

Transport to Health Project Relaunch

Following on from its initial success, the ABUHB funded Transport to Health project is opening applications for its second year of grant funding to help community organisations from across the greater Gwent area support patients, visitors and staff to get to health settings.

The fund can provide up to £10,000 to new applicants who wish to develop new or existing not-for-profit transport services to health settings. There is also the opportunity for up to £7,500 continuation grant funding for last year's successful applicants.

In its first year, Transport to Health supported eight community transport schemes to launch or develop transport initiatives. These included three projects run by community organisations brand new to transport, as well as five managed by existing operators who wanted to enhance their existing service. Four followed a volunteer car scheme model, where volunteer drivers use their own vehicles to provide journeys, and four adopted a dial-a-ride type scheme using the organisation's vehicles with voluntary or paid drivers behind the wheel.

Transport to Health were able to help all these projects with financial grants as well as mentoring from a dedicated Regional Community Transport Coordinator, plus additional support from the other Project Partners involved, including representatives from the Community Transport Association, the regions three County Voluntary Councils – GAVO (Gwent), TVA (Torfaen) and PAVO (Powys), and the Health Board themselves.

"Being able to support eight projects in our first year was very rewarding. However, transport to health appointments and venues is an enormous area of need and there is still much work that needs to be done across all the boroughs" says Faye Mear, the Regional Community Transport Coordinator and often the first port of call to any interested parties. "Starting a new initiative can be very daunting and it's great that our project can offer knowledge and mentoring as well as financial support. Myself and the other Project Partners can all offer guidance and support to schemes every step of the way."

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's support for this initiative was nationally recognised with them being awarded Community Transport Champion of the Year at the Community Transport Awards last year. Steve Bonser, Head of Transformational Change at ABUHB said: "The Health Board recognise the importance and value of community transport to the areas we serve. We are pleased to be able to provide the funding for the Transport to Health project for a second year and be a key partner in making sure transport providers are given the resources to meet this important challenge."

Gemma Lelliott, Director for Wales for the Community Transport Association, said: "It has never been so important to safeguard and develop transport solutions that truly work for the communities they serve. We know that community transport provides a lifeline to people living in the Health Board's area, and we are excited to continue to be part of this partnership to support and grow this vital form of transport."

Pat Powell Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Co-ordinator at Torfaen Voluntary Alliance said: "TVA and the other County Voluntary Councils that work with the communities within the Aneurin Bevan Health Board region encourage applications to this fund and welcome applicants to use the resources we have available, such as project development support and volunteer recruitment.

"We were very pleased to support and promote the Transport to Health work Age Connects Torfaen undertook last year after being successfully awarded grant funding to provide Transport to Hospital, Vaxi-Taxi and Hospital Discharge service for over-50s in the Torfaen area."

To apply for funding, please complete the application pack which can be accessed on the Community Transport Association website: [Click here](#)

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NOTES TO EDITOR

The Transport To Health Project: What It's About

This project has been designed to support the growth and development of accessible and inclusive transport to health within the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's (ABUHB) footprint, covering Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Newport and South Powys. It can provide grant funding of up to £10,000 as well as support and mentoring from specialist project partners and a dedicated Regional Community Transport Coordinator.

Following a period of research and consultation in 2021, the team at ABUHB, in partnership with the Community Transport Association (CTA), identified that there are significant transport barriers to residents wishing to access the new Grange University Hospital and other health care settings across the region, particularly for those with additional access/support needs.

Across the region, patients, visitors, and staff report long travel times, limited transport options and expensive routes for those without access to private transport, including transit times of more than two hours to some hospitals and taxi fares upwards of £60 for a return journey. Geographic 'hotspots' have also been identified where residents experience fragmented public transport provision and current community transport (CT) options are limited. Existing CT operators report that transport to health represents a significant percentage of their current service, and a great willingness to further support people to access health settings.

The project is looking to enable community-based organisations to develop new transport services, enhance existing ones, and engage in new partnerships to improve travel connections and quality standards across the region. The first round of funding ran from July 2021 – March 2022 and supported eight community transport initiatives to launch or develop. In recognition of this initial success and awareness of the ongoing need, ABUHB have provided further funding to be awarded from September 2022 until March 2023.