Making the Connections: Transport and Social Exclusion

Interim findings from the Social Exclusion Unit

Contents

The problem and why it matters

1. Poor transport contributes to social exclusion in two ways. First, it restricts access to activities that enhance people's life chances, such as work, learning, health care, food shopping, and other key activities.

2. Second, deprived communities suffer disproportionately from pedestrian deaths, pollution and the isolation which can result from living near busy roads.

3. Poor transport is just one of a number of contributors to social exclusion. Many people experiencing social exclusion will not suffer from poor transport. However, poor transport can be an important factor in restricting access to opportunity. It can therefore undermine key government objectives on welfare to work, raising educational achievement and narrowing health inequalities, and has costs for individuals, businesses, communities and the state.

Work

4. Transport can be a significant barrier to accessing work:

- Two out of five jobseekers say lack of transport is a barrier to getting a job.[1] One in four jobseekers say that the cost of transport is a problem getting to interviews.
- One in four young people have not applied for a particular job in the last 12 months because of transport problems.
- One in 10 people in low-income areas have turned down a job in the last twelve months because of transport.
- Young people with driving licences are twice as likely to get jobs than those without.

Learning

5. Poor transport is linked to young people dropping out of college:

- Sixteen- to 18-year-olds spend on average £370 a year on transport.
- Forty-seven per cent of 16- to 18-year-olds experience difficulty with this cost.
- Six per cent of 16- to 24-year-olds turn down training or further education opportunities because of problems with transport.

Health

6. For those who rely on public transport, getting to hospitals is particularly difficult, and can lead to missed health appointments:

- Thirty-one per cent of people without a car have difficulties travelling to their local hospital, compared to 17 per cent of people with a car.

- Seven per cent of people without cars say they have missed, turned down, or chosen not to seek medical help over the last 12 months because of transport problems, double the rate in the general population.
- Children from the lowest social class are five times more likely to die in road accidents than those from the highest social class.
- Sixteen per cent of people without cars find access to supermarkets hard, compared with six per cent of people with cars.

Social, cultural and sporting activities

7. Poor transport can also affect people's participation in a range of other activities, including seeing friends and family, volunteering and caring, religious activities, exercise and cultural activities. Eighteen per cent of people without a car find seeing friends and family difficult because of transport, compared with eight per cent for car owners. People without cars are also twice as likely to find it difficult getting to leisure centres (nine per cent) and libraries (seven per cent).

What stops people getting to key places?

8. Nearly one in three households does not have access to a car. They depend primarily on walking to get around, but also on buses, lifts from family and friends and taxis. Cycling and rail make up a tiny fraction of their journeys.

9. People can face three types of barriers to accessing work, learning, health care and other key activities:

- **Access and availability:** People cannot get to key places in a reasonable time, reliably and safely. This may be due to poor network coverage, frequency, and reliability of public transport or a lack of accessible facilities. Only 20 per cent of buses and 10 per cent of trains meet new accessibility regulations under the Disability Discrimination Act. People living in rural areas without a car face particularly acute problems due to longer walking distances to bus stops, and low service frequency.
- **Cost:** People cannot afford personal or public transport. Bus fares have risen by nearly a third in the last fifteen years. Low-income households that do have a car spend nearly a quarter of their weekly household expenditure on motoring.
- **Travel horizons:** People are unwilling to travel long journey times or distances, or may lack trust in, or familiarity with, transport services. The average distance to work for people on low incomes is three miles compared with eight for the general population. Jobseekers are typically not prepared to travel more than thirty minutes to a job.

10. A large minority are therefore stuck in a vicious cycle. They experience poor transport as a consequence of social exclusion: they cannot afford the costs of motoring or public transport fares, or they cannot drive because of age or disability. And poor transport reinforces this exclusion by cutting people off from work, learning, and health care opportunities. In deep rural areas, car ownership may be critical to accessing basic services due to the absence of public transport.

Causes

11. Over the past fifty years, the need to travel has become greater and more complex as society became organised around the car. People travel 42 per cent further than in 1975.

12. Rising car use has allowed most people to keep pace with the need to travel, but for people reliant on walking and public transport, there is an increasing mismatch between where they need to go and whether they can get there.

13. Past policies have contributed to the problem. Policies encouraged greater car use and failed to arrest the decline of walking and buses – the two most important modes of transport for people on low incomes without cars. Transport policy focused on predicting and providing for traffic growth rather than managing demand. Tax and spending decisions and bus deregulation allowed bus fares to rise much faster than motoring costs.

14. Planning policies enabled more dispersed patterns of development, such as out-of-town shopping, leisure and office developments. These have produced more scattered destinations and lower density housing, both of which have undermined the viability of buses, cycling and walking. While bus privatisation delivered some benefits, it ended the ability of local authorities to set bus fares, thereby preventing them from rising faster than motoring costs. Deregulation also created a less stable bus network subject to many small route changes and inhibited integrated ticketing policies.

What can be done?

15. Chapter 4 describes a number of policy approaches and innovative schemes from the UK and overseas which offer the hope of real improvement. There are policy lessons to be learned relating to:

- **Objectives and target setting:** Copenhagen has targets to reduce public transport journey times by 10 to 15 per cent; ensure walking distances to bus stops are no more than 400 metres; and ensure journeys outside the city centre are no more than 15 minutes longer than by car.
- **Planning integration:** in many European countries there is a regional transport company which controls fare levels, network coverage and marketing and promotion across all modes of transport including trams, buses, car clubs, walking and cycling.
- **Funding and performance management:** in many other EU countries, bus services receive up to 70 per cent of their running costs in subsidy, compared with 32 per cent in this country. In Helsinborg, Sweden, and in Copenhagen, bus funding is linked to performance measures and a customer survey of 25,000 passengers.

16. Practical examples of what can be done include:

- **Improving access and availability:** through a wider network of bus routes that 'orbit' a popular destination (rather than radial routes) supported by feeder services that operate on a demand responsive basis into interchanges or specific employment locations; development and enforcement of bus priority measures; car clubs; and tackling crime and fear of crime walking to, waiting for, or travelling on public transport.
- **Tackling the cost barriers:** through travel vouchers which allow passengers to use a subsidy on different modes of transport; subsidised vehicle loans or hire; paying for driving lessons conditional on participation in work; pay-as-you drive vehicle insurance.
- **Widening Travel horizons:** through travel advice, personal travel plans, and better travel information.
- **Reducing the need to travel:** through more proactive land-use planning policies, which promote appropriate developments in suitable places. This includes focusing shops, leisure facilities and offices in town centres and encouraging more efficient use of land. It also covers complementary policies which encourage outreach, home and virtual delivery of services.
- **Reducing the disproportionate impact of traffic** on deprived areas through targeted traffic calming measures and 20-mph zones.

What are the barriers to success?

Current policy

17. A range of improvements have been introduced in recent years. These include: long term investment through local transport plans, bus priority measures through Quality Partnerships, Urban and Rural Bus Challenges, improved accessibility following the Disability Discrimination Act, and emerging developments in Transport Direct, a new nation-wide multi-modal travel enquiry and booking service. DTLR policy guidance has also placed increased emphasis on measures to improve accessibility and promote social inclusion.

18. However, there are a number of critical barriers to progress including:

- *Social costs have not been given due weight in transport policy:* The cost of poor access to work, learning and health care falls to a range of departments. Local transport targets are focused on reducing congestion and increasing bus use, not ensuring that people can access work, learning and health care. Nor do they target programmes to ensure some communities do not suffer disproportionately from the impact of traffic through pollution and child pedestrian accidents.

- *Local transport planning*: Local authorities do not routinely assess whether people can get to work, learning, health care or other activities in a reasonable time or cost. Spending is not tied to outcomes such as improved journey times, accessible vehicles, punctuality or customer satisfaction. In rural areas, pockets of deprivation can be hidden by ward-level statistics.

- *Revenue funding level*: Around £1 billion is spent on revenue support for buses through concessionary fares, fuel duty rebate (FDR) and subsidising unprofitable services. Spending has fallen by nearly a third since 1985, while spending on subsidising unprofitable routes has fallen by almost two-thirds. This reflects falling operating costs during this period. However, tender costs are now rising sharply due to driver shortages and commercial operators withdrawing routes. Local authorities are struggling to maintain existing services, rather than trying to adapt services to more dispersed land use patterns and more flexible working hours. Since 1997, Urban and Rural Bus Challenges have provided additional finance to address these problems.

- *Funding equity*: Current transport spending is regressive. The majority of transport spending benefits people on higher incomes because they are more likely to use rail and travel longer distances. It is estimated that those in the lowest income quintile will gain 12 per cent of total spending in the 10 Year Transport Plan, while the highest quintile would gain 38 per cent.

- *Fragmented funding*: while £1 billion is spent by DTLR on bus revenue support, a further £900 million is spent on school, patient and social services transport by several different Government departments.

- *Funding sustainability*: funding is often available to local authorities and voluntary sector groups for innovative new transport schemes, but they often have great difficulty finding money to sustain the service, even when they are successful.

- *Regulatory barriers*: Some potential solutions, including demand responsive transport, flexibly routed buses, wider use of community transport, integrated ticketing, Quality Contracts, and applying concessionary fares to wider client groups, are prevented because of regulatory barriers.

Towards a more inclusive system

19. This report sets out some initial thoughts on potential improvements. Over the next few months, the SEU will be working with other departments to develop these in more detail. The ideas under consideration will be subject to spending review decisions. A final report in the autumn will provide further details.

20. To ensure the social costs of poor transport are tackled effectively, policy needs to give due weight to the following objectives:

- To improve access to work, learning, health care, food shops and other key activities for people experiencing or at risk of social exclusion; and,
- To reduce the inequalities in pollution and child pedestrian accidents between deprived communities and the national average.

21. Changes in three areas are required to achieve these objectives:

a) Mainstream transport
b) Specific transport for pupils, patients, social services clients and jobseekers
c) Reducing the need to travel

a) Mainstream transport

22. Ideas under consideration include:

- **Clearer accountability** at a local level to improve access to work, learning and health care, through accessibility and impact planning. Someone would need to be responsible for auditing whether people in each area can get to key places, and whether deprived communities suffer disproportionately from pollution and pedestrian deaths. Local targets could then be set to improve availability, affordability, service frequency, crime and fear of crime walking to, waiting for, or travelling on public transport, or other local problems. Better information and consultation would be needed to ensure pockets of deprivation, such as in rural areas, are addressed effectively.
- **Flexibility** to achieve these objectives, possibly including the removal of regulatory barriers to flexibly routed buses, integrated ticketing, the use of concessionary fares for people on low incomes, and reducing the notice period for the implementation of Quality Contracts.
- **Resources** that are distributed more equitably, are more joined up, better targeted, and linked to measurable outcomes defined under accessibility and impact planning. This should ensure that social exclusion objectives are given due weight alongside economic and environmental goals, including through transport appraisal mechanisms.
- **Skills, expertise and knowledge:** local authorities need the skills to ensure transport services adapt to consumers' requirements, and a firmer evidence base on which to assess problems and develop solutions.

b) Specific transport

23. Key changes could include:

- **Work**: A clearer deal between people seeking work and the state. This could include ensuring people can get to interviews and jobs in a reasonable time and cost through providing transport to or from out of town locations or for shift work, in return for a commitment to travel reasonable distances to work. The Government announced in the

2002 Budget that £5 million per annum would be made available to fund transport solutions for jobseekers in the 63 areas covered by Action Teams for Jobs. It also announced personalised travel planning services in Jobcentres to help jobseekers find out how to get to jobs.

- **Learning:** ensuring that transport routes are more sharply focused on schools, colleges and training providers; ensuring that the cost of transport to schools and colleges does not restrict access to education.

- **Health care**: better advice on how to get to hospital through mainstream transport; greater publicity for the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme; greater choice over the timing of hospital appointments to fit in with travel needs; and a better integration of support available from non-emergency patient transport, the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme and the Social Fund.

c) Reducing the need to travel:

24. Transport providers should factor in the needs of people experiencing or at risk of social exclusion in terms of access to work, learning, health care and other activities. Similarly, planners of new facilities need to factor in considerations of accessibility by public transport and walking and cycling to these activities and services. This applies not just to opening new facilities but equally to closures of existing facilities, including schools, hospitals, health centres, GP practices and other community facilities. Outreach and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can also be a cost-effective way of tackling access problems.

25. Other changes could include ensuring that local planning authorities:

- actively identify and promote key sites for such facilities in accessible locations within a process which actively takes account of local consumers; and,

- encourage higher density development including housing to help create more viable public transport networks.

Next Steps

26. This report shows that transport problems can be a significant barrier to social inclusion and sets out some initial thoughts on potential improvements. Over the next few months, the SEU will be working with other departments in Government and organisations outside of Government to develop these in more detail. We would welcome any comments on this report. They should be sent to:

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27. The ideas under consideration in this report are subject to spending review decisions. The SEU intends to publish a final report later in the year. The report will contain details on how policies will address the problems identified in this interim report.

[1]A note on the data used. Research and survey evidence is presented in this report from a range of sources. Where proportions or percentages are quoted, these are based on *statistically representative* surveys, either of the general population or of particular sub-groups of the population (for example young people, older people or job-seekers). All the statistics quoted in the summary are fully referenced and sourced in the main body of the report.

Background

1. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that transport problems can be a significant barrier to social inclusion. During the Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) work on neighbourhood renewal, transport problems were frequently highlighted as important barriers to improving work, learning and health outcomes in deprived areas.

2. The Prime Minister therefore asked the SEU to begin a study to examine the links between transport and social exclusion in spring 2001.

Social exclusion and transport

3. The term 'social exclusion' refers to more than poverty or low income, but it is closely related to them. It is used to describe a number of linked problems – such as unemployment, poor educational achievement, low incomes, poor housing, physical barriers and bad health – which tend to have a cumulative and reinforcing effect on each other, preventing people from fully participating in society.

4. Poor transport can be a **result** of social exclusion. For example people on low incomes may not be able to afford the cost of motoring or may be forced to restrict their use of public transport because of the cost of fares. Age and disability can also restrict access to motoring and public transport.

5. Poor transport can also **reinforce** social exclusion. For example, a lone parent may be unable to take up employment because of the travel costs and complex travel patterns needed to accommodate childcare arrangements and getting to work. Or an elderly or disabled person may be unable to get to key local services and facilities as often as they would like because of intimidation from busy and noisy roads and a lack of accessible crossings.

6. Not everyone who experiences social exclusion will necessarily have a transport problem, and not everyone with transport problems is at risk of social exclusion. For some people, transport can be a major factor limiting their opportunities, while for others, it may not be very important compared to other problems such as poor education. In rural areas, the problems are qualitatively different. Car access makes a huge difference to quality of life and access to jobs, education, health care and shops.

The SEU project

7. This report contains an analysis of the problem of poor transport and highlights the social cost of this for different people and areas. The extent to which transport is a barrier to participation has not been the subject of extensive quantitative research. This report therefore makes use of considerable qualitative data.

8. Chapter 1 examines the extent to which transport contributes to social exclusion, with particular emphasis on access to work, learning, health and other key services. It also identifies the disproportionate impact of road traffic on deprived areas.

9. Chapter 2 examines the causes of poor access and how past policies have contributed to the problem.

10. Chapter 3 draws on experience from both here and abroad to identify the policy lessons and practical initiatives that can improve the present situation.

11. Chapter 4 identifies a number of financial, regulatory and institutional barriers to a more effective transport system.

12. Chapter 5 lays out the basic principles for working towards a more inclusive system of transport provision.

Poor transport contributes to social exclusion in two ways. First, it can stop people from participating in work, learning, health care, food shopping and other activities, such as volunteering and community participation. Second, people in deprived communities also suffer the worst effects of road traffic through pollution and pedestrian accidents. Poor transport has costs for individuals, businesses, communities and the state.

Key facts include:

Work: Two out of five jobseekers say lack of transport is a barrier to getting a job. One in four say that the cost of transport is a problem getting to interviews. More than one in six people in low-income areas have not applied for a particular job in the last 12 months because of transport problems, while for 16- to 25-year-olds, this figure is one in four. One in 10 people in low-income areas have turned down a job in the last twelve months because of transport problems. People with driving licences are twice as likely to get jobs than those without.

Learning: Transport is potentially a key cause of young people dropping out of school or college. Sixteen- to 18-year-olds spend on average £370 a year on transport and 47 per cent of this age range experience difficulty with this cost (compared to 19 per cent of older students). Six per cent of 16- to 24-year-olds turn down training or further education opportunities because of problems with transport.

Health: Thirty-one per cent of people without a car have difficulties travelling to their local hospital, compared to 17 per cent of people with a car. Seven per cent of people without cars say they have missed, turned down, or chosen not to seek medical help over the last 12 months because of transport problems. Over a twelve-month period, three per cent of people – or 1.4 million – miss, turn down or choose not to seek medical help because of transport problems. Children from the lowest social class are five times more likely to die in road accidents than those from the highest social class.

Food shopping: Sixteen per cent of people without cars find access to supermarkets hard, compared with 6 per cent of people with cars.

Friends, family, leisure, culture and exercise: Eighteen per cent of non-car owners find seeing friends and family difficult because of transport, compared with eight per cent for people with access to a car. People without cars are also twice as likely to find it difficult to access leisure centres (nine per cent) and libraries (seven per cent).

1.1 Nearly one in three households does not have access to a car.[1] These households rely primarily on walking, getting lifts from family and friends and buses. Taxi rides make up a small and increasing number of journeys. Cycling and rail journeys make up a tiny proportion of journeys.

1.2 This chapter discusses:

I) to what extent poor transport prevents people from accessing work, learning, health care, food shopping and other key activities

II) to what extent deprived communities suffer disproportionately from pollution and child pedestrian accidents

I) Access to work, learning, healthcare, food shopping and other activities

Access to Work

Access and Availability of transport

1.3 Poor public transport can prevent people from attending interviews, can lead people to apply for jobs in a narrow geographical area, and can result in people turning down jobs. The available evidence suggests that, whilst this is not a problem for the majority of jobseekers, for some it can act as a significant barrier to employment (see para. 1.7).

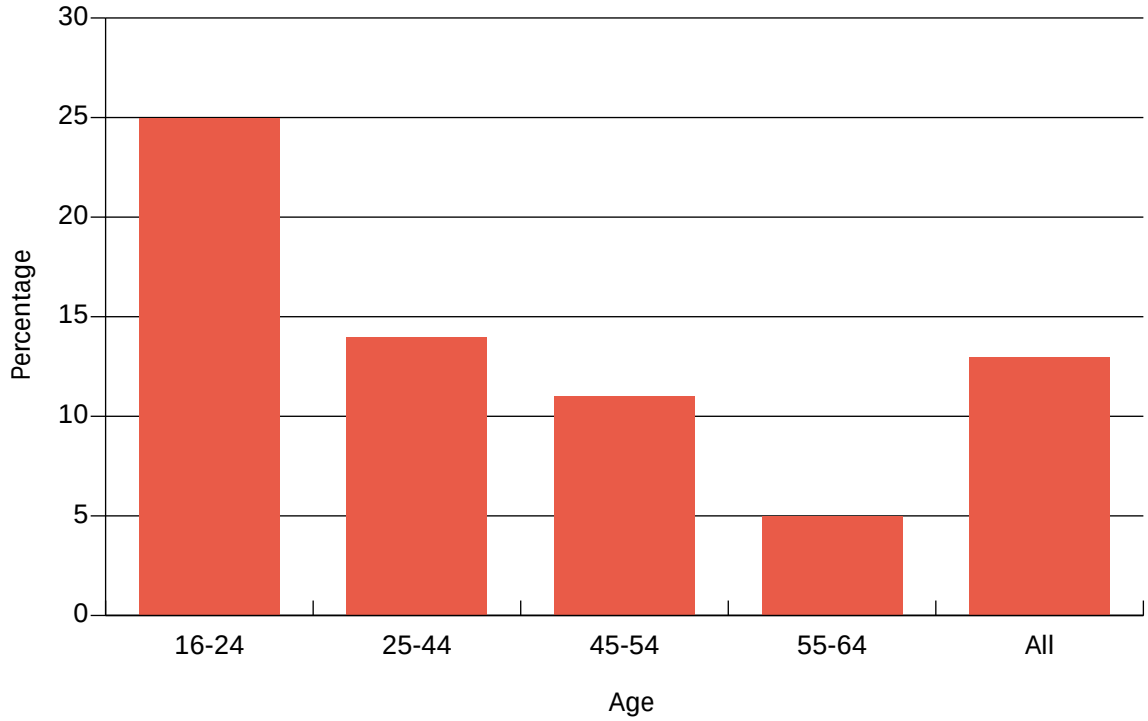
- Thirty-eight per cent of jobseekers say that transport (lack of personal transport or poor public transport) is a key barrier to getting a job.[2]
- Jobseekers with driving licences are twice as likely to get jobs than those without.[3]
- Two-fifths of long-term unemployed men in rural areas say that getting to jobs is a barrier to finding work.[4]

A 17-year-old man lives in social housing in a village with one bus a week on market day. Since finishing school 12 months ago the only work he has been able to access is a few occasional days as a beater on a game farm in the village.

