to thank the participating operators for their assistance, the survey would not have been possible without it. 250 passengers took part in the survey, using operators across England. 90% of passengers were over the age of 65 and 75% were female. Most passengers had some level of disability or limiting condition: 58% of respondents had limited mobility.

Further Information

Contact information:

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The Community Transport Association (CTA) is the UK charity that represents and supports providers of Community Transport. Our 1200 members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are local charities and community groups which provide transport services always for a social purpose and never for profit. We believe in accessible, inclusive and sustainable transport for all.

