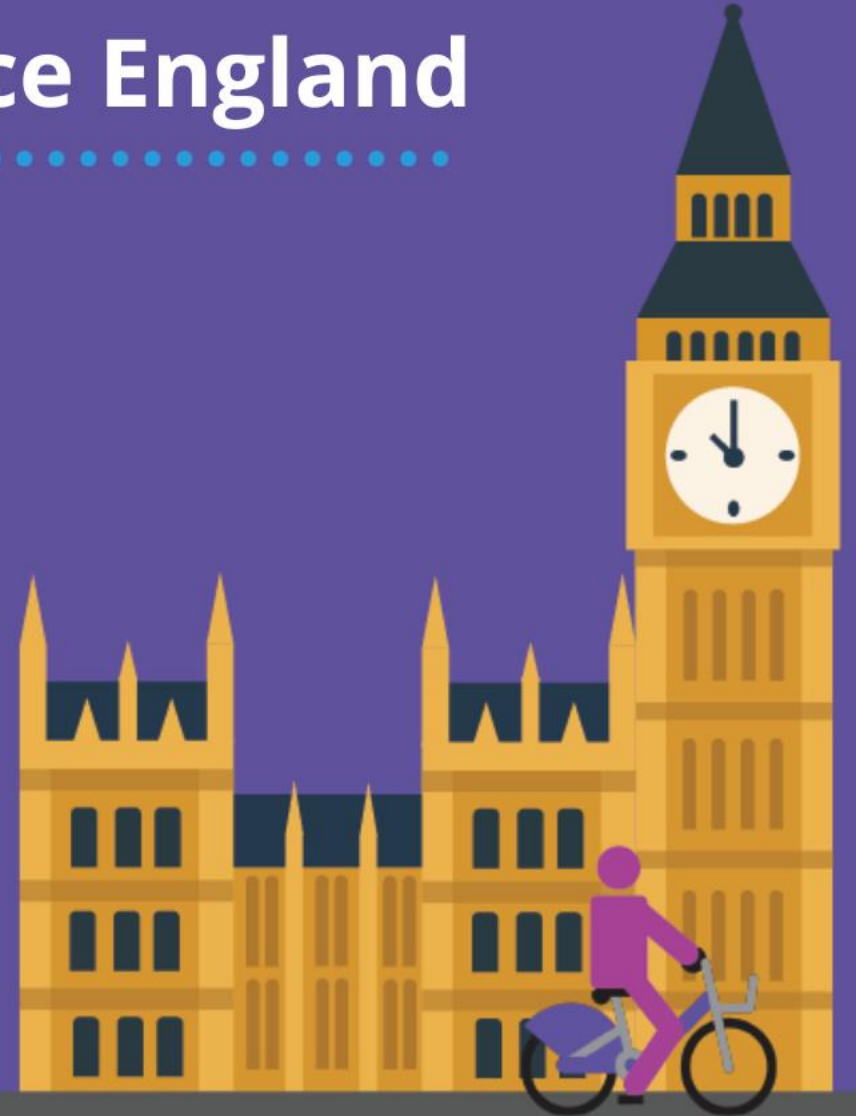


# ConneCTing England 2025

Community Transport Conference England

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Tues 16 Sep | 9am - 4pm  
Coram Campus, London



# The Future of Community Bus Routes

## **Caroline Whitney**

England Director & Head of Membership Services, Community Transport Association

## **Tim Christian**

General Manager, Dorset  
Ealing Community Transport

# ConneCTing England 2025

Community Transport Conference England

## Audience Participation



Join at Menti.com /  
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# Exploring and Enhancing Community Bus Routes



## **This project seeks to,**

- Examine the operation of community bus routes, focusing on understanding who is running these routes, the types of routes being operated, and the permits or licences being used.

## **Outputs**

- Report will provide actionable recommendations for CTA, and stakeholders, to improve the knowledge and usage of S22 permits
- Case studies that offer insights into the benefits, challenges and modes of operation.