Dorset Community Action – consultation response

- Twelve per cent of jobseekers claim that a lack of available transport has stopped them from attending interviews.[5]
- Thirteen per cent of people say they have not applied for a particular job in the last 12 months because of transport problems. This figure rises to 18 per cent for people living in low-income areas, and 25 per cent for 16- to 25-year-olds [6]
  (see figure 1.1).

Percentage of people who have not applied for a particular job in the previous 12-months because of transport problems they would have getting to work



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey November 2001

Fig 1.1

- Five per cent of people say they have been offered a job but turned it down in the last 12 months because of transport problems. For people living in low-income areas this figure is 10 per cent.[7]
- People in the most deprived areas are more likely to be late for work as a result of transport problems: over one in five of those in the 20 per cent most deprived wards were late at least once a week, compared with one in seven of those in the 20 per cent least deprived wards.[8] Low-income workers, particularly in temporary jobs, are more at risk of losing their job if they are late for work.
- Lack of access to transport services remains one of the key barriers to disabled people in gaining employment. Over a million of the 2.6 million disabled people of working age who are unemployed would like to work.[9]

Case Study 1: Jamil, employed, low-income, aged 35-44 (North Huyton) [10]

Jamil works full time in a shop and earns £5 per hour. His normal working hours are nine to five, Monday to Friday. He uses taxis to travel to and from work and it usually takes him between 10 and 30 minutes at a weekly cost of between £10 and £20.

He likes to work overtime but would not be able to do this if he travelled by public transport, "*the bus service is unreliable especially at the time in the morning that I leave – I start overtime at 5.00am. If I want to work overtime a taxi is my only option".*

He is sometimes late for work because of difficulties getting there. "*I'm reliant on taxis because I don't have a car and it's too far for me to walk to the bus stop to then have to hang around and just wait for a bus to turn up. Every so often the taxis don't turn up and then I am late for work".*

Cost of transport

1.4 The cost of bus fares or motoring costs can affect travel to interviews and work:

- One in four people say their job search is inhibited by the cost of travel to interviews.[11]
- Evaluation of the welfare-to-work programme 'ONE' showed that 14 per cent of out-of-work lone parents said they couldn't afford the cost of transport to work.[12]

"…one client who was working as a chef…reported that it was costing him £4 a day to get to work and back. He was not due to be paid for at least a fortnight and was concerned that he would have to give up his job...travel expenses were a heavy burden".

Newton Aycliffe Job Centre – consultation response

- Average motoring costs account for a quarter of weekly expenditure of households in the lowest income quintile.[13]

  Many concessionary fare schemes are only valid for use off-peak, preventing some disabled people from getting to work at the same time as their non-disabled colleagues thereby restricting their employment opportunities.

Case Study 2: Phil, unemployed, aged 25-34, would like to work in Liverpool (North Huyton)

Phil lives with his partner and their child who is under five years of age. He has been unemployed for between one and two years but is currently actively seeking work in the IT industry. He would be prepared to travel up to 30 minutes in order to get to work.

He stated that his employment opportunities are restricted by his transport provision, *"I haven't got a car and the cost of public transport on a low income is often too high…there are loads of places that I'd like to work in Liverpool, like Bootle or Walton, but I can't as it would take me two buses to get there [and] I'd have to pay double the cost".*

His job searching consists of visiting the job centre and the library and he tends to walk while undertaking his day-to-day searching. He would normally travel by bus to interviews, when the journeys can be quite lengthy, with his last trip taking over an hour. The average cost is between £3 and £5.

Limited travel horizons

1.5 Some jobseekers are hindered by limited travel horizons: they are unwilling to look for or consider job vacancies outside their own geographical area, even when they are accessible. This can be due to poor information about how to get around and a lack of trust or familiarity with local transport services.

1.6 Workers in the bottom income quintile on average travel three miles to work compared with eight miles for the population as a whole.[14] Jobseekers typically say they are prepared to travel for between 30 and 45 minutes to work.[15]

How important is transport compared to other barriers to work?

1.7 A lack of transport is one of a number of barriers that people can face. Its importance relative to others varies between individuals, and it can never be entirely separated from other factors. For instance, low travel horizons may be related to lack of trust and familiarity in local bus services because of frequent timetable changes, out of date information, and unreliability. It is also important to note that some individuals may be reluctant to tell interviewers that they cannot afford to make trips which can mask the relevance of cost related barriers.

1.8 Evaluation of the New Deal for Young People provides an example of the relative importance of transport compared with other problems when moving into work. Participants were asked about problems that they had experienced finding or keeping a job in the last year. 'Lack of jobs nearby' also has a mobility dimension as it could reflect the narrow geographical area within which a person is looking for work.[16]

Problem	Percentage reporting the problem
No problems	31
No jobs nearby	29
Lack of personal transport	25
Own ill health or disability	17
Lack of references from previous employer	15
Debt or money problems	12
Lack of public transport	12
Problems with the law or previous record	8
No permanent place to live	5
Illness of another member of the family	5
Problems with drugs or alcohol	3
Lack of childcare or affordable childcare	2

Source: Bryson, A et al: (2000) New Deal for Young People: national survey of participants. Employment Service Research Report 44

1.9 According to research on young men's experience in the labour market, the following factors increase their chances of leaving unemployment for a job: [17]

- vocational qualifications: young men with them were 1.7 times more likely to leave unemployment for a job than those without;
- possessing a driving licence: 1.98 times more likely than those without one;
- previous work experience: 2.15 times more likely than those with none;
- living with a parent or other relative: 2.3 times more likely than those who did not.

1.10 As with other kinds of problem, many people who say that they face transport difficulties subsequently find work. However, this may not mean that transport is not a problem. Transport problems can restrict people's choice of job opportunities and mean that they remain unemployed longer than otherwise might be the case.

Access to learning

1.11 Transport can affect access to:

- Post-16 participation in education
- Before- and after-school activities
- Parental preference of school
- Participation in adult learning

Post-16 participation

1.12 Whereas most school children receive concessionary fares and tend to travel relatively small distances to school, young people entering further education or training usually do not receive travel discounts and often travel longer distances: [18]

- More than one in five students have considered dropping out of education because of financial difficulties. [19] Transport costs are the biggest expenditure associated with participation in post-16 education. [20] In 1999, the average annual (education-related) transport costs for 16- to 18-year olds was £371 (around £10 per week during term time) compared with £319 for all students; [21]
- Nearly half of 16- to 18-year-old students say they find their transport costs hard to meet. The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) evaluation shows that a significant proportion of young people use their allowance to subsidise transport costs;
- Six per cent of students have missed college at some point in the previous year because they could not afford transport costs; [22]
- Students are concerned about the impact on their academic achievements of being in financial difficulty (and, in particular, the resulting need to do paid part-time work). [23]

Before- and after-school activities

1.13 On a number of SEU visits and interviews, the problem of accessing breakfast clubs and after-school activities has been raised. In some areas, the problem is simply the cost of bus fares home. A further problem is where dedicated school buses are needed. In these cases, for children whose parents cannot pick them up by car, after-school activities may be out of reach. Additionally, disabled pupils can be excluded from extra-curricula activities where the school transport or commercially run services are not physically accessible.

1.14 Many parents express concern that they are unable to let their children take part in after-school activities because of a lack of public transport to get them home.

Case Study 3: Cath, unemployed, aged 25-34, single parent of two children, (Bulwell, Nottingham)

Cath's children attend school daily, and travel by bus, which costs £1 each per day. However she would like them to travel by alternative modes. "*I would like them to walk or cycle but the youngest is too young to go on her own at present".*

She also feels that the buses do not run regularly enough, especially around school leaving time. *"My eldest would like to do after school netball, but there aren't any buses that come near our house at the time she would be leaving, so she can't do it".*

A comprehensive school with a large isolated rural catchment area found that 40-45 per cent of pupils were missing out on after-school activities due to transport constraints. Since the introduction of two late bus services (at the cost of £10,000 per year) no child was forced to miss after-school activities.

Central Council of Physical Recreation – consultation response

Parental preference

1.15 Children are currently entitled to free school transport to schools more than three miles away (two miles for children under eight), as long as it is to the nearest suitable school.

1.16 Low-income parents may find that their school preference is restricted by this entitlement. While some parents can afford to move house to secure a good school or drive their children to the school of their choice, others are restricted to sending their children to the nearest school because they cannot afford to pay for transport costs.

1.17 A survey of parents' experiences of choosing a secondary school showed that parents renting housing from the social sector are 1.5 times more likely to cite travel convenience as a reason for choosing a school than owner-occupiers. [24] National Travel Survey (NTS) data shows that children from low-income families travel a shorter distance to school than their high-income counterparts.

1.18 Children from low-income households often therefore attend low-performing schools in their local area. Furthermore, low mobility ensures that the school population tends to mirror the local housing population – segregated housing can lead to segregated schooling. [25]

Participation in adult learning

1.19 Focus group data shows that low-income families can feel trapped and limited in the education activities they are able to pursue. One study, for example, cites the case of a woman who could only take part in an evening class located in another village because she had access to a car – with public transport it would have been impossible. [26]

1.20 Three per cent of 25- to 44-year-olds and two per cent of people aged between 45 and 64 have turned down training or further education over the past twelve months because of transport problems.[27] However, the proportion of younger people who have rejected training or further education is higher: six per cent amongst 16- to 24-year-olds. These figures are for the population as a whole, the majority of which will neither need nor seek educational participation. DfES is undertaking further research to understand the relevance of transport barriers amongst potential adult learners.

1.21 One of the reasons for such a small proportion of adults participating in learning may be the lack of flexibility offered by FE colleges for those facing significant barriers already. For example, a single parent may need to drop off a child with a childminder and will need a college that offers hours to fit around this. There may be significant transport barriers to attending the most suitable college as it may not be the nearest one.

<u>Access to Healthcare</u>

1.22 Poor transport can mean that people miss health appointments or suffer delays in being discharged from hospital – both of which incur large costs to the NHS. Transport problems can also restrict access to leisure and sports facilities. Key facts include:

- Around 20 per cent of people find it difficult to travel to hospital. A much higher proportion (31 per cent) of people without access to a car have this difficulty. [28]
- Three per cent of people miss, turn down or do not seek medical help because of transport problems experienced in the past year. This rises to seven per cent of people without access to a car. [29]
- More than half of older people travelling to hospitals and dentists in London experience some difficulties in getting there, as do a third of those attending GPs or health centres.[30]

Case Study 4: Fiona aged 45 – 54, long-term sick, low-income family (Bulwell, Nottingham).

She has problems walking and now spends most of her time in a wheelchair. She visits the doctor at least once a week and the Queen's Medical Centre every week. She is driven by her husband to all appointments and has to rely on him, as she is not allowed out of the house alone. She cannot use public transport as she feels it is not wheelchair friendly. *"You can't get wheelchairs on the buses… if there's no-one available to take me by car I can't go anywhere because the buses aren't wheelchair friendly".*

She would therefore like to use Dial-a-Ride more but *"they can't take you to doctors or hospital appointments and they are always so busy because disabled people can't get on the normal buses."*

- On-going research by the University of East London, which is focusing on women's experiences of antenatal care, would seem to suggest a link between transport problems and failure to attend appointments.[31]
- Twenty-three per cent of people who use mental health services say that financial problems have restricted their ability to access these services; the majority of these responses related to transport problems. One individual was "unable to attend a group due to a taxi costing £8 return".[32]

"My stepmother is 83 and lives in London. She has to catch three buses and then walk quarter of a mile to her "local" hospital. Her total journey time is 1¾ hours, by car it only takes 20 minutes."

Cheltenham Resident - consultation response

Access to other activities

i) Food Shops

1.23 People without cars are far more likely to find it difficult to access food shops and supermarkets. Sixteen per cent of people without cars find getting to supermarkets difficult compared with six per cent of the population as a whole.[33]

1.24 Poor access to food shops reflects the growth of out-of-town shopping centres and supermarkets at the expense of smaller, more local shops:

- The number of small shops fell by 40 per cent between 1986 and 1997.[34]
- On average, basic foodstuffs cost 24 per cent more in small stores than in big supermarkets.[35]
- From the mid 1970s to the late 1980s, total distances travelled for food shopping increased by 60 per cent.[36]
- Seventy-eight per cent of rural settlements do not have access to a general store or a village shop.[37]

ii) Participation in social, cultural, religious, and sporting activities

1.25 People without cars are around twice as likely to identify transport as a barrier to participation in a range of social and cultural activities:[38]

- Eighteen per cent of people without cars say that they have difficulty seeing their friends and family compared with eight per cent of those with access to a car.
- Nine per cent of people without cars have difficulty accessing leisure facilities compared with four per cent for people with car access.
- Seven per cent of people without cars say they have difficulty accessing libraries compared with three per cent on average.

1.26 Transport is a particular barrier to older people's participation in activities such as church, day centres, caring, and volunteering. Research has shown the importance to older people of simply getting out of the house.[39]

- Twelve per cent of older people are unable to go out of doors and walk down the road on their own.[40]
- One third of older people say that there are one or more activities that they would like to be able to do more often; half of these involved family and other social visits, which suggests a significant degree of social isolation.[41]
- A Help the Aged survey showed that 10 per cent of older people have some difficulty seeing family and friends because of transport.[42]

1.27 Transport can also be a barrier to participation in social activities for young people:

- One third of people think that better public transport would improve their social lives. This rises to 39 per cent of young people aged 16 to 24.[43]
- There is evidence too that children from deprived households are missing out on day-trips because of a lack of suitable transport. Such trips are particularly important because of the limited holiday opportunities available to low-income families.[44]
- Ten per cent of disabled young people said transport was the main barrier to participating in sporting events.[45]

"[Transport] emerged last year from the Best Value review of services to older adults, as the single biggest barrier to older adults served by Social Services accessing mainstream leisure, educational and social participation."

Birmingham City Council - consultation response

"I have spoken to some young people who, after a night bowling, walked the seven miles home down country lanes in the dark."

Warwickshire County Council - consultation response

"I would like to go swimming, which would help my arthritis, but I can't get there without transport."

Cornwall Health Action Zone - consultation response

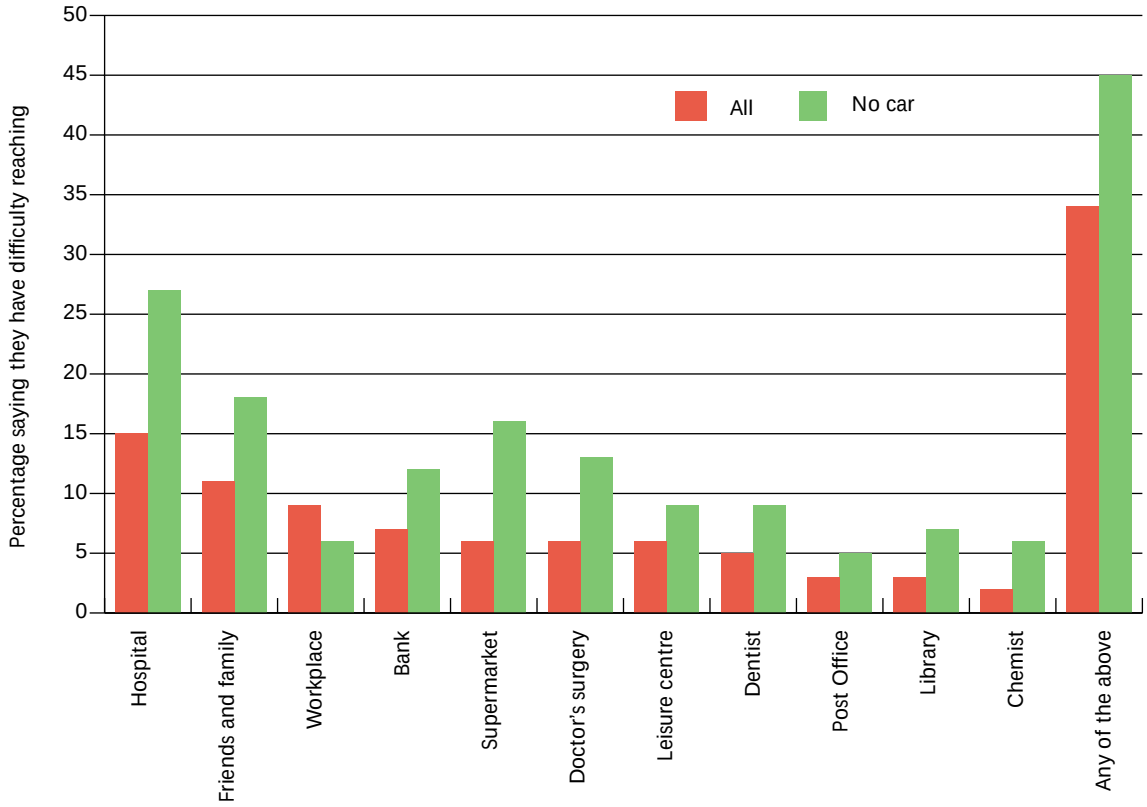
1.28 Seeing friends and family matters in itself, but it also has other spin-off benefits:

- Evaluation of labour market initiatives has consistently shown that people who move into work often find out about their job through a friend or relative. More than 30 per cent of lone parents surveyed in an New Deal evaluation said they heard about their job from friends or relatives, compared to 10 per cent who had heard about the job from the Jobcentre.[46]
- The evidence suggests that low-income mothers use friends and family as a source of lifts to shops and hospitals.[47]
- Strong social support networks bring discernible health benefits.[48]

What are the most difficult places to get to?

1.29 To help set in context the difficulties described here, an ONS survey asked people to say which of a range of facilities they had difficulty accessing. The most frequently mentioned is hospital, followed by friends and family and then work. Figure 1.2 illustrates this.

Places people find it difficult to get to



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey November 2001

Fig 1.2

II) Pollution, community severance and pedestrian deaths

1.30 The worst impacts of road traffic, namely pedestrian accidents, air and noise pollution, and community severance, disproportionately affect deprived areas and people experiencing, or at risk of, social exclusion.

