

# Tackling Loneliness with Community Transport



Funding  
Community  
Transport

How our pilot projects are reaching out and engaging with people in the community who are vulnerable.

## Case Studies



XXX is a carer for his wife who has dementia. They are already known to the organisation through our Memory Loss advice service. He has previously asked us if we would be organising any trips out as he no longer gets the chance to take his wife anywhere due to his age, and that he had stopped driving.

When we were successful in gaining the CTA funding we were able to inform him of the chance to join a trip to RHS Bridgewater. Both carer and his wife thoroughly enjoyed the trip, especially as she had been a keen gardener prior to developing dementia, and although she still potters in the garden, she is unable to carry out tasks as she once was. The carer reported that his wife was much happier after the trip, she was more talkative, and in fact they had something new to talk about.



XXX is a veteran who retired seven years ago. He moved to Spain initially but moved back due to Brexit. He wanted to give back to the community and to get out and about. He has volunteered at other places during Covid but this dropped off as Covid numbers went down, whereas we need his help more.

He was particularly attracted to helping the veteran community. XXX was given MIDAS training so that he could drive our minibus and link with the community. He has been supported to engage with the public by our arranging trips that he would drive for. Should he have any problems while doing this we are always available to help and will continue to work closely with him.

XXX has become long term driver who plans to continue. He says that he is enjoying it, and if not, would not do it. He has found that he has a greater understanding of the needs of the elderly and disabled community and how he can help them. He also has a better understanding of how much freedom is lost when someone can no longer drive or run a car.



Our project helps connect people with sight loss, and other long-term health conditions, to their community through transport. This case study covers one of our members who was already using our transport service, but has now been able to access more activities as a result of this funding.

This is a direct quote from the beneficiary: *"It means a lot to know that someone I know and can trust will be picking me up from home, and bringing me out for the day. Beacon Transport is a lifeline for me, without the transport team I would be isolated and wouldn't have the opportunity to get out of the house independently. No other services I know of anywhere, guide and assist people with sight loss to and from their front doors. It is a very person-centred service, and I am not rushed to get in and out of the minibuses. I really enjoy coming out of the house and am treated like royalty by all. I would never get this type of one-to-one service from any taxi services, and feel empowered to become more independent every day. The recent trips and days out are a bonus and I feel so much better in myself."*



This was a day out to a local market town for a look around and then onto a local pub for lunch before returning back to Beverley. The passenger has mobility issues and requires the use of her wheelchair on longer trips, or a walking frame if only going to one location e.g. garden centre or restaurant. She lives on her own and does find she feels lonely quite often as a result. She does have family but they are all very busy people and she doesn't like to impose.

Our trips provide a vital lifeline for her and she appreciates all that we do. The passenger thought that this trip was lovely. The passenger assistant was very nice to her and made sure she had everything she needed. The driver was also very good and made a point of chatting with everyone over lunch. A very satisfied lady who is looking forward to many more days out.

## COMMUNITY FIRST

We met and chatted to a female in her 50's who has been unemployed for the last 6 years due to ill health. She has also been caring for her elderly parents, both of which have now passed away. This lady also lost her young nephew due to an accident in the last 6 months which has hit her hard and she has become a bit of a recluse. For the first 5 minutes of her opening the door, she would only hold the door open wide enough to be able to just see through, however by the time we left her (45 minutes later) the door was fully open.

This lady had clearly lost all confidence and is battling with many issues, ill health and finances seem to weigh heavily on her mind. After listening to us explain about the project and how, through volunteering, she could help others and meet other people. She began to relax and felt that volunteering might just be the key to her opening up her life again, as she could take it at her own pace.

In addition to signing her up to volunteer for a Link, we also connected her with our own Building Bridges programme, which enables those out of employment or education to get the support and tools they need to get back into some form of employment, volunteering or education. The individual has already contacted the Link Scheme and has begun the DBS process.



This client was referred to us by the Halifax Society for the Blind, a local charity we have been working with for many years. She is 87 years old, registered blind and also has hearing difficulties and mobility issues.

The Society felt she would benefit from attending Wednesday lunch meetings at the Maurice Jagger Centre in Halifax (now running fortnightly). We paired her with a younger client, who already attended the Wednesday meetings, and lives in the same area. The two clients have

been attending Wednesday meetings together for several weeks and are now good friends. This friendship has given our new client the confidence to attend regularly.