## **Focus on collecting evidence and insights from**

- *East Midlands, East of England, South Central, South East and South West Peninsular*

# Summary of what we know



147 operators, holding 784 Permits

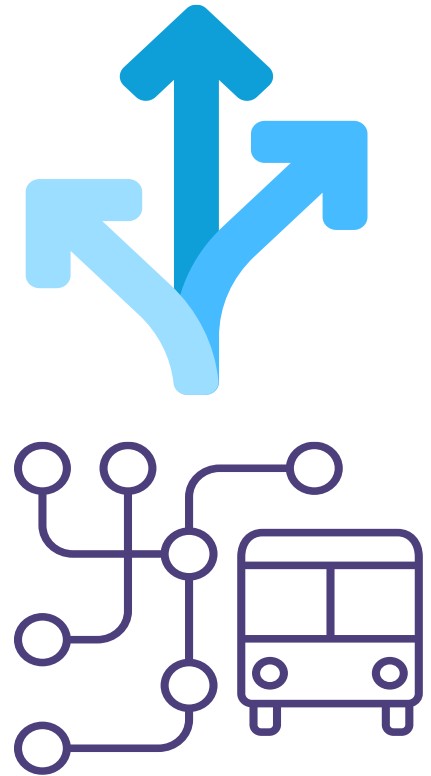
24% of English CT operators now run Section 22 services

61% of those services include flexible routing.

54% operating over 20 years

These aren't new experiments

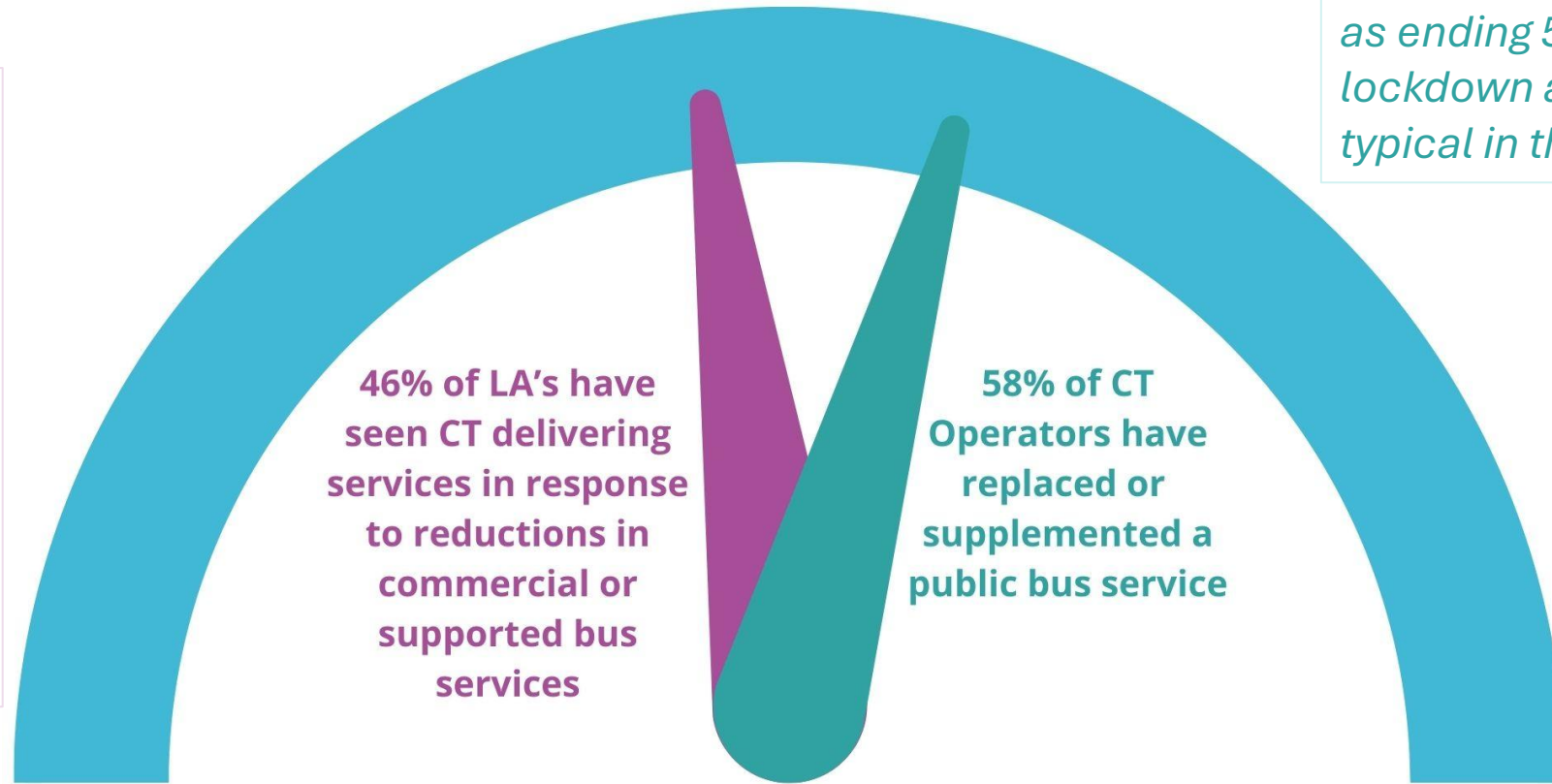
They're established, trusted services. And they're growing: 14% of operators have launched services in the last five years.