Pedestrian accidents

1.31 There is a clear link between pedestrian accident rates and social class:

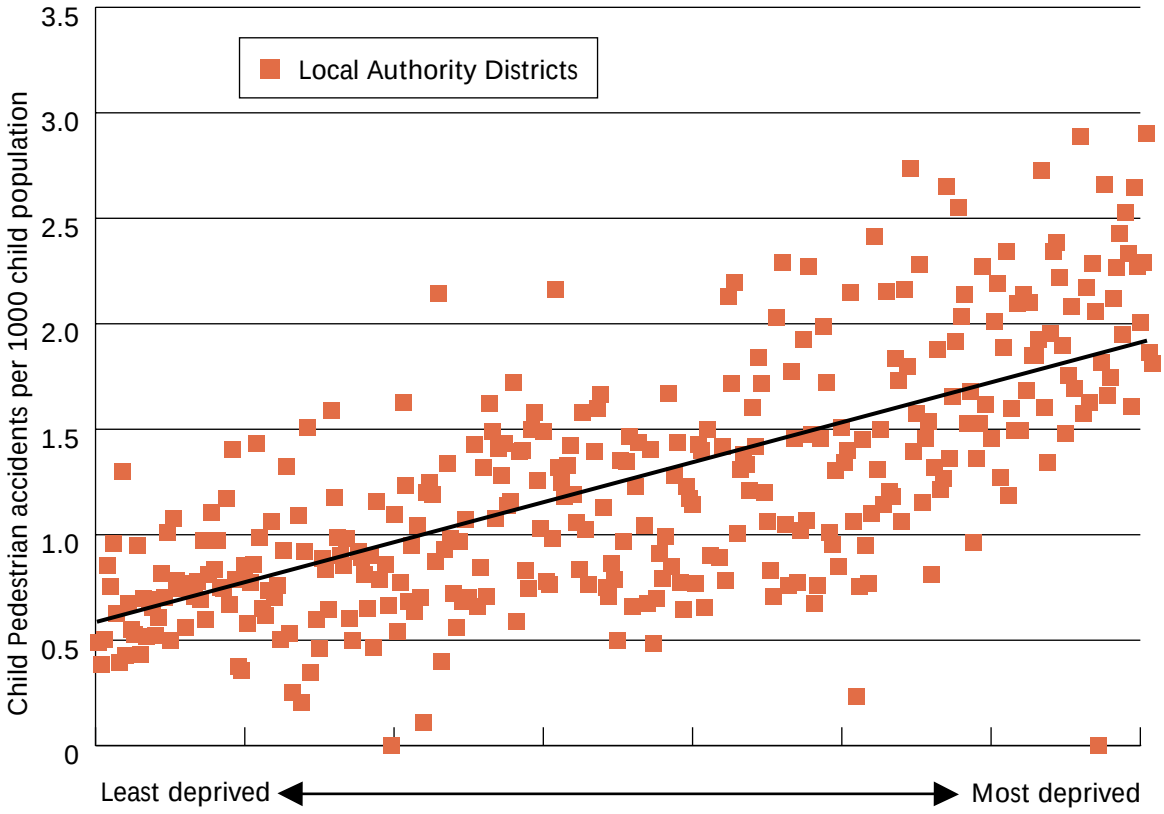
- The evidence is particularly marked for children. Children from social class V are five times more likely to die in a road accident than those from social class I. Social deprivation is also a key determinant of child road injuries.[49]

- Children of lone parents have a 50 per cent greater risk of pedestrian injury than children from two-parent families.[50]

- Although the accident rate for children has declined in recent years, it has done so more slowly for those in the lowest socio-economic group.[51]

1.32 There is also a clear link between area deprivation and accident rates for child pedestrians. Recent analysis of Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) data for 2000 suggests that the most deprived local authority districts have about five times as many accidents per head as the least deprived: around 2.5 accidents per 1000 children compared to 0.5 (see figure 1.3). The relationship holds even after controlling for factors such as residential and employment density.

Child pedestrian accident rates in local authority districts, by index of multiple deprivation



Source: Centre for Transport Studies, Imperial College 2002

Fig 1.3

1.33 Small-scale studies have suggested that there is a disproportionately high rate of pedestrian accidents among minority ethnic children, over and above the effect of social class.[52]

1.34 The explanation for the variation in accident rates appears to be:

- That children from low-income backgrounds are more likely to live near main roads, more likely to play by or in roads (because they do not have safe places to play) and to walk rather than travel by car.[53]

- That children from families in the lowest income quartile cross 50 per cent more roads than those in the highest quartile.[54]

- Lack of access to a car doubles the risk of injury for children.[55]

1.35 In contrast with its relatively good record on road safety overall, Britain has a poor record compared to the rest of Europe for child pedestrian deaths; one study estimates that half of the difference could be explained by British children's greater exposure to busy roads.[56]

Pollution

Air pollution

1.36 Road traffic emissions make a significant contribution to levels of air pollution, particularly in towns and cities. Pollution from traffic fumes can exacerbate the symptoms of some people who may already suffer from breathing difficulties or respiratory diseases such as asthma:

- The short-term effects of air pollution may bring forward the deaths of between 12,000 and 24,000 vulnerable people.[57]
- Between 14,000 and 24,000 hospital admissions and re-admissions may be associated with the short-term effects of air pollution each year. The long-term effects of pollution are as much as ten times greater than the short-term effects.[58]
- There is a growing body of evidence suggesting a link between road traffic and health, and it is important to note that families themselves perceive a strong link between traffic volume and asthma.[59]

1.37 Some people are more exposed to air pollution than others:

- The Acheson Report (1998) concluded that deprived communities suffer the worst traffic pollution.[60] This is backed up by at least two studies which have mapped social deprivation against air quality: research for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has provided "tentative evidence" for a positive correlation;[61] Friends of the Earth also found a positive correlation between levels of deprivation and traffic in their recent study of Bradford.[62]
- Pollutants pose particular risks to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, older people, children and those suffering from respiratory and coronary-illnesses.

Noise pollution

1.38 Traffic noise also has a major impact on quality of life. Complaints about traffic noise rose by 64 per cent between 1982 and 1993/4.[63] It is likely that socially deprived areas suffer more noise pollution than better off areas, as they are more likely to be situated near busy roads. Although evidence for the health effects of noise is inconclusive, the adverse effects include stress and sleep deprivation.

"Houses in close proximity to traffic noise, danger, pollution and severance are…more likely to be occupied by lower income groups… A traffic study carried out on one radial corridor [in Northamptonshire] identified high noise and air pollution in an area traditionally associated with lower income groups."

Northamptonshire County Council – consultation response

Community severance

1.39 Road traffic can divide local communities and restrict walking - especially amongst children and elderly people. Busy roads can cut people off from facilities because of fear of accidents. Some older people and disabled people can feel particularly intimidated by heavy traffic.

1.40 Local studies have suggested a clear relationship between traffic volume and local quality of life, including the amount of social interaction with neighbours. Seventy-five per cent of parents say that they let their children play outside less than they used to; and 43 per cent are concerned about busy roads.[64]

"The building of the M32 in to Bristol severed one traditional neighbourhood (Easton) into two parts. The poor air quality will at best be unhelpful to the already low health status of children and older or vulnerable people in these neighbourhoods, and perhaps actively damaging."

ACRE[65] - consultation response

The costs of inaction

1.41 Poor transport impacts on social exclusion and this costs individuals, communities, businesses and the state:

- **Individuals:** can be cut off from jobs, education and training. They may not be able to access cheap, fresh food; may only access health care in a crisis; are often unable to see friends and family or do other social activities; and may experience crime or fear of crime walking to, waiting for, and travelling on public transport. The money people spend on personal or public transport may leave them with little disposable income. In extreme circumstances, people may be left isolated or even housebound.
- **Communities:** poor walking environments and poor transport links can leave some areas isolated. High levels of traffic and poor access can reduce investment in towns and cities as well as making the local environment less pleasant.
- **Businesses:** may suffer from lost customers and difficulty hiring employees.
- **State:** poor transport as a barrier to work may contribute to higher benefit payments, and reduced tax contributions. The cost of missed health appointments, delays in patient discharge from hospital, and course drop-outs in education are high. The impact of transport through pollution and pedestrian deaths has significant immediate and long-term costs. There can also be unforeseen side effects on crime and anti-social behaviour.

"I am the fourth person I know on my Birmingham bus to leave or be in the process of leaving their jobs in Birmingham because getting there is harder and harder."

Birmingham resident – consultation response

[1] National Travel Survey (NTS) 1998/2000

[2] Audit Commission(1999) *A Life's Work: Local Authorities' Economic Development and Regeneration*,

[3] Stafford, B et al (1999) *Work and Young Men* Joseph Rowntree Foundation

[4] Beatty, C and Fothergill, S. (2001) *Labour market detachment in rural England* Countryside Agency

[5] McKay, S et al (1999) *Unemployment and Jobseeking after the introduction of jobseeker's allowance DSS Research Report 99*

[6] Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2001) *Omnibus Survey* November 2001

[7] ibid

[8] ibid

[9] Labour Force Survey, spring 2001

[10] Case studies in this report are drawn from the Halcrow research study, commissioned by the SEU to inform this project

[11] McKay, S et al (1999) *Unemployment and Jobseeking after the Introduction of Jobseeker's Allowance*, Department of Social Security (DSS) research report 99. Almost 40 per cent of job seekers say that their job search has been limited because of the costs involved. For 63 per cent of them, this results from the cost of travelling to interviews.

[12] Green, A et al (2000) *First Effects of ONE*, DSS research report 126

[13] Lucas, K et al (2001) *Transport, the environment and social exclusion* Joseph Rowntree Foundation

[14] National Travel Survey, unpublished analysis from 1998-2000

[15] Research in progress being undertaken for the SEU by Halcrow; findings confirmed by Merseytravel 'Pathways' research

[16] Bryson, A et al (2000) *New Deal for Young People: national survey of participants* Employment Service Research Report 44

[17] Stafford, B et al (1999) *Work and Young Men* Joseph Rowntree Foundation

[18] Callender, C (1999) *The Hardship of Learning* South Bank University

[19] ibid

[20] ibid

[21] Note that 'expenditure associated with participation' here includes tuition fees, exam and registration fees, books, computers, stationery, travel, field trips and child care. The research shows that the cost of some items (eg computers) may be higher than transport, however students themselves are less likely to incur these themselves.

[22] ONS (2001) ibid

[23] Callender (1999) ibid

[24] Sheffield Hallam University and ONS *Parents' experience of choosing a secondary school*

[25] Home Office (2001) *Community Cohesion*

[26] Hine, J and Mitchell, F (2001) *The role of transport in social exclusion in urban Scotland* Scottish Executive

[27] ONS (2001) ibid

[28] Ruston, D (2002) *Difficulty in Accessing Key Services* ONS

[29] ibid

[30] Age Concern, cited in Audit Commission (2001): *Going Places Taking People to and from Education, Social Services and Healthcare*

[31] Professor Kerry Hamilton, informal feedback (draft report not yet available)

[32] *Focus on Mental Health. An uphill struggle, A survey of the experiences of people who use mental health services and are on a low income* (2001)

[33] NTS (1998/2000)

[34] Department of Health (1999) *Improving shopping access for people living in deprived neighbourhoods – Policy Action Team 13*

[35] Dowler, E et al (2002) *Poverty Bites: Food Health and Poor Families* Child Poverty Action Group

[36] Health Education Authority (HEA) (2000) *Health Update - Environmental Health: Road Transport*

[37] Countryside Agency (2000) *Rural Services Survey*

[38] Ruston, D (2002) ibid

[39] DTLR (2001) *Older People: their transport needs and requirements*

[40] Originally quoted in Help the Aged *General Household Survey* (1998)

[41] DTLR (2001) *Focus on Personal Travel*

[42] Help the Aged (1998) *Pensioners' Transport Survey*

[43] Commission for Integrated Transport survey, 2001

[44] Bostock, L (2001) *Pathways of Disadvantage? Walking as a mode of transport amongst low-income mothers*

[45] Sport England (2001) *Young People with a Disability and Sport*

[46] Hales, J et al (2000) *Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents* DSS Research Report 108

[47] Lucas, K et al (2001) ibid

[48] Morton, B (2001) *Evidence of the impact of transport on health*

[49] HEA (2000) ibid

[50] White, D et al (2000) *Road accidents and children living in disadvantaged areas: a literature review* Scottish Executive

[51] ibid

[52] ibid

[53] Lack of gardens means that children in deprived areas are more likely to play by or in roads (children with no play area at home are over 5 times more at risk of pedestrian injury). Research for the Scottish Executive suggests that a significant proportion of accidents are related to the unsafe (and unsupervised) behaviour of children in deprived areas (White et al, 2000)

[54] White et al (2000)

[55] ibid

[56] MVA Ltd (1999) *Comparative study of European child pedestrian exposure and accidents* DETR

[57] Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (March 2001)

[58] ibid

[59] Burningham, K and Thrush, D (2001) draft conference paper *Pollution concerns in context: a comparison of local perceptions of the risks associated with living close to a road and a chemical factory*

[60] Sir Donald Acheson, (1998) *Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health*

[61] King K and Stedman J (2000) *Analysis of Air Pollution and Social Deprivation*

[62] Friends of the Earth (2001) *Environmental Justice: Mapping Transport and Social Exclusion in Bradford*

[63] HEA (2000) ibid

[64] Living Streets Campaign (2001); Bostock (2001); Burningham and Thrush (2001)

[65] Action with Communities in Rural England

Nearly one in three households do not have access to a car, for reasons that include cost, age or disability, and have to rely on walking, buses, taxis and lifts from families and friends. People on low incomes without cars make far fewer, shorter, and slower journeys.

People experiencing, or at risk of social exclusion face three key barriers to getting to key services: **access and availability**, **cost** and **limited travel horizons**.

People living in rural areas without a car face particularly acute problems. In urban areas, despite a dense public transport network, buses are focused on radial routes entering town centres rather than peripheral locations, and early morning, evening and weekend journeys are under-served. Some groups in the population face particular problems in their travel including children and young people, older people and people with disabilities.

Over the past fifty years the need to travel has become greater and more complex as society became organised around the car and average distances to work, learning, hospitals and shops increased. Car ownership allowed the majority of people to keep pace with these changes but people without access to cars have been disadvantaged. Past policies have contributed to greater car dependency and inadequate public transport.

2.1 This chapter examines:

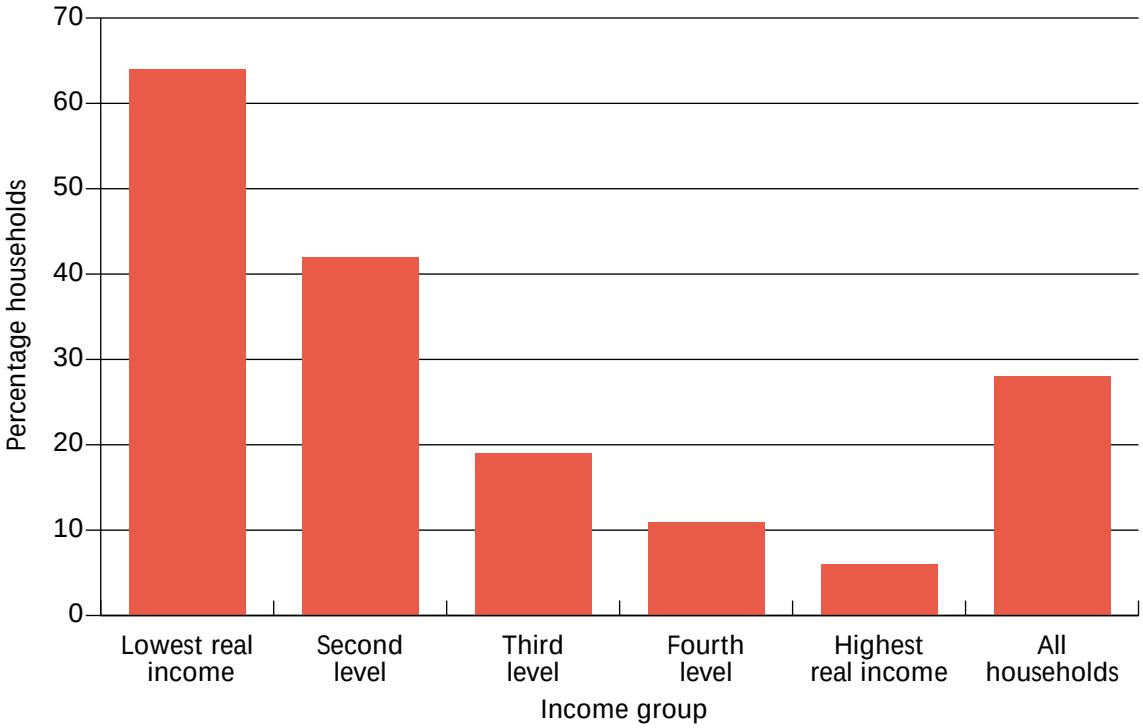
- What modes of transport are used by people experiencing social exclusion
- What transport problems stop people accessing key activities
- How things have changed over time
- How policies have contributed to the problem

What modes of transport are used by people experiencing social exclusion?

2.2 Nearly one in three households do not have access to a car. This figure varies by income, gender and age.

- Amongst the 20 per cent of households with the lowest income, 65 per cent do not have access to a car.

Households without a car by income



Source: Focus on Personal Travel, DTLR 2001

Fig 2.1

- Women are less likely to have a driving licence or to have access to a car – 25 per cent live in a household without a car compared with 17 per cent of men. Older people and young people are much more dependent on public transport.[66]

<u>They rely on walking, buses, lifts from family and friends, and taxis</u>

2.3 Low-income households are more likely not to have cars, and therefore rely more heavily on other modes of transport, in particular buses, walking, taxis and lifts from friends or family.

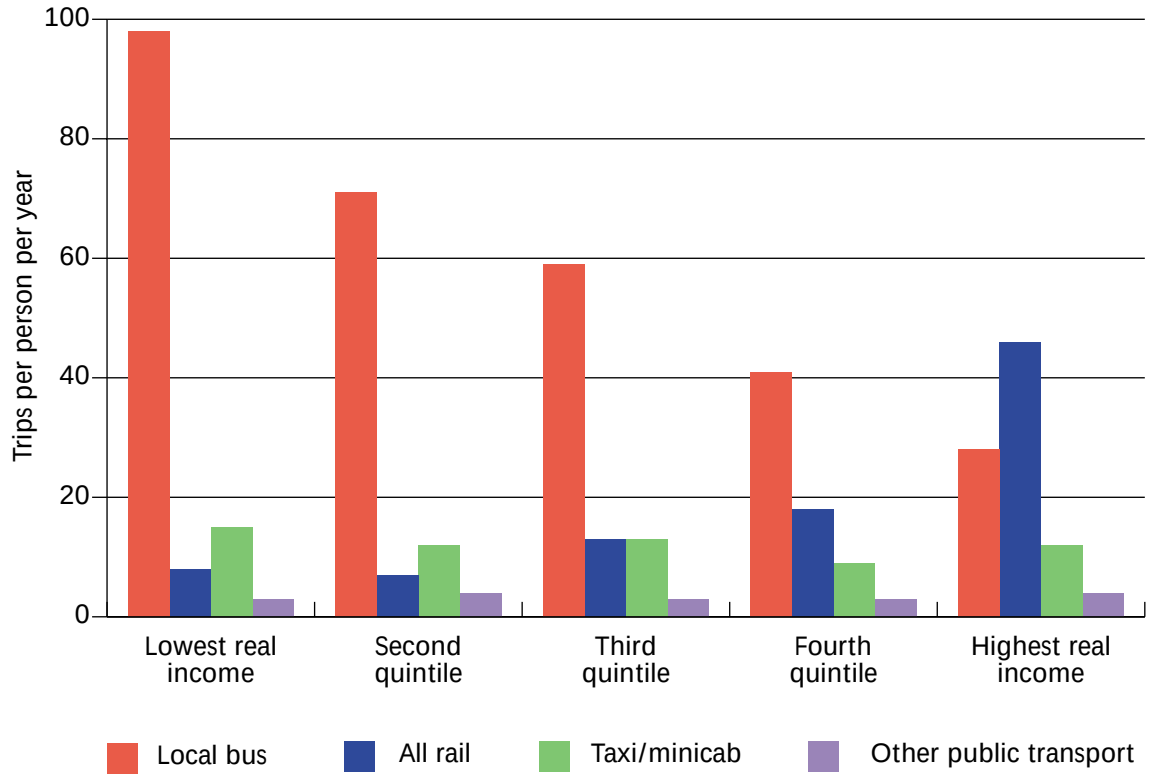
2.4 Walking is the most frequently used mode of transport for people on low incomes:

- For households in the lowest income quintile who do not have a car, 58 per cent of their trips are on foot - compared to 30 per cent for low-income households with cars and just 17 per cent for high-income households with cars.