## Compaid

Removing barriers. Changing lives.

When XXX heard about a trip to Hever Castle, she was excited, but also nervous at the idea.

She isn't able to go out to places like this by herself, so her curiosity for Hever Castle made the possibility very intriguing. However, her anxiety about being in a public place was still present. Due to her not going out by herself, she doesn't know or talk to many people; however, the knowledge that Compaid staff would be with her, and they would be travelling on Compaid's buses, reassured her greatly.

When they all arrived at Hever Castle and they were organised into groups of clients and staff, Gemma's enthusiasm for exploring the grounds only grew. She felt safe being in a group of people she recognised, and that helped her enjoy everything Hever Castle had to offer. The highlight of the trip for Gemma was the gardens. She said, *"I really loved seeing all the flowers. They were so beautiful and the colours were so bright. Seeing them all actually inspired me to create art that is just as beautiful as the flowers were. I enjoy making art on the computer, and this experience has motivated me to see what I can make."* Gemma hopes to have more trips like the one to Hever Castle in future. While she had anxiety about going out in a public place at first, she found that having the shared experience with others from the centre, being cared for by the kind Compaid staff and volunteers, made the trip greatly enjoyable. The day out at Hever Castle was an experience Gemma will cherish for a long time.

Darlington Association on Disability



XXX, a young person aged 23 had become increasingly lonely during the Coronavirus pandemic, and in the months that saw the easing of restrictions. XXX lives at home with her mum and was deemed 'clinically extremely vulnerable' and was advised to 'shield' during the pandemic. XXX and her mum decided to 'shield' together as there are only the two of them, and no other immediate family close by. Due to XXX's impairments and 'shielding' XXX lost contact with many friends and sources of support, as she was unable to access any online support that was being offered.

As the vaccine programme was rolled out XXX and her mum continued to 'shield' until both were fully vaccinated and as winter approached they decided to continue to isolate until the winter months passed. XXX decided in summer 2022 that the time was right to start accessing support to re-engage with activities and community support, even though she had lost confidence and skills, to engage in activities and social interactions with her peers. XXX signed up to a day trip to York with a small group of young people, some of whom she remembered from school, but had not seen for some time. 1:1 support was provided to enable XXX to attend the trip and begin to re-engage with services and activities, as well as social interactions.

XXX thoroughly enjoyed the day out and spending time with her peers. Following the trip, she decided to attend further group sessions that we delivered during the summer, including arts & crafts and baking.



XXX is part of a Ukrainian Group that we were put in contact with by Links CVS. XXX, along with other Ukrainians in Chesterfield, wished to take advantage of DCT's Tackling Loneliness Discount Travel Offer to visit the Crich Tramway Museum, and to take her young son with her. Money is limited and this trip provided an opportunity to meet up

with other Ukrainians to socialise and for her son to learn about the history of trams in the UK. DCT provided a 21-seat minibus to take the Ukrainian party and two supporting members of Links CVS to the Crich Tramway Museum for a day out at 50% of our normal costs.

This was the first time that XXX and her fellow Ukrainians had used Community Transport in the UK, and they had previously been unaware of its existence. XXX wrote to Links CVS thanking both organisations for a *"wonderful day and excited excursion. It was a pleasure to spend all day with Ukrainian friends and watch my son's happy smile"*.

Links CVS wrote to me to offer *"a big thank you to you and the driver. The trip was a great success and they (the Ukrainians) all enjoyed themselves. Nigel (the driver) was a hit and got a round of applause"*. The trip was well received by all the Ukrainians who went to Crich. As a result of this Links CVS has booked a second trip for the Ukrainian Group, which XXX and her son intend to take advantage of. The Tackling Loneliness scheme has helped us to become involved with and support a BAME group that we previously had no relationship with.



Merton Community Transport (MCT) received a call from a former Trustee who, due to his age, has decided not to do any more volunteer work in the community. He has a disability and uses an electric wheelchair for his mobility.

He is married and has care and could not say why he was feeling lonely. He called and explained that it was his birthday that week and was reflecting on his volunteering days when he had a reason to get up and go out into the community. I told him about MCT-LIP and asked if he could use this service to reduce his loneliness. He said yes, and a local trip to Richmond Park was arranged for him and his carer. It was a very hot summer's day, they had lunch and spent time going around the gardens at Richmond Park, before making the journey back home.