# Replacing Public Services

*A couple of routes have been taken on by our local CTA after commercial operators stopped running them. They are small, infrequent routes, but show the potential for CTO's to fill this gap.*

*One passenger described it as ending 5 years of lockdown and that view is typical in the villages served.*



*We replaced services that covered rural villages were run one day a week by commercial services. With out us these villages would have become totally isolated.*



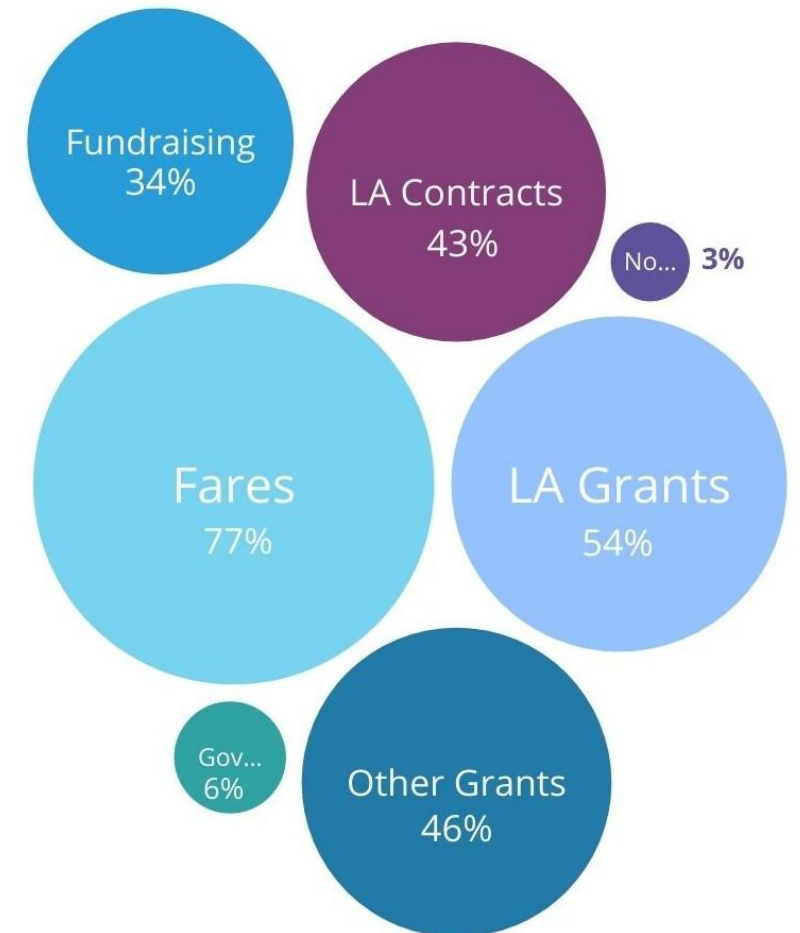
# Operating Services



## What are the biggest operational challenges faced in running community transport services

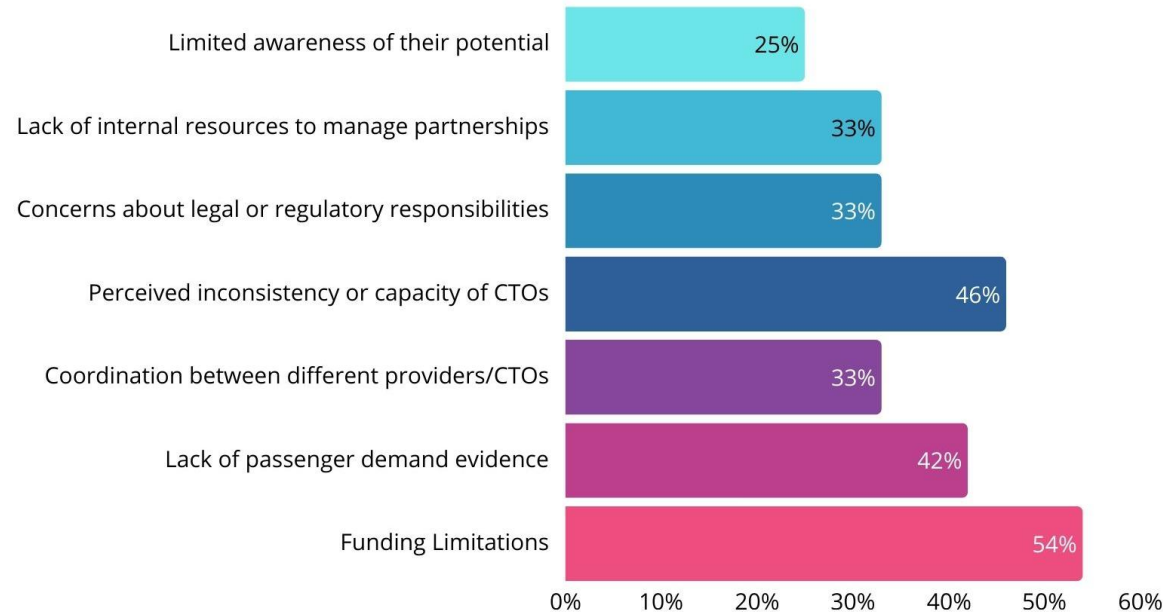