2.5 The most important mode of public transport for people on low incomes is the bus:

- More than nine out of 10 public transport journeys are by bus for those in the lowest income quintile.
- Low-income households without cars use the bus for 20 per cent of their trips, compared to between two and four per cent of households with cars. [67]

Public transport trips per person per year by household income

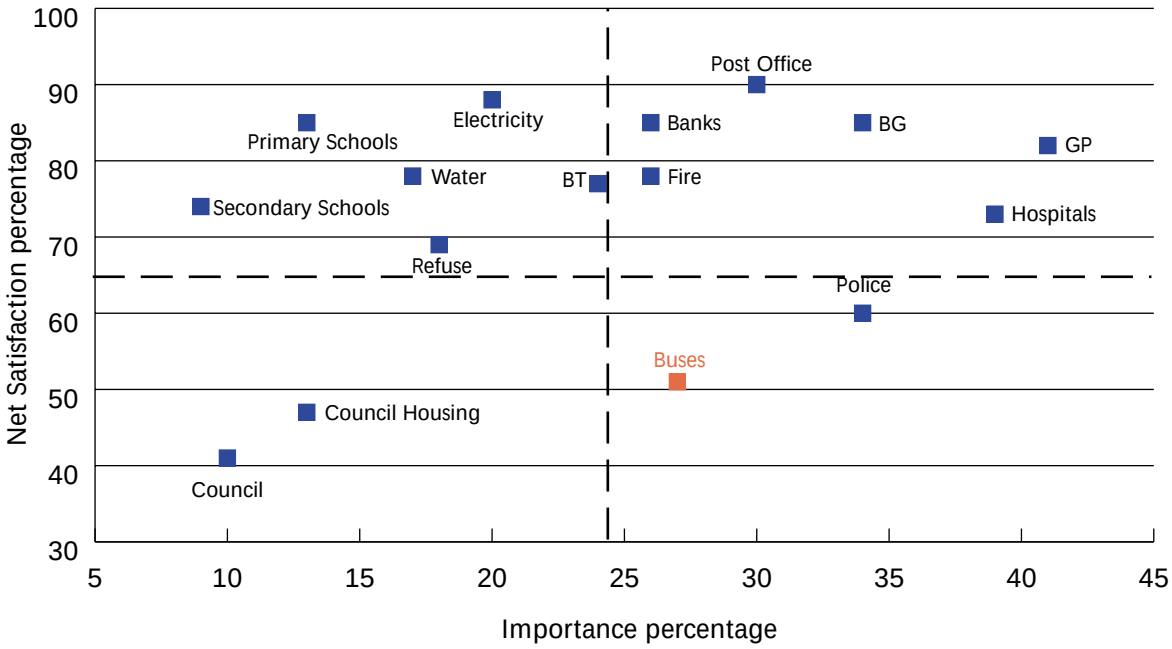


Source: Focus on Personal Travel, DTLR 2001

Fig 2.2

2.6 Despite the importance of the bus as a mode of transport for people on low incomes, bus passengers are generally dissatisfied with the service that they offer, as figure 2.3 shows:

Deprived areas: satisfaction and importance of services



Source: Duffy, B (2000) Satisfaction and expectations: attitudes to public services in deprived areas, CASE paper 45. Data from MORI/People's panel

Fig 2.3

2.7 Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) make up a rising and disproportionate number of journeys:

- Despite the cost of taxi fares, people in the lowest income group make a third more taxi trips than the average and more than any other income group. [68] The use of taxis has more than doubled amongst this group since 1985. [69]
- For people with disabilities, the taxi is often the only means of transport that can deliver any level of assurance that they will reach their destination with ease. This places a disproportionate financial burden on this group.

"Taxis are a lot more expensive but it's better than waiting half an hour or 40 minutes for a bus, especially late at night when the bus might not come anyway."[70]

2.8 Rail is used by a very small proportion of people on low incomes. However, those who do travel by rail, especially those in rural areas, find it essential to access local towns and services.

2.9 An important further source of transport for people from low-income households is lifts from friends or relatives, which account for 13 per cent of trips by people without a car in the lowest income quintile.[71]

2.10 Reflecting their lower access to cars, women are more likely to rely on walking and public transport in travelling to local services.[72]

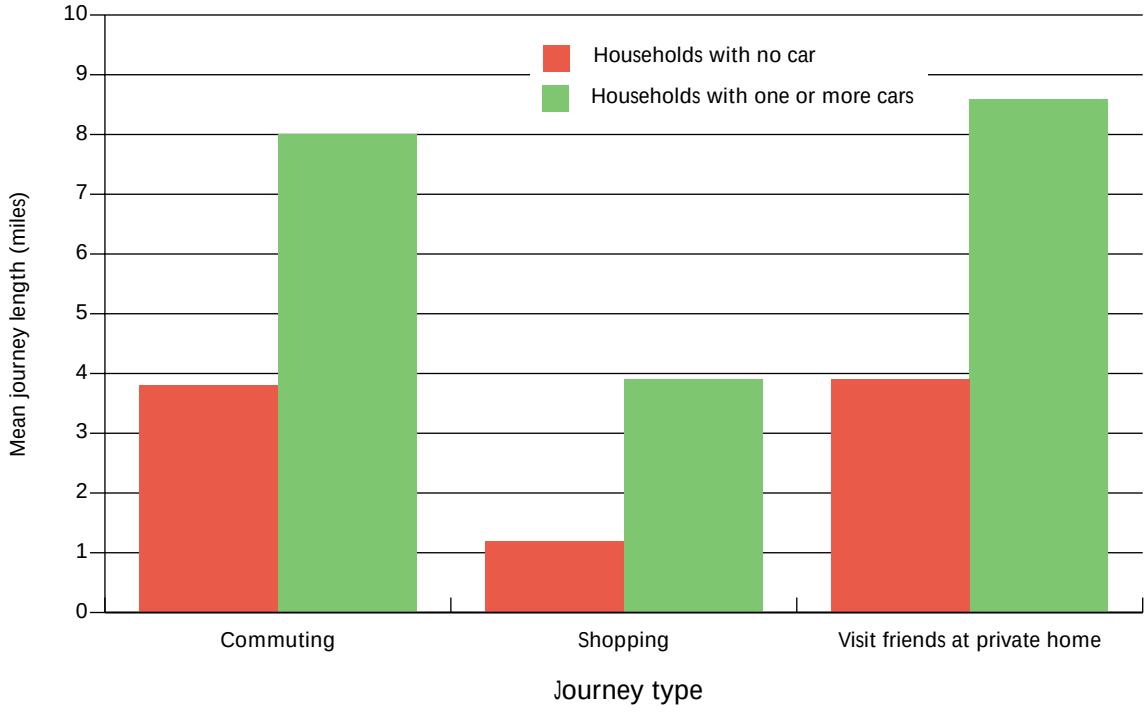
<u>They make fewer, shorter and slower trips</u>

2.11 People on low incomes travel less than better-off households, potentially reducing their ability to access services and activities.

- Low income people without cars make, on average, only 706 trips per year, compared to 948 by low income car owners and 1,618 by high income car-owners.[73]

2.12 The following graph (Fig 2.4) shows that people with cars travel further for commuting, shopping and visiting friends.

Mean journey length by purpose and car ownership (all income groups)

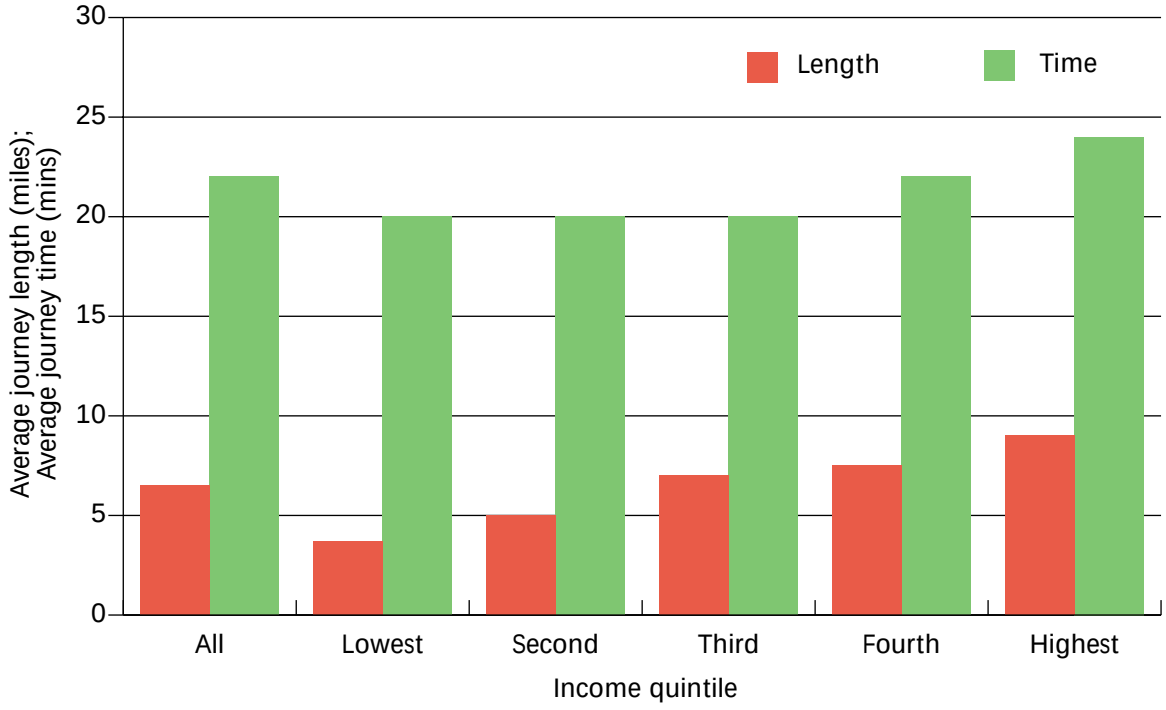


Source: Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition

Fig 2.4

2.13 People in the bottom income quintile, on average, take twice as long to travel the same distance as those in the top quintile: on average, 12 miles per hour versus 24 miles per hour. Although average travelling *times* do not vary significantly by income (varying between 20 and 24 minutes), better-off people are able to travel significantly further within those times. See figure 2.5 below:

Journey distance and time spent travelling by income quintile



Source: Focus on Personal Travel, DTLR 2001

Fig 2.5

What transport problems stop people accessing key activities?

2.14 People on low incomes face several types of barrier to travel. These relate to:

- Access and Availability: people cannot get to places in a reasonable time, safely and reliably.
- Cost: people cannot afford the cost of motoring, buses, rail or taxis.
- Limited travel horizons: people may be reluctant to make journeys that require longer distances, journey times, or interchange.

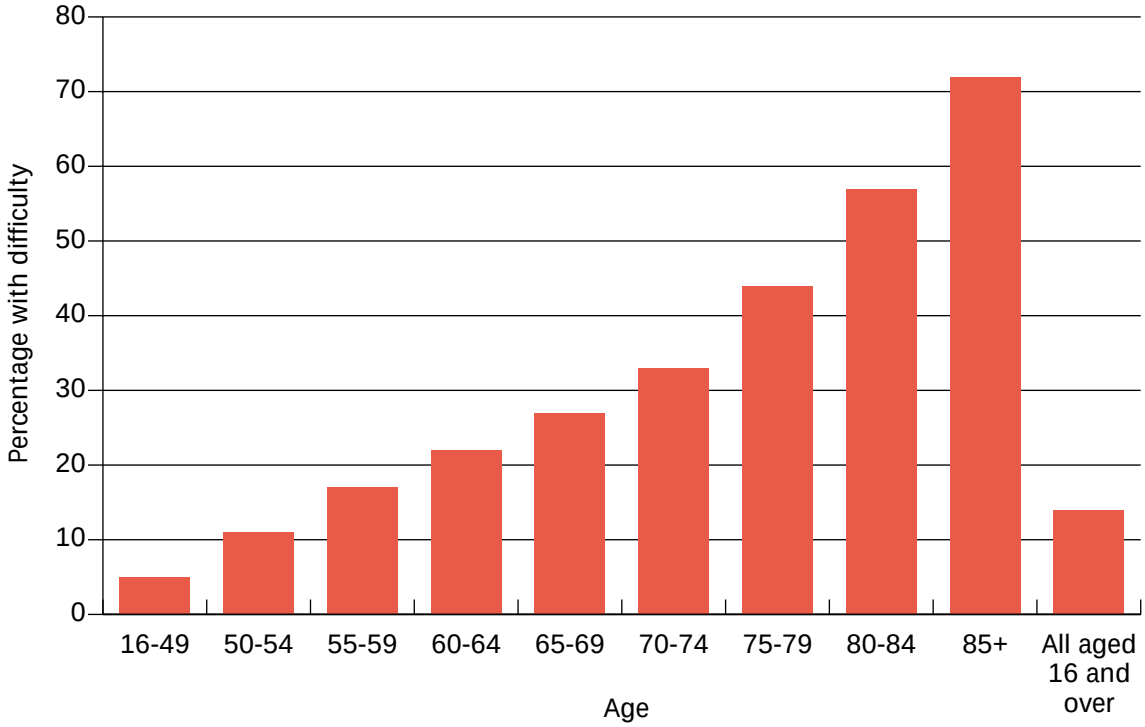
Access and availability

2.15 A range of problems may prevent people getting to places in a reasonable time, safely and reliably.

Physical access

2.16 Fourteen per cent of adults have a physical disability or long-standing health problem that makes it difficult for them to go out on foot or use public transport.[74]This is more prevalent with age, see figure 2.6:

People with mobility difficulties by age



Source: Focus on Personal Travel, DTLR 2001

Fig. 2.6

2.17 Only 20 per cent of buses in the UK meet the accessibility requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.[75] The Disability Rights Commission stresses that a further problem is a lack of safe crossing points close to many bus stops plus a poor level of access in the pedestrian environment around many bus stops.[76]

2.18 Of the 275 London Underground stations, only 40 do not require the use of steps or escalators. Railtrack does not keep records of the number of accessible stations nationally. There is not a single station in the country that meets the design standards issued in the Strategic Rail Authority's *Train and Station Services for Disabled People* (February 2002). In response to the consultation exercise carried out as part of the SEU study, the Leonard Cheshire Foundation emphasised the wasted investment in accessible vehicles given that most train stations remain inaccessible.

2.19 Physical accessibility can also be problematic for parents who travel with children's buggies and who often cannot rely on low-floor buses being available.

Case Study 6: Claire, a single parent aged 16 to 21. Unemployed with two children under five (Lemington, North Tyneside).

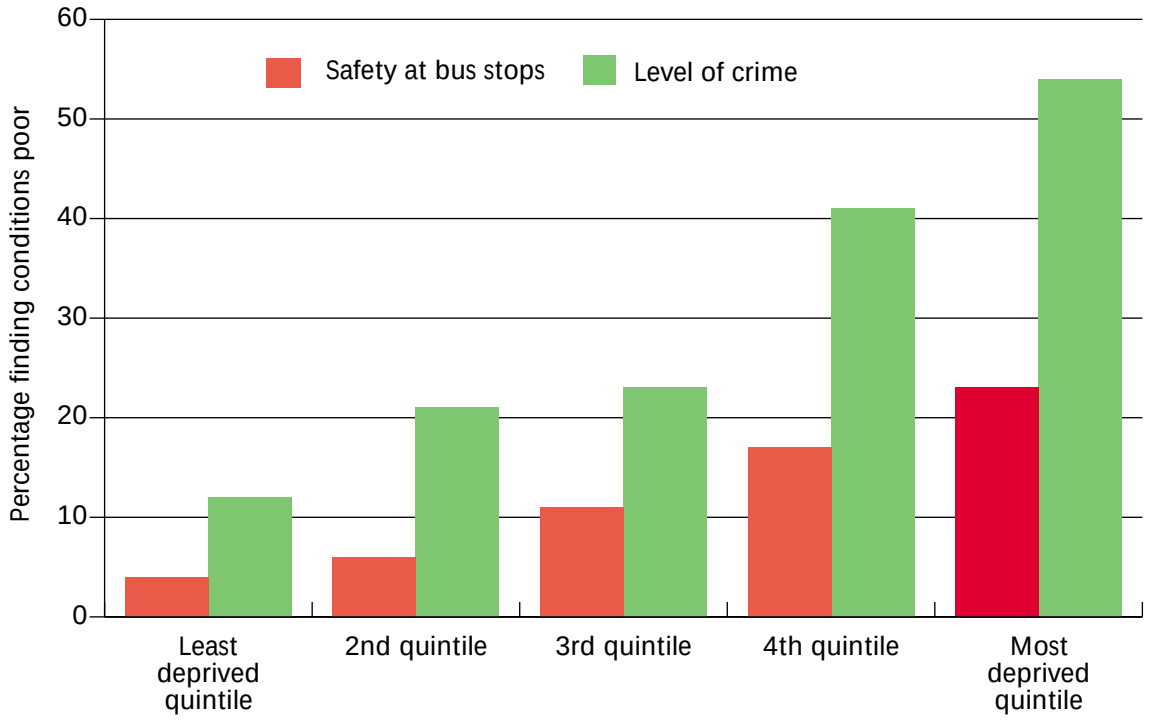
She visits the doctor at least once per month in Throckley, travelling by bus with the two children. The journey takes up to 20 minutes and costs £1.15. Normally the vehicle on the route is not a low-floor bus.

"It's a real struggle for me to get on a normal bus, you know, the ones with two steps. It can take a minute or so for me to get on and I feel embarrassed as everyone is waiting."

Crime and fear of crime

2.20 People in the most deprived areas are around five times more likely to say that they are concerned about levels of crime in their area and safety at bus stops compared with more affluent areas, [77]as figure 2.7 demonstrates:

Proportion finding conditions poor, by income quintile



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey November 2001

Fig 2.7

2.21 Security fears are particularly acute for women and older people, and for people travelling during the evening or early morning.[78]

- 53 per cent of women and 23 per cent of men feel unsafe waiting on a train platform after dark;
- 44 per cent of women and 19 per cent of men feel unsafe waiting at the bus stop after dark.[79]

2.22 Over a 12-month period, five per cent of passengers report being threatened with violence and four per cent being the victim of theft.[80]

2.23 Crime and anti-social behaviour can also lead to bus operators removing or re-routing services. On a visit, the SEU was told how persistent stoning of buses by children on an estate led an operator to re-route the service round the edge of the estate. The end result was that there is no longer a bus service from the centre of the estate in to the local town or to the nearest hospital.

2.24 A recent survey suggests that 18 per cent of people would use buses more if personal security measures were improved.[81]

Public transport frequency, reliability, and network coverage

2.25 For some parts of rural England, just 50 per cent of people live within 13 minutes walk of an hourly daytime bus service.[82] Furthermore, 29 per cent of rural settlements have no bus service at all.[83] Access is also difficult in some urban areas, for example peripheral estates, particularly

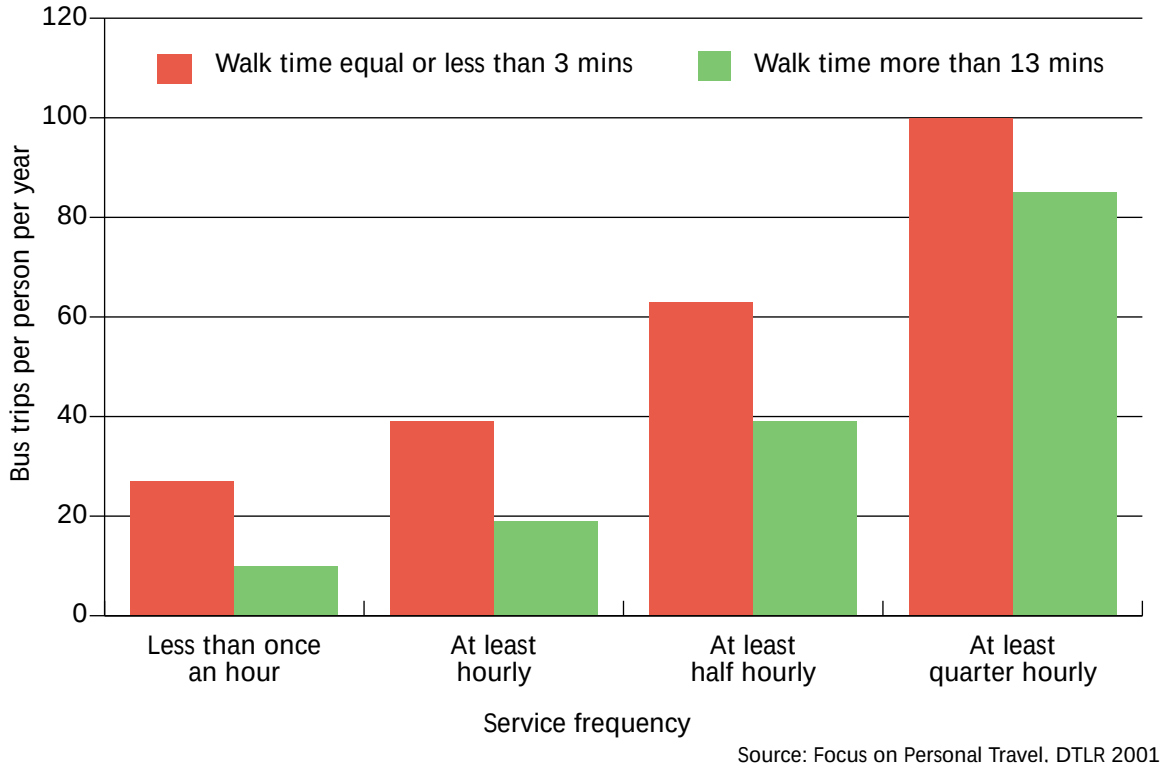
during the evenings or early mornings.

