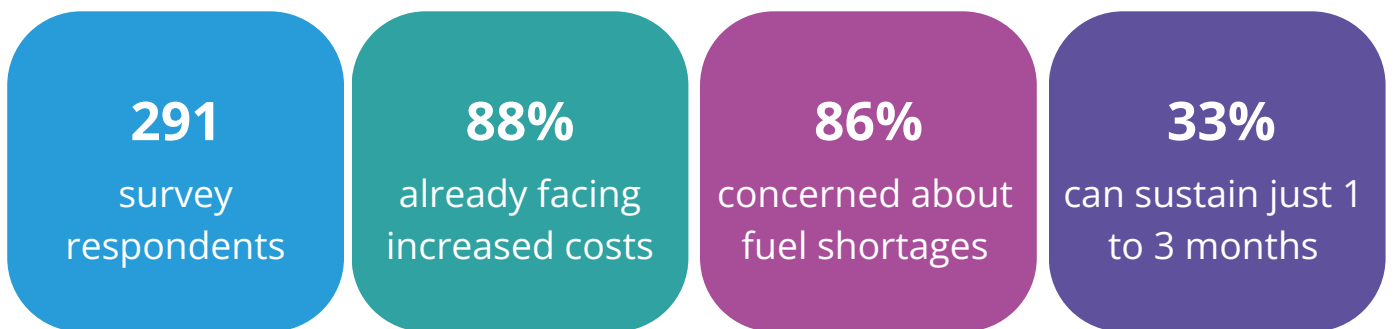


How the Fuel Crisis is impacting Community Transport Operators in England

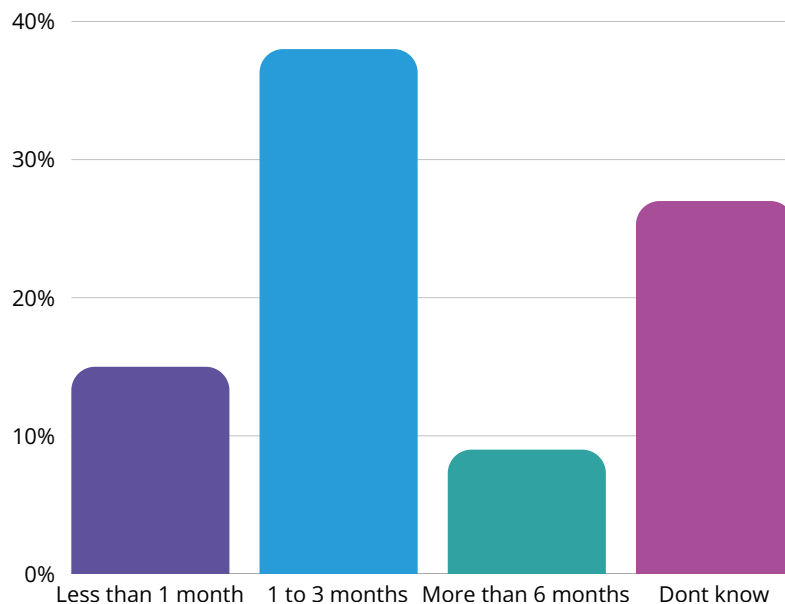
Survey of 291 operators, April 2026

Community Transport Association | Report to the Department for Transport

Heading findings



How long can current service levels last at today's prices?



Based on 269 responses. More than half could only hold out for 3 months or less.

Scale of fuel cost increases reported

cost rises reported

14% to 55%

over recent weeks

extra weekly costs

up to £1,000+

for larger operators

with no fixed price

71%

fully exposed to
pump prices

The volunteer driver crisis

HMRC Mileage rate stuck at 45p per mile



Unchanged since 2011, this no longer covers real running costs at today's pump prices.

Volunteers report feeling out of pocket on every journey, with many reducing hours, refusing longer trips, or withdrawing from schemes altogether.

What operators expect if high prices persist

Service reductions

Routes cancelled,
hours cut, non-medical
trips cut

Fare increases

Risk of pricing out the
people most in need

Loss of volunteers

Where volunteers are the
service, losing them ends
provision

Reserves running out

Several operators describe risk
as existential or use the word
bankrupt

Rural areas are hit hardest

Longer journeys, higher local
fuel costs, no alternative
providers

Three asks of the Department for Transport

Urgent review of the HMRC approved mileage rate

- 1** The 45p per mile cap is driving volunteer attrition and needs to reflect real costs.

Emergency grant funding or enhanced fuel subsidy

- 2** Targeted relief, additional to the BSOG uplift, to keep services running.

Specific consideration for rural communities

- 3** Support designed around longer distances, fewer alternatives, and higher exposure.

Source: Community Transport Association Survey, March to June 2026, 291 valid responses.