## Funding community bus services

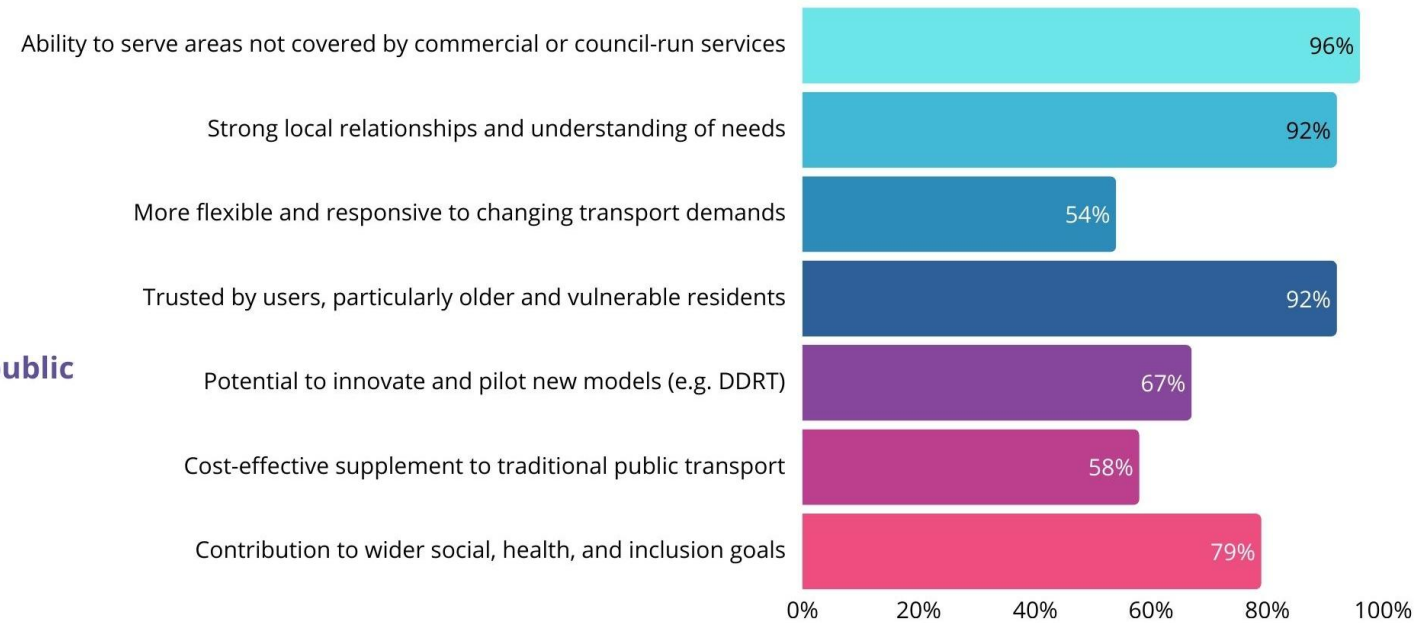


# Views from Local Authorities

## What are the key challenges in engaging CTOs more effectively in public transport delivery

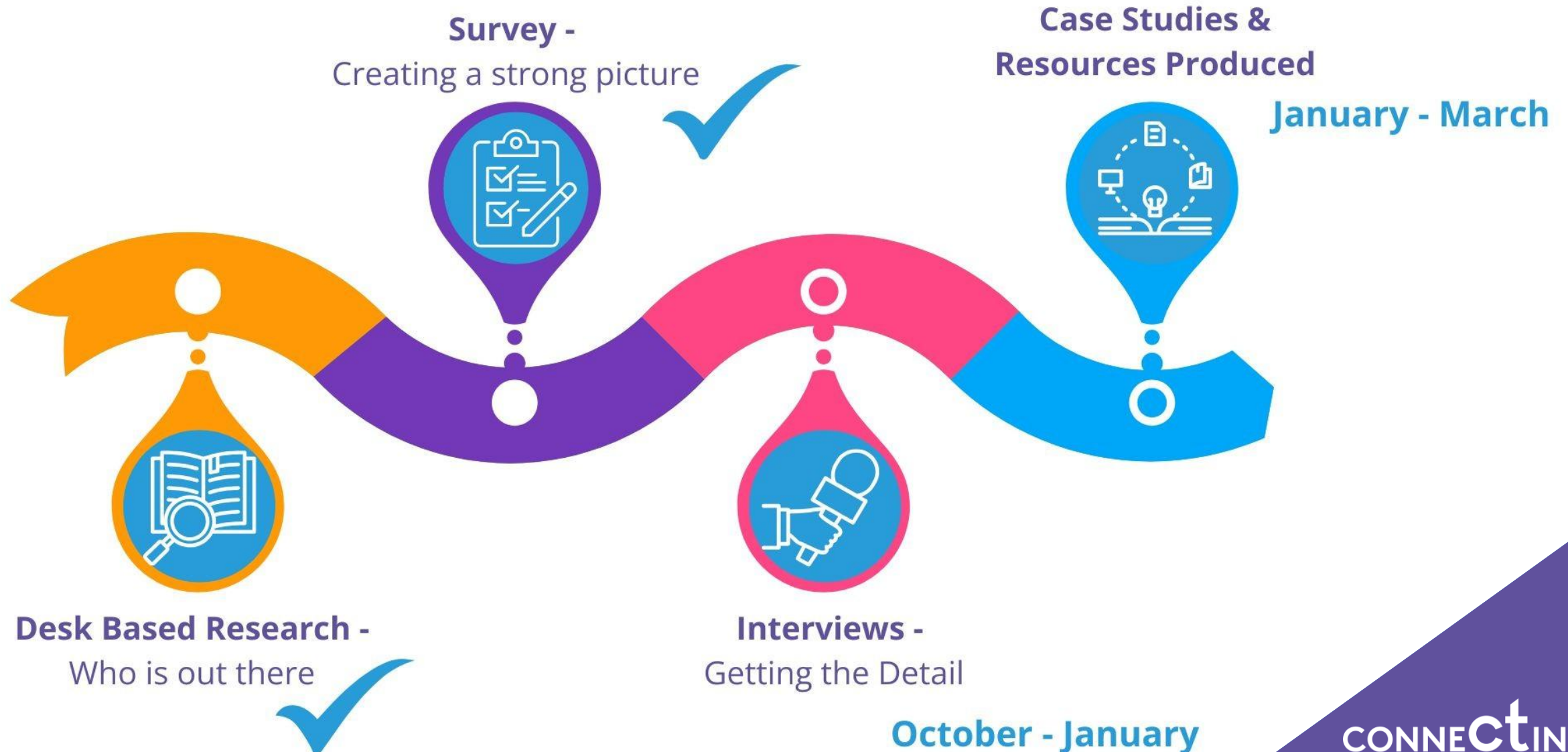


## What are the main strengths or benefits of effectively engaging CTO's in public transport delivery





# Next Steps



# Rural Bus - Using the shadow network in Dorset

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- In 2016, Dorset Council could no longer fund its 1-day a week bus services, with scores of villages losing service altogether
- Highest impact on older and disabled people
- Dorset Community Transport (DCT) has gradually replaced these services – reconnecting communities with 22 ‘PlusBus’ routes
  - Made possible through using school service ‘shadow network’ contract vehicles, staff and overheads
  - Funded by farebox revenue with contributions from parish/local councils
  - Designed in partnership with parish councils and the community
- Developed on the initiative of DCT, outside of transport planning
- Replicable model – but dependent on unrelated school contracts

# Rebuilding a rural network

- Reconnects villages with nearby towns
  - Services either weekly or fortnightly
  - Demand responsive – booked and collects from door
  - Robust county-scale coverage
- 