2.26 Although many people may be able to walk to a bus stop, bus routes do not always match the location or timing of the journeys people need to make. Bus networks are dominated by radial routes, entering city centres often during peak hours, whereas new sites of employment, such as call centres or supermarkets, and key public services such as further education colleges, are often located on the periphery of towns. Accessing these places can mean a long circuitous journey involving two or more changes.

2.27 The frequency and reliability of public transport is particularly important for women, who often have to combine journeys to work, school, childcare and shopping, thus punctuality and speed is at a premium.

2.28 More trips are made by bus when services are more frequent. Figure 2.8 shows that this is true even after taking into account the distance they have to walk to the bus stop.

Bus use by access to bus services



Source: Focus on Personal Travel. DTLR 2001

Fig 2.8

Cost

2.29 Motoring costs account for 24 per cent of the weekly expenditure of households in the lowest income quintile who have cars,[84]compared with 15 per cent for all households in the UK.[85] So, although poorer people spend less money on travel than the rest of the population, this often accounts for a far greater proportion of their income.

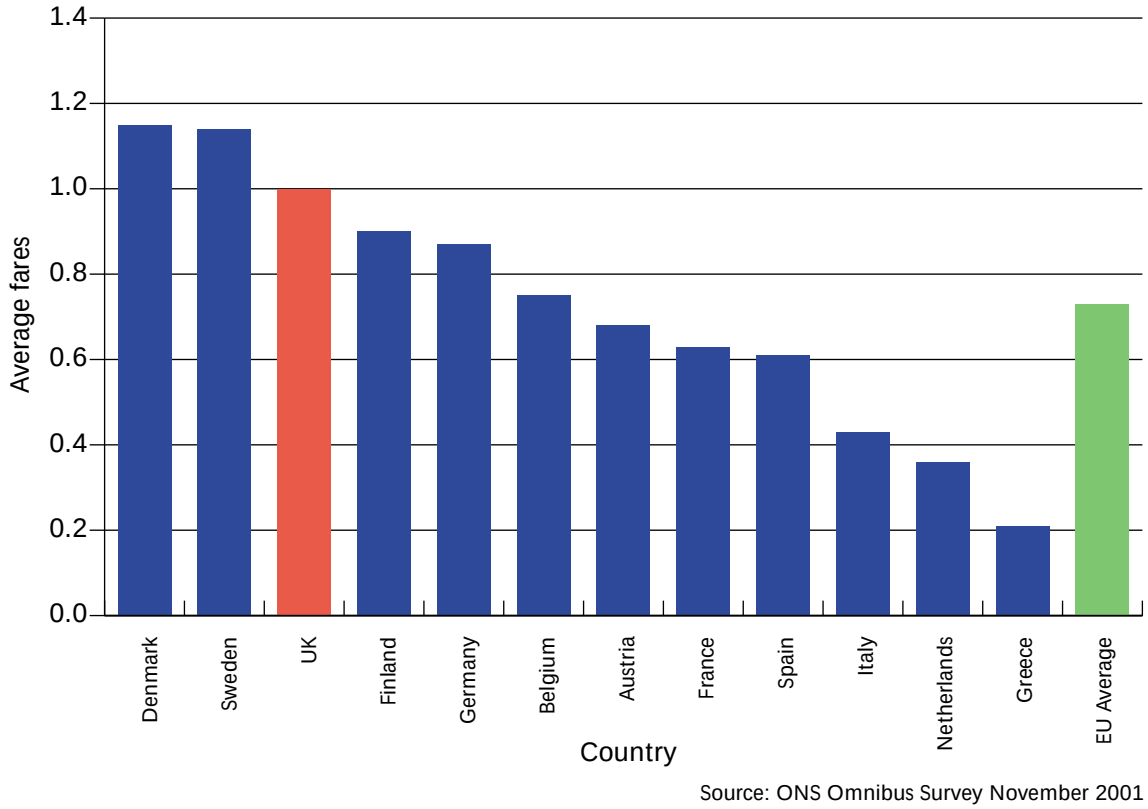
2.30 The cost of motoring can be particularly prohibitive for older people who are more likely to live on low incomes. For disabled people, the cost of adapting a car is very significant. Adding a wheelchair lift to a car, for example, costs about £6,000.[86]Evidence also suggests that asylum-seekers face particular problems meeting the cost of journeys to asylum interview or appeal hearings.[87]

"We cannot afford it really [a car] but we have to have it, especially for taking the kids to hospital. We have to do without certain things to pay for it. The car has become a necessity for us now."
Forum for Rural Children and Young People – consultation response[88]

2.31 While the cost of motoring has remained relatively steady in real terms over the last 15-20 years, the cost of bus fares has risen by over 30 per cent since 1985.[89]

2.32 Overall, the average public transport fare in the UK is high in comparison with other European countries, as figure 2.9 shows:

Comparative public transport fares



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey November 2001

Fig 2.9

Limited travel horizons

2.33 Low income groups can be reluctant to travel long distances or undertake long journeys because of:

- A tendency to look for work in, or travel to, places that are familiar.
- Poor knowledge of how to get to places using the transport network. Emerging findings from the SEU-commissioned research study in North Huyton in Knowsley, suggest that, in addition to a lack of services to some destinations and at certain times of the day, there is also poor awareness of the transport services on offer.[90]
- Low levels of English language and literacy skills which can prevent people from being able to access transport. This can be a particular problem for people from black and minority ethnic communities.
- Lack of audio-visual information or other inclusive design features that can prevent people with physical and learning disabilities accessing transport services.

- Lack of confidence that the bus will get them to places on time.
- Poorly paid work which may mean that long journeys are not financially viable.
- Frequent changes to bus routes and timetables, and out of date timetables.

Which transport problems are most important?

2.34 The recent ONS omnibus survey asked the third of respondents who said that they experienced difficulty in getting to one or more places about the different transport difficulties they experience. 'Inadequate public transport' is by far the most frequently mentioned transport problem, as figure 2.10 below demonstrates.

Transport problems that make access difficult

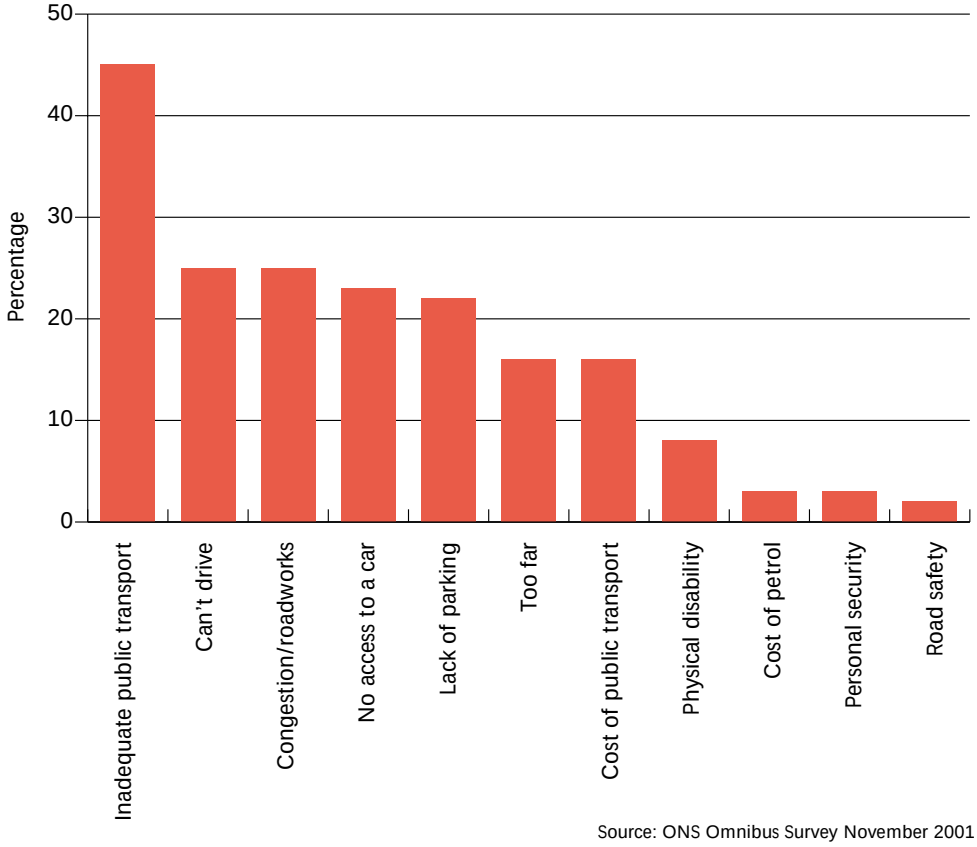


Fig 2.10

2.35 Forty-five per cent of people experiencing transport problems mentioned inadequate public transport. This rises to 50 per cent of women experiencing problems (who are also more likely than men to cite 'no access to car' as a reason for difficulty).[91]

Which people and places are worst affected?

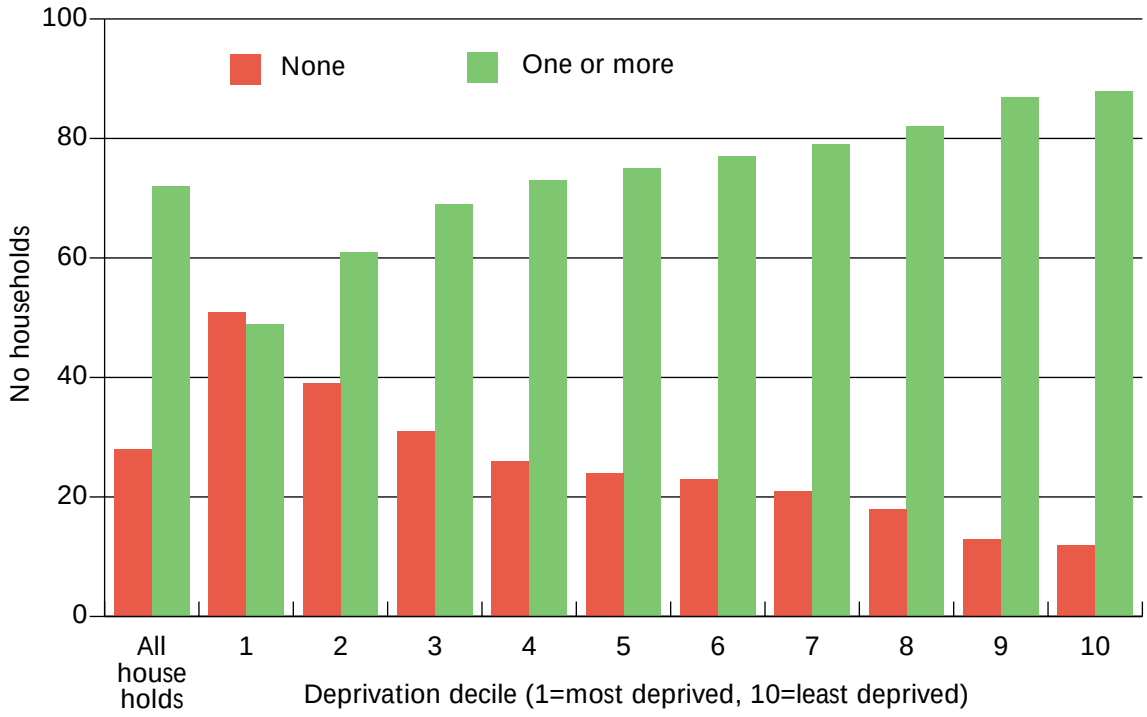
2.36 As the previous sections suggest, different transport and accessibility problems are likely to have more relevance for some people and places than for others.

Geographic variation

The 10 per cent most deprived wards

2.37 In the poorest 10 per cent of wards, 50 per cent of households do not have a car. In the 10 per cent *least* deprived wards this is true of only 11 per cent of households. In the most deprived ward in the country, about 75 per cent of the adult population have no car. [92]

Car ownership by deprivation decile



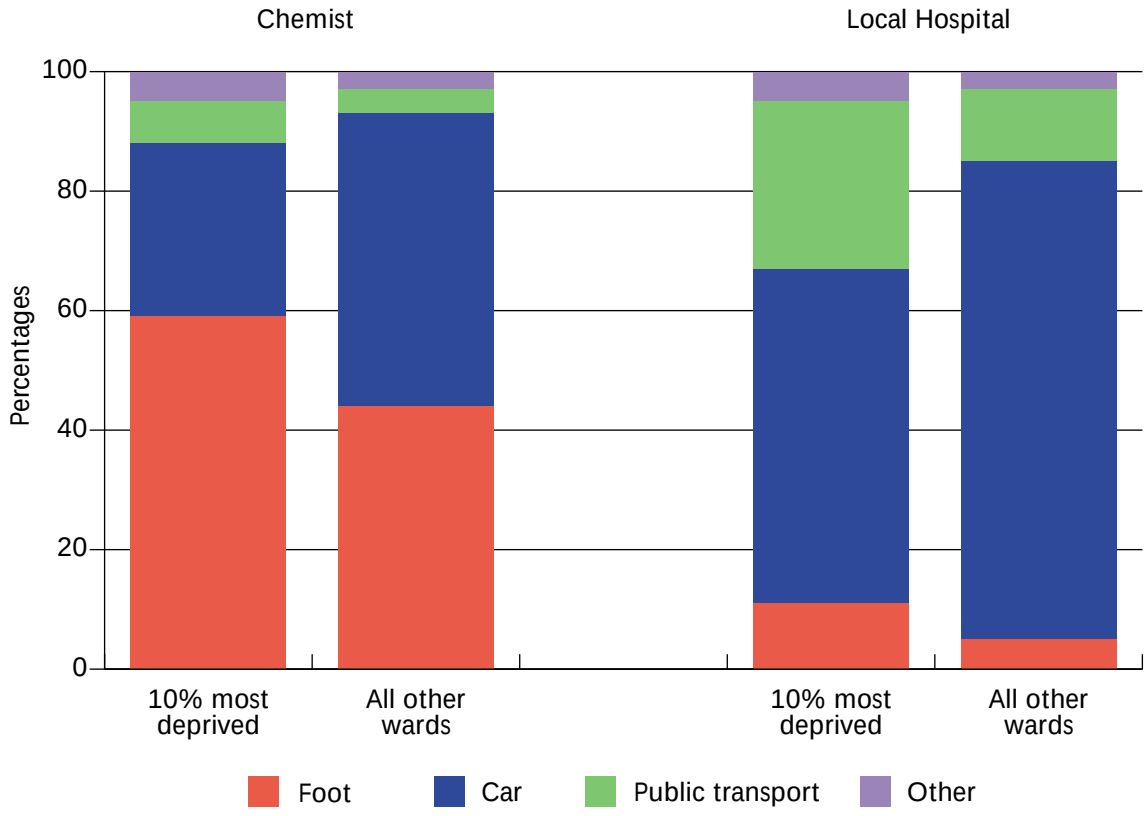
Source: Focus on Personal Travel, DTLR 2001

Fig 2.11

2.38 People in deprived areas are much less likely to use cars to get to key services. The differences are particularly marked for visits to local hospitals, 89 per cent of which are made by car in the least deprived areas, compared with just 56 per cent in the most deprived areas.[93]

2.39 Figure 2.12 illustrates the greater reliance on walking and public transport in the 10 per cent most deprived wards.

Usual mode of transport to services, by level of deprivation[1]



[1]Deprivation is measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation Source: ONS Omnibus, January and March, 2000-2001

Fig 2.12

Urban areas

2.40 People living in densely populated urban areas will tend to experience a denser public transport network. For instance, some Passenger Transport Executives believe that a reasonable service level is to ensure people live within 400 metres of a bus service every 15 minutes. However, urban areas may experience more problems in terms of crime and fear of crime; services may focus on radial journeys going into rather than across town centres; and cost may be a problem because users may have to pay twice when journeys require an interchange.

2.41 People experiencing social exclusion but living in relatively affluent areas, particularly in rural locations, can also suffer acutely from the effects of poor transport provision. This is because public transport services have usually declined in these areas as a direct result of high car use.[94]

Rural areas

2.42 Although households in rural areas are more likely to own a car than in urban areas, this is often a necessity for those on a low-income. Table 2.1 illustrates the greater reliance on cars in rural areas.

Usual mode of transport to services, by rural vs urban (per cent)

		Foot	Car	Public transport
Rural	GP	17	77	4
	Post Office	43	53	1
	Food Shop	4	91	4
	Hospital	1	91	6
	Chemist	21	72	4
Urban	GP	38	51	9
	Post Office	62	33	3
	Food Shop	15	74	9
	Hospital	7	72	17
	Chemist	52	40	4

Source: ONS Omnibus, January and March, 2000-01

2.43 The cost of running a car is usually higher in rural than in urban areas because of the distances people have to travel to access services and the higher cost of many non-urban petrol stations. Low-income households in the least densely populated non-metropolitan areas spend, on average, over 30 per cent more on motoring per week than those in more densely populated areas.[95]

2.44 A substantial proportion of rural settlements do not have either a general food store (78 per cent) or a small village shop (72 per cent). Twenty-one per cent of people live more than 2.5 miles from a supermarket; a distance which would pose particular problems for people without access to a car.[96]

Case study 7: Alison, a single parent aged about 35, who lives with her daughter aged 4, and elderly parents in the village of Yarcombe (Honiton, Devon)

Being unable to drive, she feels very isolated and worries about future prospects of getting around especially since she has to rely on her elderly father for a lift.

" I worry that without my dad's help to give me a lift in his car I couldn't get to a doctor or hospital if my daughter had an accident. Also my mum can't drive and if anything happened to dad, who is elderly, we just couldn't get out."

Her little girl attends a pre-school group in the village of Stockland, but again she is totally reliant on other people for a lift.

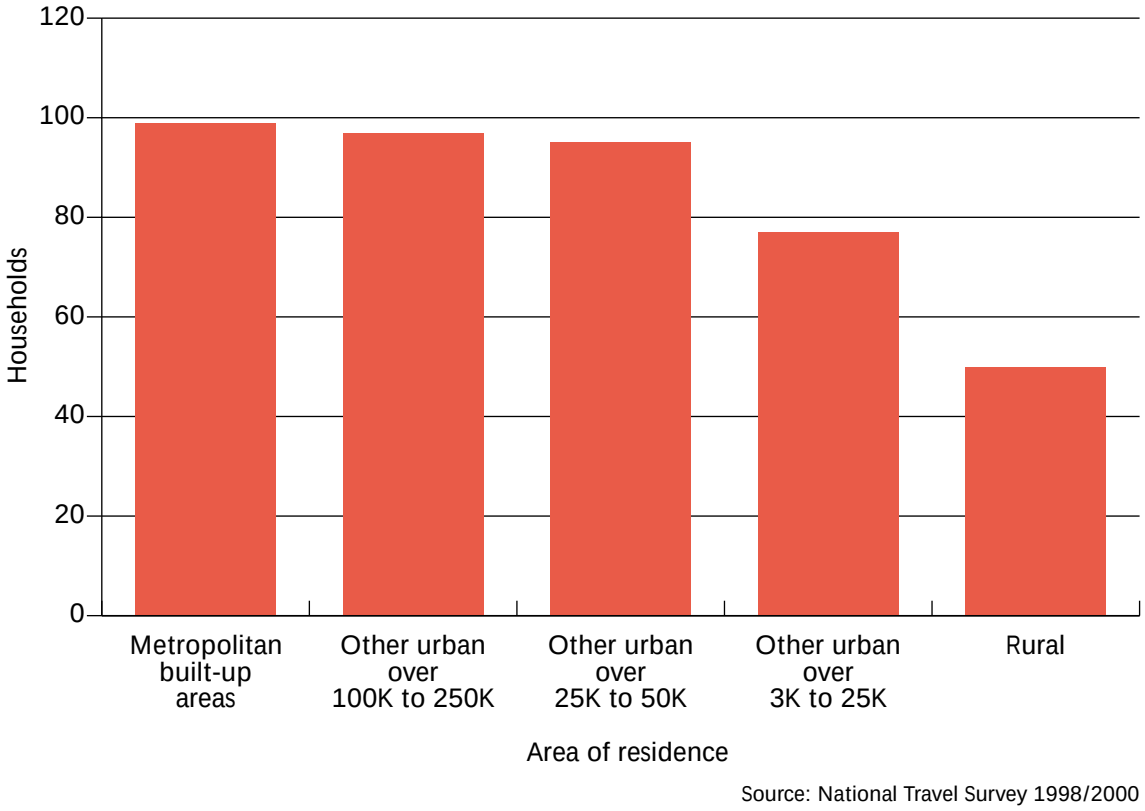
"My dad has to open his garage business first thing in the morning so sometimes he is back late to take me and Stella to pre-school. That means he misses an hour at the pre-school group. Otherwise a friend normally takes us to the pre-school group."

