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# Community Transport – East Renfrewshire

## "Your Wee Red Bus"

### 2013 Survey Report

The Community Transport project in East Renfrewshire is run by the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP), a free-standing programme that runs within the larger Community Service Volunteer (CSV) organisation. RSVP is unique in that it is organised and run by volunteers and primarily aimed at those who are in retirement or aged over 50.

The project has been running in East Renfrewshire since April 2000 taking patients to their medical appointments, using volunteer drivers own vehicles. Thanks to funding from SPT in 2010 the project was able to purchase a people carrier to ensure disabled people had access to medical appointments and in 2011 a minibus was purchased, thanks to a variety of funders including CHCP via the Change Plan for Reshaping Care of older People. Both vehicles are equipped to take wheelchairs by the use of a lift.

The Project Manager secured agreement that the vehicles could be used to help reduce social isolation by utilising them for activities such as assisted shopping trips and afternoon teas. The shopping trips have been running successfully since 2010 and the afternoon teas have proved a very successful addition to the programme since being introduced in 2011. A small charge is made to Individual Members who wish to register for these activities to help with the sustainability of the vehicles.

In 2013, the project carried out a survey of new and existing users of its services. Experience has taught us that the best way to do this is by one to one chats with each user using a questionnaire as the basis of the conversation. This allowed us to explain the questions in more detail and provide examples to illustrate what we mean thereby enabling the older people to give their full opinion in the service we provide.

25 new users and 36 existing users were interviewed. A copy of the survey template is included as appendix 1.

### New User Survey

There are 9 questions on the questionnaire and surveys are carried out on the first trip (shopping trip or afternoon tea). See appendix 1

### **People to see**

When we asked how many people they see our results showed us that **10 users** only see **very few or few people** on a weekly basis. All users stated they saw either, family (daughter or son) or carers **3/4 times** a week. **11 stated they** never saw any friends (not those living in a housing complex). 85% felt isolated and wanted to get out more to meet more people.



## **Places to go**

Our findings showed that the **17 new** users only got out of the house once or twice a week at the most. This was due to mobility issues, and the only time they got out was when someone came to help them. 5 stated they could not go out on their own. Out of 25 people interviewed, only 4 were out 4-5 times per week.

Shopping trips and afternoon teas were the most popular outings; 22 of the older people wanted to get out more and enjoy the company and social side more than the actual shopping and tea itself.

## **The difference this would make**

19 of the users said getting out and about was more enjoyable than sitting in their own houses with no company; they believed that using our service would benefit them a lot.

15 of the 25 new users said that “it would make a big difference in (their) life to use the services and take part in (our) activities such as assisted shopping trips and afternoon teas”. They said that “meeting new people and getting out was something they want to concentrate on”.

## **Sustainable services**

100% of participants said they would be prepared to pay a small fee to make them feel less isolated and have more of a social life.

## **Mobility**

17 people said they either needed a wheelchair if walking a distance, or they needed walking frames and sticks.

## **Existing user surveys**

The existing user surveys asked questions about the RSVP Service and what comments they have to make on the service they use. I.e. Assisted Shopping Trip, Afternoon teas & Hospital Appointments.

## **Medical appointments**

For the people who use the hospital appointments they rated the level of service between 4.5/5. They were very satisfied with the service and had no complaints.

## **Quotes from participants:**

“Love how the volunteers are so friendly and helpful and it makes a big difference to me for attending these appointments”.

”Do not know what I would do without this”

Benefits specifically highlighted included:

- that it got them there and back without hassle
- always good to know that they will be taken right to their door after their appointment

## Assisted shopping

For the people who use the assisted shopping service – **30 out of the 36** rated this between 4.5/5.

Reasons for low scores (those scoring between 1-3 out of 5) included:

- one scored 1 because of a traffic delay during his last outings
- 2 stated that they would like more time for shopping as they felt they weren't getting long enough.

## Benefits of going on shopping trips included:

"It gets me out and about

"Enjoyed the company and the shops"

"Keeps me in touch with life and the price of things"

"Can buy heavier things and help to take them to my home",

## Afternoon teas

For the users of the afternoon tea service - **everyone rated it 5/5**. They enjoy the tea and the social side of this. The said that they "love the company and the cakes/biscuits are very enjoyable".

Benefits to them include:

They "are able to sit with different company and talk away and find out more things and have a good time"

They "feel we are well looked after at these teas and are very happy with the level of service".

## Our own observations

At the start of the year the majority of people requested a wheelchair and needed to be pushed around on the assisted shopping trips. However, over the course of the year we observed that the older people were gradually becoming more independent and started using either walking frames or just walking sticks.

We have observed over the **last 18 months** that the older people are becoming more confident and comfortable and are able to do more for themselves. Their reliance on wheelchairs and extra support is diminishing. As a result we have been able to extend the numbers of participants involved in some of the shopping trip - more people getting out. Initially our aim was to have groups of six older people with three volunteers. Now we have more large groups with up to 10 older people still with the three volunteers and therefore making more use of the Big Bus (13 seater) for the shopping trips.

We will continue to carry out surveys of new and existing users

Those participants who carried out a new users survey will be asked to complete an existing users survey over the next few months

We will continue to survey existing users who have not already filled in a survey form.