



Top Tips



Gap analysis and needs assessment

Mission and Values



This guide will be useful for: community transport operators to ensure they can clearly demonstrate the need for their proposal to a funder.

What you want to achieve:

A useful document which evidences the need for your project and which can be used for a range of funders such as the Lottery and charitable trusts. ✓

What you'll need:

Mix of consultation methods ✓

Wide range of contacts with 'stakeholders' (people who have a "stake" in your organisations eg: volunteers, beneficiaries, trustees, people you work with, wider partners) ✓

Time to check any relevant information and research ✓

How you'll do it:

- An effective gap analysis or needs assessment is essential to ensure your proposed project or services will actually meet the needs of your organisation's beneficiaries. It is also important to be able to evidence high quality and thorough needs assessment to funding bodies. **If you approach funders for money for a particular project they will ask 'how do you know it is needed'?**
- **Funders want to achieve the greatest impact for their investment** and this often means targeting areas or individuals that are in greatest need, with services that are best able to address their specific needs. So undertaking a gap analysis and developing a needs assessment document can be a useful tool in your fundraising efforts.

- The process typically includes a **mix of beneficiary and stakeholder consultation methods** and a desktop review of any relevant research. Stakeholders may include existing funders, other organisations working in the area, or the local Council.
- You could start by doing an internal review of your organisation’s existing consultation / any project reviews and reports. **Look for any existing evidence of needs and build from there.**
- Check the relevant statistics for your area, such as *Census* population figures, numbers of households without access to a vehicle, general demographics such as proportion of older people, people with long-term conditions and so on.
- Look at the **Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation** for your area – are there particular indicators such as ‘Income’ and ‘Access to services’ where the area is showing as high on the deprivation scale? Any information like this can help **add weight to your needs analysis.** Or you may want to look at the local health needs assessment or Council’s wellbeing plans for additional data about the local population.
- Think about any challenges your community faces. **‘Community’ can refer to a group of people** such as older people or people seeking employment, an area such as Anytown or a specific location within Anytown such as a particular housing estate with poor public transport links, or a community of interest.
- **Keep a record:** (for example, a diary or excel spreadsheet) on who you have spoken to (individuals and groups / organisations) with the date, the methods used (for example, phone call, face-to-face, raised at meeting, survey), and feedback received.
- **Develop your plan of action:** who do you need to contact for further information and useful feedback on gaps in services within the area? How will you contact them? By when?
- Develop and undertake surveys, focus groups, and interviews to start building up your evidence base. You could interview existing beneficiaries, drivers, trustees, volunteers, and hold a workshop with representatives from a variety of organisations to find out **what additional support may be needed that is currently unavailable in the area.**
- Do a desk-top review of relevant publications, strategies, and published research findings. Are there Wales-wide reports or UK reports relating to community transport that you can link into your review to **add extra weight to any findings from your own area?**
- **Consider how you want to present and share the findings:** the results can be presented as a needs assessment report and / or built directly into funding bids. Remember to provide feedback to the people who have participated in the process and let them know about any follow-up action you are planning to take as a result.
- Review your gap analysis / needs assessment every so often and update it as required.

Connecting Communities in Wales

This top tips guide was put together as part of the Connecting Communities in Wales project run by the Community Transport Association. The project is funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government, and aims to support community transport in Wales through creating new partnerships, bringing funding into the sector and creating new transport networks.

Find out more at ctauk.org/cciw