Eventually, she would like to get back into work. She has the offer of a job in Chard, where she used to work but she would not be able to get there – or if she did it would take most of her salary.

"If we had proper transport this would help with finding work. There's a job in Chard I can go to, otherwise there are not too many vacancies."

2.45 As highlighted earlier, many rural areas do not have an hourly daytime bus service within 13 minutes walk. For the 16 per cent of households in rural areas without access to a car, this can leave people literally unable to get to key places because of the absence of buses and the cost and limited availability of taxis.

Percentage of households within 13 minutes walk of a bus stop with a service of at least one an hour



Source: National Travel Survey 1998/2000

Fig 2.13

"I don't go out any more, even if I'm ill I won't bother to see the doctor as there is no transport available out there."

Cornwall Health Action Zone – consultation response

2.46 A survey by the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance showed that 83 per cent of all the accessible taxis in Scotland operate within Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, the remaining 17 per cent being distributed across the remainder of Scotland.

Barriers to travel – how does it feel?

2.47 Previous sections have discussed a number of specific problems faced by women, people with disabilities, young people and older people. The following quotes from the SEU's consultation responses and project visits give a flavour of how people experiencing such barriers feel.

Older people

“We’re alright while we’ve got the car and my husband can still drive, otherwise I think we would have to move because we live over a mile from the nearest village and we would be absolutely stuck”.

“If there was a Dial-A-Ride service I could get myself to the bus station and get on one of those double-decker buses and go anywhere. I could be independent again, rather than having to ask my husband to take me everywhere”.

Young people

“Most bus drivers have an attitude towards young people… I know that some kids really push their luck when they get on the bus but that doesn’t excuse those drivers who always have a poor view of young people”.

“Taxis charge you more if you’re a young person, just because they can get away with it”.

“I feel unsafe when I’m in a taxi and the driver goes down little alleyways”.

Black and minority ethnic groups

“Members of the Asian community in Newcastle are unwilling to use public transport, partly due to fears of harassment, but also because their religious beliefs make it difficult for women to travel on buses and trains with men”.

“There is something that happens a lot. The bus driver sees me at the stop and drives past, I can see there’s room on the bus”.

“This driver took the bus ticket off my son, he’s ten years old and the driver said it was fraudulent. It wasn’t, I’d only just bought it for him. He was the only black child on the bus”.

Experience of a lone mother living on income support

“We’ve got no shopping facilities, so you’ve either got to have your own transport or use public transport. It’s easy going with empty bags – it’s coming back that’s the problem never mind if you’ve got kids with you”

People with disabilities

“I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve been left stranded at the bus stop because the ‘accessible bus’ doesn’t have a ramp or its broken. You’re just stuck there for half an hour waiting for the next one and you are so vulnerable sitting at a bus stop in a wheelchair”.

“I use my mobility allowance to pay for taxis…two taxis per week usually costs me about £50, just to go shopping or to the cinema. Recently, my taxi-man could not fulfill my Tuesday outing to a therapy group.”

“My sighted partner has to drive me to the nearest bus stop four miles away to enable me to get to work and when she is ill…I have to take a day off as well. In addition to this the latest half-fare bus passes, wonderful as they are, do not operate before 9.00am which means that an assumption is being made that people with sight problems or disabilities do not work”.

“I have learning difficulties. I am afraid to use the buses to go to places that I do not know because the bus drivers treat me as though I am stupid and don’t listen to what I am trying to ask them”.

How things have changed over time

2.48 Over the past 50 years, the need to travel has grown considerably as society has become increasingly organised around the car.

- Average distances to work, learning, hospitals and shops have increased sharply. People travel 42 per cent further than in 1975.[97]
- Work and shopping are less focused around a nine-to-five schedule. Early morning, evening and weekend journeys are more important than ever before.
- Female participation in work has created more time pressures and more complex journeys, involving childcare, school, work and shopping.

2.49 While the majority of people have successfully adapted to the rising need to travel through greater car use, for those without a car, the ability to travel has failed to keep pace in a number of respects:

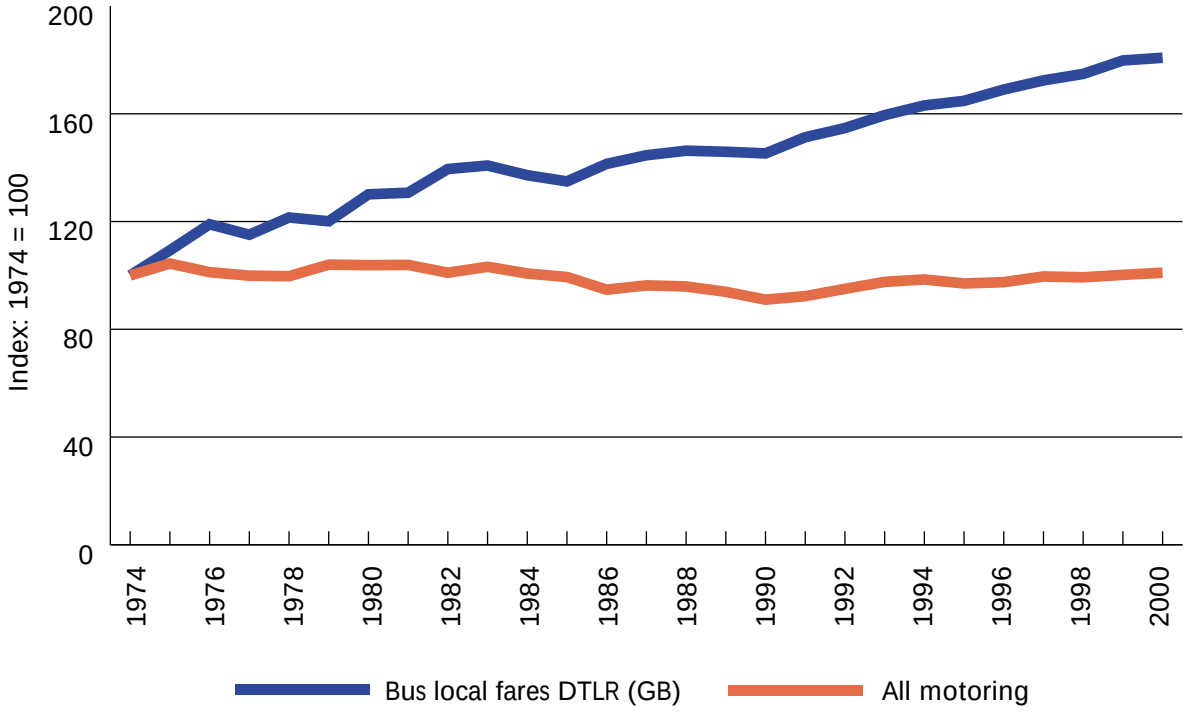
- **Access and Availability:** Although there has been a sharp rise in the proportion of buses that are physically accessible to wheelchair users or parents with buggies, bus routes have not always kept pace with new land and time use patterns.
- **Cost:** Bus fares have risen faster than the cost of motoring over the past 15 years. Lack of integrated ticketing may also have restricted people from undertaking journeys involving interchange.
- **Travel Horizons:** There is little evidence on whether travel horizons have changed over time. However, the number of changes to bus networks in recent years have reduced people's trust and familiarity with bus services. It is also possible that people have not adjusted to changes in the location of employment as many town centres have seen declining employment levels as work has been created in out-of-town areas.

How policies have contributed to the problem

2.50 A range of policies contributed to rising car use and changing land use patterns:

- Road building: During the 1980s and early 1990s, transport policies attempted to predict traffic growth and provide for it through road building, rather than manage demand. Increasing the supply of roads encouraged greater car use.
- Public transport fares: Bus fares rose 30 per cent between 1985 and 2000 while motoring costs remained static. This encouraged people to switch to cars as they were more competitive in terms of service quality and cost.

Bus fares and motoring costs



Source: Any More Fares? Delivering better bus services, ed T Grayling. IPPR 2001

Fig 2.14

- Housing and land use planning: low-density housing, out-of-town shopping sites and business parks produced more fragmented journey patterns, better suited to cars than public transport. This was facilitated by the relaxation of planning controls on out-of-town developments from the mid-1980s to early 1990s.

2.51 Certain policies also led to a situation where those reliant on buses and walking were unable to adapt to the growing need to travel:

- **Walking:** Land-use changes meant that services were increasingly beyond walking distance. Fear of crime, particularly outside daytime hours, also reduced people's willingness to walk as well as increased traffic.
- **Buses**: More fragmented journey patterns due to changing land and time use undermined the competitive advantage of buses which was based on taking large numbers of people from and to the same place at similar times.

Bus policy

2.52 Bus privatisation and deregulation impacted upon the effectiveness of bus services. This had some positive effects including a sharp reduction in operating costs due to falling labour costs, and some innovation through the use of minibuses and route changes. However, deregulation undermined the competitiveness of bus services in terms of cost and service quality.

What is bus deregulation?

Before 1985, local authorities planned, owned and operated the bus network. They controlled routes, service frequency and fares.

The 1985 act privatised and deregulated buses. Buses are now operated by private companies rather than local authorities. Private bus operators are allowed to register routes and decide on service frequency and fare levels.

The role of local authorities is restricted to plugging gaps in the commercial network by tendering for companies to operate services that were not commercially viable. They are restricted from subsidising commercial routes and therefore cannot lower fares or increase frequency.

Local authorities continue to have a range of other roles including: funding bus companies to operate concessionary fares schemes to children, pensioners and disabled people; providing information on timetables; and infrastructure improvements such as installing bus shelters and bus lanes.

At present approximately 85 per cent of the bus network is provided on a profitable basis by private operators, whilst the remaining 15 per cent is subsidised by local authorities.

Within London, bus services were privatised but were not deregulated. Local authorities continue to specify the fares, frequency and network coverage. They then tender the service to the lowest bidder.

Cost

2.53 As the long term trend towards fewer people using bus services continued, fares rose sharply, and some services were withdrawn. This created a vicious cycle: falling bus use led to fare increases which in turn stimulated a further decline in bus use, and ultimately the contraction of commercial services onto the busiest routes. As the graph below shows, the long term effect of rising bus fares is much greater than the short term effect as people take time to respond to rising fares by switching to cars.

Bus patronage over time resulting from a 20 per cent increase in bus fares

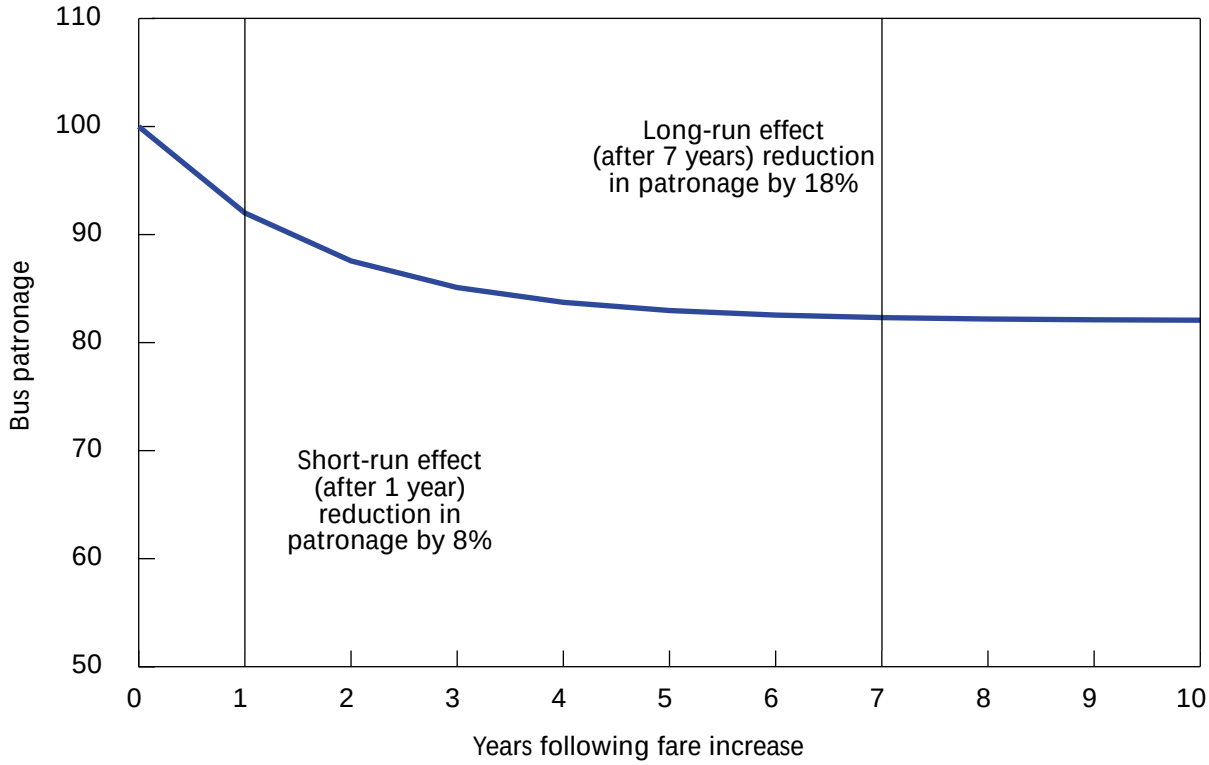


Fig 2.15 Source: Any More Fares? Delivering better bus services, ed T Grayling. IPPR 2001

2.54 Bus deregulation removed local authorities' capacity to break this cycle. It prevented them from subsidising commercial services in order to stabilise fares. Local authorities could only subsidise services after they had stopped being commercially viable and therefore could not assist in preventing this. Local authority spending on bus services fell by nearly a third from 1985/86 and 2000/01 due in part to falling operating costs. But these savings could not be reinvested in preventing fare increases.

Service Quality

2.55 Deregulation, combined with competition laws, also prevented integrated ticketing arrangements. This inhibited the development of daily or weekly travel passes outside London or the use of a single ticket across different operators. The integration of services has also been hindered, as operators feel unable to coordinate services for fear of breaking competition rules.

2.56 Deregulation enabled operators to change routes or simply withdraw them with only limited notice. The overall effect was that the bus network was subject to many small changes or interruptions. For instance, in Merseyside during 2001, 396 changes were made to bus routes. Network instability has helped undermine people's confidence in the bus as a reliable means of transport and their 'mental map' of when and where bus services operate.

2.57 In Tyne and Wear, network changes can result in the need for NEXUS (the Passenger Transport Executive) to update information at as many as 850 bus stops in a single week. At any one time, a third of timetable information at bus stops is out of date. However, it is estimated that in many parts of the country, that proportion is much higher.

2.58 Overall, policies focused on introducing competition within the bus industry rather than between the bus and the car. Outside London and other major cities and towns, the bus was never likely to compete with the car in terms of speed, comfort or flexibility. By contributing to greater network instability, lack of integrated ticketing and services and fare increases, deregulation exacerbated rising car use. In turn this led to congestion, pollution and poor access to work, learning and health care for those without cars.

2.59 The next chapter looks at promising examples where the above problems have been addressed.

[66] NTS 1998/2000

[67] ibid

[68] NTS 1998/2000

[69] ibid

[70] *Young People's Experience of crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport,* Report by Crime Concern for DETR, (1999)

[71] NTS 1998/2000

[72] Ruston, D (2002) ibid

[73] ibid

[74] NTS 1998/2000 ibid

[75] DTLR estimate

[76] Disability Rights Commission consultation response

[77] MORI (2000) *State of London 2000* Greater London Authority; and ONS (2001)

[78] Home Office (2000) *The 2000 British Crime Survey England and Wales*

[79] Crime Concern/Transport and Travel research (1997) *Perceptions of Safety from Crime on Public Transport*

[80] ibid

[81] CfIT (2001)

[82] DTLR (2000) *Focus on Personal Travel*

[83] Countryside Agency (2000) *Rural Services Survey*

[84] Lucas, K (2001) ibid

[85] DTLR (2000) *Focus on Personal Travel*

[86] DTLR estimate

[87] Although asylum seekers supported by the National Asylum Support Service are entitled to travel warrants for such journeys, administrative problems mean that these are not always available when needed – from *Process Error* Citizens Advice Bureau (2002)

[88] The quote originally appears in Countryside Agency and NCH (2000) *Challenging the Rural Idyll*

[89] Grayling, T et al (2001) *Any More Fares?* IPPR

[90] The SEU research is being carried out by Halcrow in five areas of the country. Early findings from North Huyton (Liverpool), Bulwell (Nottingham), Honiton (Devon) and Lemington (North Tyneside) are used in this report. North Huyton has a relatively good level of bus coverage yet participants in the research claimed that there was no service or that many bus changes were required.

[91] ONS (2001) *Omnibus Survey*

[92] NTS 1998/2000

[93] Ruston, D (2002) ibid

[94] As chapter 2 discusses, they also suffer disproportionately from negative effects of road traffic such as pedestrian accidents and pollution.

[95] CfIT webpage

[96] Countryside Agency (2000) ibid

[97] DTLR (2001) *Focus on Personal Travel*

3.1 Drawing on experience from both here and abroad, this chapter demonstrates that improvements can be made, and points to the lessons for improving policy in this country.

3.2 This chapter begins with overall *lessons from policy* outside the UK relating to:

- Objectives and targets
- Integrated planning
- Funding and performance management

3.3 It then moves on to *practical examples* of what can be done including:

- Improving access and availability
- Tackling the cost barriers
- Widening travel horizons
- Reducing the need to travel
- Reducing the disproportionate impact on deprived areas

Lessons from policy

3.4 Research does not exist on whether countries approach transport-related social exclusion more or less effectively than the UK. However, compared to most other EU countries, the UK has:

- **More expensive public transport fares**: A typical public transport trip by any mode in Britain costs 15 per cent more than in Germany, 60 per cent more than in France and nearly three times as much in the Netherlands; [98]
- **Declining bus usage**: As between 1980 and 1998, the average distance travelled by bus per person in the UK declined by more than a fifth.[99] During the same period, most EU countries experienced growth in demand for bus travel. Distance travelled by bus per person in Austria and Sweden increased by more than 20 per cent, in Denmark by more than 40 per cent, and in Italy by more than half. [100]
- **Higher levels of car use, despite lower car ownership:** Almost nine out of ten motorised journeys (car, bus, motorbike) in the UK are by car, compared with an EU average of just over eight out of ten. [101]

a) Objectives and targets

3.5 Some regional transport bodies have explicit accessibility objectives and targets, linked to land use planning. Copenhagen has a target to reduce public transport travelling time by between 10 and 15 per cent, and to ensure that journeys outside the city made by public transport are no more than 15 minutes longer than by car; walking distances to a bus or train stop must not exceed 400 metres.[102]

3.6 These objectives are typically linked to long-standing concerns over environmental sustainability and the need to reduce the negative impacts of traffic in cities. In Vienna, no more than 25 per cent of employees' journeys to new offices may be made by car, and there is a public transport corridor plan to concentrate new developments in locations that are convenient for access by public transport. [103]

b) Integrated planning

3.7 Genuine access depends on walking and waiting environments, information and marketing, personal security and the location and scheduling of public services as much as it does on bus and train services.