He was very thankful to MCT-LIP and forwarded a testimony of his day: *"Thank you so very much for taking me out last Friday. It was a wonderful outing, which did me a world of good. It took me out of the house and into a beautiful sunny day. Richmond Park was lovely and seeing the deer was great. It did me so much good, both physical and mentally. MCT is there for the people of Merton. Thank you"*.



XXX wanted to find out more about ways in which she could engage with communities, find likeminded community members, and integrate. She also wanted to take part in activities to generally improve her mental wellbeing.

We helped XXX by getting one of our support workers to have a chat with her about what needs / areas of support she would like. We suggested the Thursday workshops that we have, which are coupled with days on the farm, and she was very excited about the idea. She was also excited about meeting other people.



XXX had previously used Hospital transport and had a terrible experience. She was left for long time in her wheelchair after her appointment and was unable to get to the toilet. This experience affected her and she required lots of assurance that we would not leave her stranded.

We promised to take her to the department and left her with a mobile phone number to hand to the nurse ready to contact us when ready for collection. We waited in the café and XXX was aware of that. The appointment was very quick and XXX was delighted at everyone's efficiency.

XXX had not been out of her house since February, and after getting on the bus, she was totally mesmerized by the greenery of the fields, new houses that had been built and generally quite emotional about being out of her house. She was in really good spirits and very cheerful. We took her again at a later date, and she was delighted again to get out of her house.



The individual had asked us to provide additional social support for them, as we were already assisting them to get to medical appointments. They asked if they could be included in our lottery funded social outings, but taking them on the bus

meant we would have to remove at least 5 seats from the minibus. Not all of our buses are accessible enough for their needs. Being able to take them on outings using a WAV meant that this did not impact passenger numbers for the bus.

We had a conversation on the telephone, where we determined confidentially what the beneficiary's situation was. Although they have disabilities to contend with themselves, they also support their partner who has hidden disabilities. We worked out the best way to support them as a couple, but also as individuals.



XXX was referred to the organisation in 2019. He has a brain injury dating back to the 1960's. XXX had been reclusive and declined any support from the organisation other than occasional shopping. In July 2022 we approached XXX and spoke with him about the men's group project and associated trips.

XXX agreed to a home visit in July and then came along to the August open day. XXX booked onto the Filey trip and put forward several suggestions for further outings. He also expressed an interest in attending a support group. XXX has asked to come on trips in October/November.



The Service user has onset of Alzheimer's and her son, who lives far away, was looking for transport to get his mum out and about and engaging with others. He also needed assistance to get his mum to important health appointments, and other social support groups for her condition. The service user stated that she often lacked companionship and often feels isolated and alone.

The service user has been attending all the weekly excursions and lunch outings. We also provide Community car service to get her to other social groups which support her. We also provide transport to get her to health appointments.

She is thoroughly enjoying her outings with Sedcat and her son feels confident and reassured that his mum can access transport to get her to her important medical appointments, and other social outings accompanied by our drivers, who give extra care and support and understand her situation.



XXX joined following an appointment with a social prescriber who referred this lady to us. Both her and her mum have health issues which had an impact on their social inclusion. Due to mum's diagnosis of dementia, which was deteriorating, they were finding it increasingly difficult to use public transport and were only leaving their home to attend health appointments, using taxis for this. They were getting their weekly shop delivered plus family members live away so the lady doesn't have much support.

XXX is finding it financially and emotionally difficult to go out due to her own health issues, predominately her anxiety, which can increase at times, due to caring for her mum who has Dementia which is deteriorating. XXX finds it difficult to use public transport and is becoming socially more isolated because of this, and is feeling lonely at times and unable to cope. She would still like to be able to take her mum out and spend quality time with her before mum's dementia becomes too severe.

Door to door transport was offered so that both of them can go on weekend activities/trips with Wheel Meet Again. As a consequence, they feel less isolated. XXX knows the drivers will stop should she need to take mum to toilet (due to incontinence). XXX is able to visit places independently from her mum when her mum is in respite. XXX has built up a friend base and support network with WMA Members who keep in contact with her. XXX can take her mum places and they can share experiences together. Both can be independent, but feel confident that they can contact one of the volunteers who come on trips/activities, should they get into difficulty or need the extra support.