3.8 This 'whole journey approach' is easier when overall transport planning is in the hands of one organisation. This makes it possible to run a seamless network of transport services, with efficient interchanges between modes.

3.9 In Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark, the standard model of public transport organisation is a regional public transport company. They have substantial state funding and involvement, and clear responsibilities for delivering accessibility, integration, environmental and social standards.

3.10 In Munich and the surrounding areas, a co-ordinating body controls service planning, setting fares, revenue allocation, and the marketing and promotion of public transport across regional rail, underground, trams, regional buses and city buses. It is also responsible for car sharing. As a result, public transport is now being used for 25 per cent of all trips across the whole metropolitan area (this compares with 12 per cent in Glasgow and 14 per cent in the city centre).[104]

Regional transport planning: RMV Frankfurt

RMV is a public limited company, owned by the local authorities. It is responsible for 15 cities and districts with a combined population of 5 million, 407 rail stations, and over 10,000 bus stops. RMV has a budget of 1.1 billion Euros, roughly £650 million.

Passenger satisfaction and service quality is formally monitored and there is a plan to improve access by reducing distances to key facilities and new developments.

c) Funding and performance management

3.11 Although UK bus operators achieve the lowest operating costs per vehicle kilometre, they charge the highest fares in Europe [105]. This is because other Governments spend far more money on public transport subsidies. Bus services in other European countries receive up to 70 per cent of their running costs in Government subsidy, whilst the UK stands at 32 per cent – the lowest in the EU. Although the 10-Year Transport Plan will rectify the national long-term shortfall in capital investment on transport, revenue spending is still much lower than in the rest of the EU.

3.12 High levels of public funding and planning of transport services can be accompanied by tight monitoring and control of the quality of services provided by public and private bus and train operators. In Frankfurt, there is a formal external system of quality assessment and evaluation, and 95 per cent of all services must run on time. [106] In Copenhagen, the bus tendering system is weighted 50 per cent on price, 35 per cent on quality of operation, and 15 per cent on the quality of vehicles. Operators can be fined or earn up to 5 per cent above the contract price for below or above standard performance. [107]

3.13 Even without significant institutional change, there are a number of initiatives that could be applied (or used more widely) in England.

Practical lessons

a) Improving access and availability

3.14 Key approaches include: establishing a frequent network of routes into and across towns, supported by bus priority measures and demand responsive feeder routes into main bus corridors and interchanges. Demand responsive services that bridge the gap between taxis and buses are particularly suitable for journeys where demand is weaker and more volatile, such as in rural areas, or during early mornings and late evening.

Improving access to out-of-town work locations – US Job Access Grants

The US Transportation Equity Act created a programme for Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants, worth $400 million over 1999-2003. This aims to:

- Develop services to transport welfare recipients and low-income individuals to and from jobs; and
- Develop transport services to suburban employment opportunities for residents of urban, rural and suburban areas.

An integrated and demand responsive rural bus network: InterConnect, Lincolnshire

InterConnect is a rural bus system that consists of bus 'corridors' running between large towns with a large number of rural feeder routes into the high demand corridors. The system incorporates two models of demand responsive transport: a telephone booking service for buses operating on semi-fixed routes, and a completely zonal service which has no fixed routes.

The network of feeder services guarantee connection to the main routes. This is achieved via a Connections Management System, which oversees all the connections – if there are problems reported by the bus drivers, services can be diverted from other areas or replacement taxis. A system of through-ticketing is offered – across the network, the four bus operators introduced a 20 per cent discount on the sum of individual fares across an entire journey, door-to-door delivery of timetables and low-floor buses (with ramps or tail lifts on the smaller buses).

3.15 There are already a small number of demand responsive services in England. New examples include scheduling software and automated booking systems, such as the one used by Flexline in Gothenburg. This allows vehicles and routes to be closely matched to demand, thereby reducing operating cost and improving service quality. Automated booking reduces the need to staff call centres, and provides high levels of customer service, including receiving an automated message to inform users whether the service is late or on time.

Demand responsive buses: Flexline – Gothenburg, Sweden

Flexline is a flexible, demand-responsive bus service with termination points at shopping malls, hospitals and other important destinations for elderly and disabled people. It operates using small, fully accessible buses, which depart at half hourly intervals from the end stops and collect passengers from set meeting points within the service area. Journeys must be booked at least 15 minutes before the bus is scheduled to leave the end point using a free phone number. Booking can be by touch telephone. Times are confirmed 15 minutes prior to arrival at the meeting point through an automated call back function once a computer has determined the best route and appropriate pick up times. As the bus only goes to booked meeting points the route and running time may vary but it is never in excess of 55 minutes.

Return journeys can be booked at major destinations using direct connection telephones or card readers. Older people do not appear to have encountered many problems in using such cost-saving technology.

Users perceive an improvement in their mobility and activity as a result of the service and this perception has contributed to its success and ongoing expansion. As of June 2002 there will be 14 minibuses in six service areas covering approximately half of the total needs in Gothenburg.

Research also suggests potential benefits for the public purse: mental health may improve through decreased isolation; the need for home and institutional care may be reduced through greater independence; and there may be fewer costly home visits by health professionals.

3.16 Car clubs, which are widespread in continental Europe, and community car schemes offer the possibility of more cost-effective alternatives to car ownership.

More efficient car use: Car sharing – Mobility, Switzerland

Mobility is a car scheme which operates nationally in Switzerland. It is a co-operative car rental scheme with members paying an annual fee in return for access to a fleet of co-operatively owned cars. It now has 43,000 members and 1,700 cars. One of the key factors in the recent increased popularity of the scheme has been a partnership with Swiss Railways through which combined rail passes are offered to Mobility members. These links with public transport are vital in persuading people that ownership of a private car is not necessary in order to access services.

b) Making travel more affordable

3.17 There are a great variety of ways in which public and private transport can be made more affordable for vulnerable groups, in addition to traditional concessionary bus and train fares. Funds can be targeted on activities (e.g. travel to job interviews or hospital appointments) or groups of people (e.g. jobseekers).

3.18 Examples include:

- Travel vouchers, which allow flexibility between different forms of travel, including taxi, and encourage responsiveness to passengers by operators.
- Smart cards, which can be charged with credits for a particular number or type of journey.
- Subsidised vehicle loans or hire, and payment for driving lessons conditional on participation in education or employment programmes, for example in ‘wheels to work’ schemes and Employment Zones.
- Subsidised bus routes offered by employers and voluntary organisations.
- Pay as you drive vehicle insurance to lower costs for low-mileage drivers. Norwich Union will be piloting such a scheme later in 2002 with 5,000 of their customers.

Taxi vouchers – Tandridge

The Tandridge Taxi Voucher scheme provides people who are unable to use existing public transport with seventy vouchers per year, each worth £2. These are used to pay for taxi journeys, with drivers able to exchange them for cash at local outlets. The scheme is very flexible as vouchers can be used for any type of journey and at any time of day giving users a sense of choice and independence. It also encourages good service from providers, who lose income if users take their business elsewhere.

Improving access to jobs in a rural area: Wheels 2 Work – Shropshire

Wheels 2 Work was established in 1995 to assist people into work through the provision of transport. The scheme includes:

- Moped lease, where users pay £1 per week to cover tyre wear, on top of which they pay for their own petrol. Helmets and a training course are provided free of charge. Loans cease when the user is financially stable.
- 80 per cent subsidy for a course of driving lessons, and payment for a theory and practical test.
- A minor repair and maintenance grant to help with minor repairs/tyres/insurance in order to put an otherwise redundant vehicle into use.
- Push bikes can be hired for free
- Between 1 April and 30 September 2001, 44 users of the scheme accepted full-time employment, 36 accepted a work placement and three accepted training.

Working links – South Wales

Working Links operates an Employment Zone in South Wales. Having recognised that up to 80 per cent of households in some local deprived areas have no access to a private car and are unable to access services, work and training, funding has been directed towards car subsidy to contribute to sustainable employment.

- Provisional driving licences for jobless people have been purchased. This not only enables access to jobs but helps individuals to feel part of mainstream society.
- Driving Theory Test Training events have been developed and funded
- Driving lessons have been funded where this will remove the barrier to people commencing and retaining employment. Blocks of up to 10 lessons are funded, allowing ‘Working Links’ to chart progress towards passing the test.

This is provided in conjunction with car leasing, free scooter use, provision of free travel passes for the first month of work, and laying on minibuses to employers.

The Manvers Shuttle – South Yorkshire

This is a public transport bus service provided by a partnership of organisations and businesses in the Dearne Valley area. It is a pioneering initiative launched in September 2000, to give a jobs and education boost to people in South Yorkshire. In its first year it attracted more than 170,000 users. The service operates every 20 minutes, 16 hours a day, Monday to Saturday and half hourly on Sunday. It links Wath to Mexborough, serving colleges and call centres in the Dearne Coalfield regeneration area.

While members of the public pay the full fare, extensive discounts – 20p for a single fare – are offered to staff and students from the organisations to encourage them to use public transport as an affordable means of travelling to work, college and leisure.

Pay-as-you-drive vehicle insurance – Texas and Oregon

Insurance is the largest vehicle cost for many lower-income motorists. Current vehicle insurance significantly overcharges motorists who drive their vehicle less than the average. Since lower-income motorists drive their vehicles less this system is regressive. Under this new model a vehicle's insurance premiums are based directly on how much it is driven; replacing a high fixed cost with an opportunity for people to save money.

Individual insurers are beginning to offer this model. For example the Progressive Insurance Company introduced distance-based insurance in Texas in 1999. This programme has been successful and Progressive is planning to expand the scheme to other areas.

Governments can also encourage insurers to offer Pay-As-You-Drive pricing. An example of this intervention is the state of Oregon which from this year has provided tax credits to firms offering this form of cover.

c) Widening travel horizons

3.19 Psychological barriers to travel can sometimes be overcome simply by providing better information about travel options and disseminating it more widely, but there are a range of more sophisticated techniques for changing travel behaviour that could be used more. These work best when there us a real 'perception gap' – for example where available transport options are better or more extensive than potential passengers realise. Options include:

- Travel information and promotion of public transport and cycling, from call centres or one-stop shops.
- Travel advice and instruction for particular groups or activities, for example, mobility centres for disabled people.
- Personalised journey-planning techniques, which can be aimed at changing specific journeys, or overall travel behaviour.

Workplace travel plans – Bluewater

Many employers are now preparing and implementing travel plans to reduce the number of people travelling to work by car. Some organisations are doing so voluntarily and some because it has been a requirement of planning permission for new development.

Plans can include restricting the amount and imposing charges for workplace parking, providing information to employees on car sharing schemes and local public transport, and even negotiating with the local authority and operators for new routes to be introduced and discounts on season tickets to be given to staff. Empirical studies [108] have shown that when all the measures are employed a 15-30 per cent reduction in single-occupant car use can be achieved, generally over a two to four year period. In addition to these environmental benefits they can also have the effect of enabling people in nearby areas to access jobs at major employment sites.

At Bluewater shopping centre in Kent, 42 per cent of employees now use public transport to travel to work, as a result of Bluewater's support for new bus services and their policy of recruiting from areas served by these services.

Workwise, Nottingham

This initiative provides a one-stop shop for those seeking transport solutions to access employment or education opportunities, with advice on bus services and other transport modes. Begun in August 2000, efforts have focused primarily on access to work issues, but it is extending to cover access to college and other education facilities. The project includes:

- Providing information on how to get to interviews or jobs. Many people have difficulties reading timetables or just do not know where to start looking.

- Promoting public transport, walking and cycling – there remains a stigma about using public transport. This project presents information in a positive way, as well as promoting the health benefits of cycling and walking. It also identifies safe routes to work and childcare facilities.

- Tailored door-to-door travel packages for clients, showing which services are available to get to and from work, including maps, timetables and fares. It also provides assistance such as free tickets and a monthly travel pass for the first month of starting a job. It organises cycle pools and is developing a community car scheme.

Individualised Marketing –Travelsmart, Western Australia

'Individualised marketing' is a technique that facilitates changes in travel behaviour by informing people of their travel options. It identifies people who are interested in using alternatives to the car (using a phone or household survey) and provides information about public transport and other travel options, tailored to individual or household circumstances. It also provides them with incentives to use public transport such as discounts or 'test tickets'. Existing regular users of public transport, cyclists and walkers are also given incentives to use them more, but resources are not used on those who express no interest in the scheme.

The result has been that car-as-driver trips decreased by 10 per cent between 1997 and 1999 cutting the number of vehicle miles by 14 per cent. This was achieved by people changing to an alternative for just two trips a week. Overall people did not reduce their travel; they still averaged 3.4 trips per person per day.

d) Reducing the negative impacts of travel

3.20 There are a number of measures which can be used to tackle negative impacts of transport like pollution and pedestrian accidents. These include 20-mph zones, 'Home Zones' and air quality targets. Some of these, such as Home Zones, which aim to make residential areas more 'liveable', are a relatively new concept in the UK, but are widespread in other European countries. Traffic calming and other schemes of this kind could be targeted more explicitly on deprived communities and the average.

3.21 The Gloucester Safer City project, which ran from 1996-2001, demonstrated how an integrated and strategic approach to road safety can be applied successfully across a whole town. It cut casualties by treating the city as a whole, rather than just tackling accident problem sites on a piecemeal basis.

Home Zone, Cavell Way, Kent

Central government has given its support to nine pilot 'Home Zones' schemes. These attempt to strike a balance between vehicular traffic and everyone else who uses the streets in an effort to encourage walking by increasing road safety.

The Cavell Way neighbourhood has 85 per cent of households in full receipt of Housing Benefit, in an otherwise affluent ward. Almost all the housing is let to families with children aged under 11. The neighbourhood contains a number of specific traffic hazards including a large central access road which encourages drivers to speed and a hump-backed bridge which previous interventions had failed to deal with. An extensive consultation was conducted to determine where the 'hot spots' were and what measures would be the most appropriate. Local architects were then commissioned to turn this series of recommendations into a coherent plan. Key components of this scheme are:

- Traffic calming principally at the entrance to the estate
- The creation of a courtyard in the middle of the block of flats to break the line of the road and link the flats
- 20mph limit

e) Reducing the need to travel

3.22 In many cases, the most cost-effective solution to enabling people experiencing or at risk of social exclusion to access key activities may be to promote better services in the areas where they live, rather than make them travel more. More proactive land use planning and more rigorous implementation of existing policies can help locate travel generating developments so that they support rather than undermine public transport. This would prevent public and commercial developments being sited out of reach of non-drivers.

3.23 However, changes in land use are gradual and occur over a long period. Shorter-term solutions include:

- Outreach by public services and home delivery of goods;
- Providing information and services electronically in homes and local facilities.

Integrated land use and transport planning – Copenhagen

In Copenhagen, overall management of transport is in the hands of one regional transport body – HUR. A formal spatial plan – the 'Finger Plan' – was established in 1948 to improve access. New housing, offices and jobs must be within 1000 metres of a railway station.

[98] CfIT (2001) European Best Practice in Delivering Integrated Transport Key Findings

[99] ibid

[100] ibid

[101] ibid

[102] Consultancy work for SEU by Eco-Logica, 2002

[103] ibid

[104] CfIT (2001) ibid

[105] ibid

[106] Consultancy work for SEU by Eco-Logica, 2002

[107] ibid

[108] Guidance on the assessment of travel plan s prepared for DTLR by Napier University, transport research Institute in association with the Open University and WS Atkins

4.1 The problem of transport and social exclusion is widely recognised both within and outside Government and a number of measures have been brought in to address it. However, there are still some barriers to creating a more inclusive transport system.

4.2 This chapter will begin by looking at what has already been done to address the problems identified before turning to the barriers which continue to exist in three main areas:

- Mainstream public transport
- Specific transport: pupils, social services clients, patients and jobseekers
- Land use planning policy

What has already been done?

There have been some significant improvements in travel provision. These have benefited people most reliant on public transport. In particular, the creation of a national half-fare discount on bus and coach travel for elderly and disabled people; the introduction of rural and urban bus challenge schemes; changes to make vehicles more accessible following the Disability Discrimination Act; the introduction of new Local Transport Plans; and changes to planning guidance to reduce the need to travel.

Cheaper travel for elderly and disabled people

Since June 2001 (1 April in London) elderly and disabled people throughout England and Wales are guaranteed a free bus pass which entitles them to half fares on local bus services. In addition, an extra one million men across England and Wales aged between 60 and 65 will be able to benefit from their local authority concessionary fares schemes when age equalisation legislation comes into effect.

Targeting resources at improving transport links for the most deprived areas and people

Since 1998 over £200 million has been targeted at the areas of greatest need in rural and urban settings. Rural and Urban Bus Challenges have supported a range of schemes including dial-a-ride and demand responsive services. For rural areas in England the Government has also allocated funds to support over 1,800 new or improved routes through the Rural Bus Subsidy Grant.

Better travel information

The Government has supported the development of a national public transport information system – Transport Direct. It provides route and timetable information on bus, train, tram and ferry services through a single phone number. Additional money was made available in the 2002 budget to support this initiative.

Improving access

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, all future public transport (buses and coaches, trains and trams and taxis) will be designed to meet the needs of people with mobility problems. For example, wheelchair accessible buses, trains and taxis, better handholds and better colour contrasts. Later in 2002, DTLR intends to carry out some research into the need to provide more safe crossings near bus stops.

Extension of Fuel Duty Rebate [109]

Since May 2002 FDR has been extended to services operated under a section 19 permit. These are provided by a range of non-profit making community transport bodies whose services do not follow a fixed route or timetable. To receive the rebate the services must be used wholly or mainly by people experiencing or at risk of social exclusion such as elderly, disabled and homeless people.

Mainstream public transport

Factoring in the social costs of poor transport

4.3 An underlying problem with mainstream public transport is that the social costs of poor transport in terms of people not being able to get to work, learning, health care, food shops and other activities has not been given due weight alongside economic and environmental objectives. Furthermore, while the reduction of child pedestrian casualties and deaths has been an objective of Government policy, it has not been Government policy to reduce the inequalities between socio-economic groups.

4.4 This lack of priority for the social impacts of transport manifests itself in four specific ways:

a) No clear responsibility for tackling accessibility nationally or locally

b) Regulatory barriers that impede innovative and effective solutions

c) Fragmented and inequitable funding

d) Lack of institutional skills and capacity to deal with access issues

a) No clear responsibility for accessibility

National level

4.5 At present a number of government departments are responsible for transport services. DTLR is responsible for mainstream public transport. The Department of Health (DH) is responsible for providing transport to hospital where this has been deemed necessary by a health care professional, such as a doctor or midwife. DTLR funds social services transport with DH contributing through the provision of grants. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) organises home to school transport and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides discretionary help to get people to work and provides assistance with the cost of visiting someone in hospital. This fragmentation means that no single department is in charge of improving access to work, learning and health care.

Local level

4.6 A lack of accountability at a national level is mirrored locally. Although local authorities have to produce Local Transport Plans and Bus Strategies, they do not have to undertake a needs analysis to assess whether people can get to work, learning, health care or other activities in a reasonable time and cost. Local Transport Plans do not set out how increased funding will improve outcomes such as reduced journey times by public transport, increased service frequency, and affordability.

What is a Local Transport Plan?

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are drawn up by local authorities and set out five-year strategies, objectives and projects for transport improvements for each mode. These reflect DTLR's national objectives. Plans should be geared towards making transport more integrated, physically accessible, available and safe. All local authorities outside London have a statutory duty to submit a plan. Inside London, boroughs submit plans similar to LTPs, but which reflect the Mayor's Transport Strategy for London.

Poor co-ordination

4.7 The lack of accountability means that local agencies such as the Employment Service, the Learning and Skills Council, and NHS trusts as well as voluntary organisations, often have little input into local transport planning. Equally, transport considerations have sometimes assumed low priority when decisions were made to open or close schools, colleges, and hospitals.

4.8 Coordination problems can be a particular issue in two tier authorities despite the recommendations of DTLR Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans that district councils should be active partners in the development of LTPs. During one SEU visit, a county council stated that they would like to use taxis for some low demand routes but that the district council which is in charge of taxi-licensing is not prepared to introduce quality standards for drivers and vehicles. Secondly, parking charges can be a way of encouraging more people on to public transport and reducing subsidy costs. But control of parking charges lies at district level, while transport responsibilities lie with the county. Third, planning permission decisions relating to the siting of services and housing are made by district councils whereas the county authority is in charge of transport strategy.

What are two tier authorities?

In England, local authorities are either single tier authorities (known as Unitary, Metropolitan or London Borough) or two tier authorities (in non-metropolitan areas). Two tier authorities were introduced in the 1970s as a response to growing populations. The tiers are made up of county councils, which cover larger areas and have responsibility for more strategic decisions, and smaller district councils, which have a remit for local decision making. Amongst their other roles, district councils deal with land use planning permission, concessionary fare schemes, taxi licensing and crime and disorder issues, whilst county councils lead on highways, transport provision, social services, education and strategic land use planning.

b) Regulatory barriers that impede innovative and effective solutions

4.9 There are a range of regulatory barriers which impede the wider use of potential solutions such as flexibly routed buses, community transport, integrated ticketing, concessionary fares and Quality Contracts.

- **Flexible bus services:** Registration with the Traffic Commissioner can be difficult because of the need to specify start and finish points and a core timetabled route. Deviations from a set route also do not qualify for Fuel Duty Rebate which means that flexible bus services can prove too expensive for bus or taxi companies to run. DTLR is currently considering legislative changes to further facilitate flexible bus services.
- **Taxibuses:** Taxi licence holders are often reluctant to operate new services and surrender parts of their secure local market where they carry out exclusive services. Many taxi licence holders are owner-drivers so are not attracted to run their vehicles as a taxibus. To be viable the route would need more than one vehicle running on it. The use of quantity controls for taxis in many local authorities may mean that potential operators are prevented from obtaining licences to run taxibuses.

- **Community transport:** Community transport cannot expand to cater more generally for the public because section 22 licences do not allow drivers to be paid. If community transport organisations wanted to access full Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licences, they would need a professionally qualified transport manager, bank balance reserves and overdraft facilities, which many small, semi-voluntary groups do not have.

"There has been little growth in Section 22 numbers despite the increase in rural transport funding across the UK. This appears to reflect community reluctance to make the necessary legal commitments to running a registered route without the security of paid staff – even if the wage involved is only on a part-time basis."

Community Transport Association

- **Quality Contracts:** Under Quality Partnerships local authorities can require bus operators to use high quality, accessible vehicles in return for investment in infrastructure such as bus priority measures and bus shelters. However, they are unable to control fares or frequency. Quality Contracts would give local authorities this power but currently they can only be introduced as a last resort, if they are the only way of delivering the local authority's bus strategy. As yet, none have been introduced. A contributory factor may be the 21-month notice period required after the Secretary of State has granted permission and before a Quality Contract is introduced. This creates a very uncertain transition period in which operators may pull out of the area.

"We believe Quality Contracts do have an important role to play in ensuring that bus provision meets the needs of all areas and is not concentrated on main routes to the exclusion of more peripheral areas."

Manchester City Council – consultation response

- **Concessionary fares:** Extending concessionary fares to groups such as jobseekers, lone parents, and people on employment tax credit would enable these people to access key services. However, only operators can offer such discounts on a commercial basis. The Transport Act 2000 does enable further client groups to be introduced by order outside London. To extend concessionary fares within London, primary legislation would be necessary. Most community transport providers are not eligible to receive concessionary fare income, so their passengers sometimes have to pay, while those able to use mainstream transport travel free or half price.

- **Integrated ticketing**: This would enable people to buy travel cards which could be used on any operator's services. However, bus operators are currently unwilling to agree ticketing initiatives because they are uncertain of the implications under the Competition Act. Although the Transport Act 2000 tried to tackle these barriers, operators still feel that the wording is unclear and does not give sufficient assurances that action will not be taken.

How do licensing regulations work now?

Buses

A service can be licensed by the Traffic Commissioner as a Public Service Vehicle (PSV – bus) if it carriers fare-paying passengers. PSV vehicles with less than 9 passenger seats must charge separate fares.

To register a bus route with the Traffic Commissioner services must generally supply a start and finish point, a core route and timetable and details of stopping arrangements (which must be less than 15 miles apart). Registered local services usually qualify for Fuel Duty Rebate.

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs)

A taxi has no more than 8 passenger seats and can 'ply for hire' in the local area for which it is licensed. This means it may stand at ranks or be hailed in the street, though it can also be pre-booked. Taxi-fares are normally set by the local licensing authority and the total is shown on a taximeter.

A licensed PHV must also have no more than 9 passenger seats, but it must be booked in advance through an operator and may not ply for hire. Fares are a commercial matter between the hirer and operator.

Taxibuses

These are licensed taxis that run as buses under a 'Special Restricted' PSV licence issued by the Traffic Commissioner. Passengers pay separate fares, and the service must be registered with the Traffic Commissioner (including a start and finish point and a core, timetabled route). It must also have at least one stopping point within the taxi-licensing district. Taxibuses usually qualify for FDR.

Flexibly-routed local bus services

The requirement to supply the Traffic Commissioner with details of the route and timetable is not an absolute requirement. The Commissioner may accept a registration as valid, provided it is supported by particulars that provide a 'complete description' of the service, although rules are not applied consistently across the country.

Some operators have used this flexibility to register innovative, flexible services that can divert from the core route to pick up and drop off passengers. They **do not** under current rules qualify for FDR on the flexible parts of the route. Such services can also be registered using a community bus permit issued under section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 (see below).

Voluntary Sector Transport

Section 19 and 22 of the Transport Act 1985 allow non-profit making organisations to operate bus services carrying fare-paying passengers. Such services have a useful role in providing a bus service in circumstances where none would otherwise be provided. It is for this reason, and also taking into account their voluntary nature, that they are exempted from the normal PSV operator licensing requirements. Services are often run by groups of volunteers, sponsored by their local authority. Under regulations which came into force on 1 May 2002 a wide range of community transport services operated under a section 19 permit are now eligible for FDR.

Section 19

These are services for particular social or community groups, such as older or disabled people, but not for the general public. Buses have normally 9 to 16 passenger seats, but can be larger in certain circumstances. If they fulfil certain criteria, drivers can be paid and are exempted from the normal requirement of driver licensing. Dial-a-ride services, and many Special Educational Needs and social services transport is provided under this arrangement.

Section 22

Services with between 9 and 16 passenger seats may be run on a non-profit basis, using unpaid drivers – although reasonable expenses and loss of earnings from driving in exceptional circumstances may be paid. The service must be registered with the Traffic Commissioner as a local bus service and can carry members of the general public.

c) Funding level, equity, fragmentation and sustainability

What money is currently spent on public transport buses?

In 2000/2001 DTLR spent over £1 billion in revenue support for buses through three separate streams: concessionary fares (£470 million), subsidising commercially non-viable services (£312 million) and Fuel Duty Rebate (£362 million).

Concessionary fares

The Transport Act 2000 obliged local authorities to offer half fare passes for elderly and disabled people to travel on buses. Authorities reimburse operators the difference between the concessionary and standard fare so that they are 'no better, no worse' off. This reimbursement calculation takes into account trips generated by the discounts.

Subsidising commercially unviable services

Where private operators do not run services because they will not make a profit, local authorities can subsidise them to put on a route. Authorities do this where they feel that the service is necessary for social reasons, i.e. to take people from rural villages without shopping facilities to market towns or to provide evening services from employment areas. This is undertaken through a competitive tendering process.

Fuel Duty Rebate

Operators are reimbursed 80 per cent of the fuel duty used on bus services. This is usually paid on ultra low sulphur diesel, the fuel used predominantly by buses. Flexible bus services can qualify for FDR for the part of the route which is rigid.

Funding level

4.10 There is considerable pressure on the current £1 billion budget. Operators are increasingly focusing on core commercial routes rather than cross-subsidising routes making a lower return. They are leaving local authorities to support more services just to sustain the current network. This has been exacerbated by rising tender costs due to higher labour costs:

- The Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO) survey in October 2001 showed an average 21 per cent increase in the cost of re-tendered services. This compares with a 17 per cent increase shown by the 2000 survey.

- Greater Manchester has experienced a pattern of gradually increasing costs to secure bus services. Over the past four years the amount of money spent on securing the general network has increased by 35 per cent.

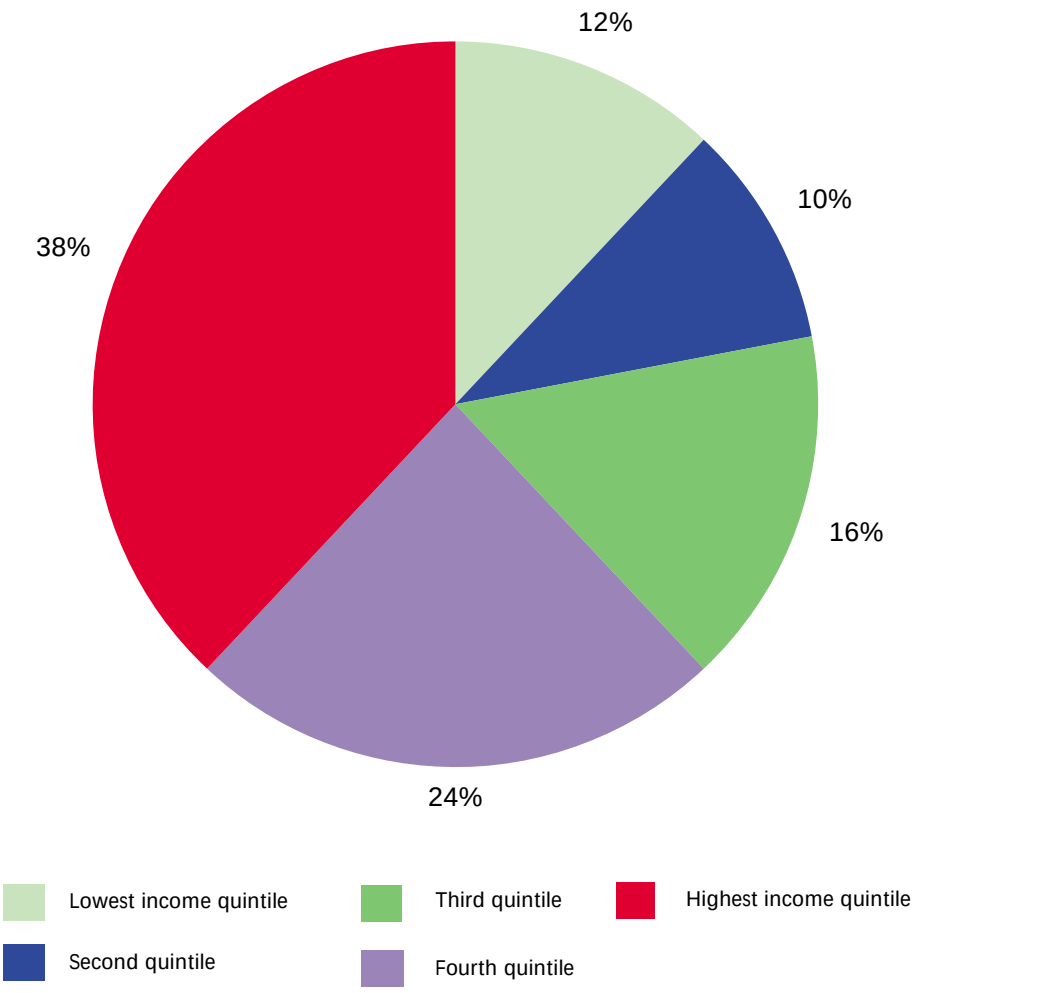
"It appears that some operators were submitting tenders at a high price for work they had no spare vehicles or drivers to cover. If they won such a contract they simply dropped their least profitable service(s) elsewhere. If this was subsidised it would in turn be re-tendered."

Wiltshire Wiggly Bus Mid-Term Review December 2000

Funding equity

4.11 Although the 10-Year Transport plan heralds a large increase in the transport budget, it is heavily skewed towards modes used by higher earners. Of the Plan's £120 billion allocation, only 11 per cent relates directly to buses, compared with 40 per cent for passenger rail. Based on assumptions about how much low income people travel, and what modes they use, DTLR calculates that the bottom income quintile will gain 12 per cent of the total spending whilst the highest quintile will gain 38 per cent. These calculations ignore the fact that some money spent on social security benefits is spent on transport and they do not take account of potential modal shift. However, they do illustrate the fact that resource allocation is regressive.

Distributional analysis of 10 Year Plan by income group



Source: DTLR estimate based on analysis of 10 Year Plan

Fig 4.1

Funding fragmentation

4.12 Transport funding goes through a number of streams. In addition to the £1 billion DTLR spends on buses, a further £900 million is spent on school, patient and social services transport. A further amount is spent through the Employment Service. This fragmentation of funding can result in less efficient services.

Funding Sustainability

4.13 Grants, including the Urban Bus Challenges and funding for community transport are often time-limited and only available for innovative new schemes. While funding for innovation is vital, local authorities and voluntary sector bodies often struggle to find funding to keep proven schemes going, and are forced to invest considerable resources in constant applications to new funding streams.

d) Lack of institutional capacity and skills

4.14 A final barrier to ensuring that mainstream public transport tackles social exclusion issues is a lack of technical capacity and staffing resources locally. Some local authorities do not have the time or expertise to map where people live, where services are and whether transport routes connect people to places. Instead, their expertise lies in addressing engineering problems such as understanding traffic flows on roads.

4.15 Many local authority areas are also weak at consulting deprived communities and assessing their needs. Although the LTP system now places much greater emphasis on local consultation, the views of people living in deprived areas are often overlooked. Similarly, contact between transport planning departments and other key government agencies, particularly non-transport agencies such as the Employment Service, can be poor or non-existent.

Specific transport for pupils, patients, social services clients and jobseekers

4.16 Over £900 million is spent on specific transport services for pupils, patients, social services clients and jobseekers. In addition to the problems of fragmentation and efficiency already highlighted, the criteria for entitlement for some specialist transport throws up certain anomalies.

a) Getting to school

What is home to school transport?

Children up to the age of 16 receive free travel to school if:

- They live over three miles from school along a safe walking route (two miles for those under eight years-old)
- They go to their nearest suitable school

Local authorities have the discretion to offer more generous entitlements but are having to cut back due to rising tender costs. Spending increased by 40 per cent from 1990 to 2000. Last year's budget for home to school transport was nearly £500 million. This policy is unchanged since the Education Act of 1944.

4.17 This entitlement raises two issues for low income families:

- Parental preference can be restricted as some parents are forced to accept the nearest suitable school if they are unable to afford the transport costs to a preferred school.
- Even if the preferred school is the nearest suitable school, parents may have to drive or pay for transport if the school is beyond walking distance but less than three miles from home.

4.18 The rules also lead to considerable deadweight costs. While the entitlement misses some children from low income families who may need help with bus fares, it provides free transport to families who *can* afford to pay for transport.

4.19 The operation of school transport can also be inefficient. Many school buses are run as designated services and seats are not sold to the public. Spare capacity is not utilised and most vehicles do not fulfil accessibility standards as they are not covered by Part 5 of the Disability and Discrimination Act. The buses therefore cannot be used for other routes at times when they are not being used for school travel. School transport bills are higher than they need be because most areas have been unable to overcome the problems associated with staggered school start times which would allow the same driver and vehicle to serve two or more schools.

b) Getting to healthcare

What help exists for getting to healthcare?

Three different programmes spanning two Government departments help get patients and visitors to hospital:

Patient Transport Services (PTS): operated by DH, transports people with a 'medical need' to hospital. Delivery by the Ambulance Service Trusts is at an annual cost of approximately £150 million.

Hospital Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS): operated by DH. Anyone on a low income, who needs to go to hospital for NHS treatment, may claim full or partial reimbursement of reasonable expenses for travel to hospital. Information on costs is not held centrally but is estimated to be approximately £25 million per year.

Help with visitors' costs: DWP awards Social Fund grants to help visitors with the cost of getting to hospital. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are only a few applications per month in each local benefits office.

In addition, the NHS plan promises that, by 2005, every patient will be able to book every hospital appointment to give them a choice of dates and times. This will enable patients to book appointments to fit in with public transport provision.

4.20 These programmes are out-dated and confusing and are not organised around the needs of patients. Key problems include:

- **Patient Transport:** The imprecise definition of 'medical need' can lead to free patient transport being provided for people who could get to hospital by public transport, whilst others who require extra assistance are slipping through the net. [110] Help is not available to people who are accessing primary care services such as GPs and walk-in centres.
- **Hospital Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS):** Poor publicity means that many practitioners, patients and even Patient Transport Services' operators are unaware of the scheme's existence: on a recent SEU visit to a London hospital, people operating PTS had not heard of the scheme. Claims procedures are also difficult because claims offices are often located away from the main treatment sites. As with Patient Transport, help does not extend to those who are accessing primary care services.
- **Help with visitors' costs:** Low application levels may be due to two reasons. First, people may not know that help exists. Second, the need to apply by post rather than when the spending is incurred can act as a disincentive. Same-day applications in person are unlikely to be considered and, even if permitted, would require a considerable wait at a benefits office.

c) Getting to work

What help exists for getting to work?

Travel to Interview Scheme: For those on Jobseeker's Allowance the cost of journeys to interviews are paid if:

- It is for a full time job
- It is beyond daily travelling distance (usually one hour)

Adviser Discretion Fund: For those on the New Deal, their personal advisers have access to discretionary funding of up to £300 per client to increase jobsearch activity or help them overcome barriers to work. This could include transport barriers and may result in a travel pass for the first few months being paid for.

4.21 These schemes, along with Action Teams for Jobs and Employment Zones have given frontline staff greater flexibility to tackle individual transport problems. However, a number of problems exist which prevent these policies tackling the full extent of the problem:

- They do not solve more fundamental *access* and *availability* problems of particular areas not being linked to employment sites.

- Neither scheme is available for groups such as those in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or lone parents on Income Support. The Adviser Discretion Fund can only be utilised by clients on the New Deal, not the bulk of JSA recipients.

- Although the Adviser Discretion Fund limit of £300 is more than enough for most individuals (average expenditure is £67), for tough cases such as those who need driving lessons or help with getting a car on the road, this is not enough. There is already provision for spending more in exceptional cases where a business case can be demonstrated, but frontline staff may be reluctant to use this procedure.

- The Travel to Interview Scheme does not at present cover local journeys, [111] even though they can be expensive for someone living on benefits, or cover the cost of making several journeys in one week, which can add up to a significant amount.

- The schemes do not address situations where high *ongoing* transport costs mean that work does not pay, for instance where motoring costs are more expensive than wage gains.

- The Jobseeker's Agreement requires clients to be prepared to travel up to around an hour each way to work, although in the first six months they can make restrictions on the type and location of vacancies they will apply for. In practice though, it is not always easy to define or enforce reasonable travel horizons.

d) Getting to social services activities

Social Services Transport

Social services transport was introduced in the 1970s. Local social services departments have a duty to arrange services to meet the needs of individual people, such as those who are disabled or elderly. This can include assistance in travelling to services such as day centres. There is no statutory obligation to provide social services transport free of charge – departments can decide whether to subsidise the cost or charge users. Charges, if any, are usually included in the cost of the day centre.

Exact costs are not known but a recent Audit Commission report estimated that they were in the range of £150–200 million per year.

4.22 The main problem with social services transport is a lack of efficiency. In some places local authorities or day centres own their own minibuses which are used to transport clients to and from activities but have spare capacity between these times. Where external contractors are used prices can be pushed up when social services departments compete with education departments at peak times. The knock-on effect is that service quality can suffer when only old vehicles can be afforded and passenger assistants are not employed.

4.23 There is now a move towards providing social services in more dispersed care locations which is likely to result in more journeys and an increased number of smaller vehicles. This will be more expensive if coordinated use of local authority vehicles or joint purchasing is not pursued.

Land use planning

4.24 Alongside improving mainstream and specific transport services, there is a potentially important role for land use planning in reducing access problems. At present planning guidance looks to tackle both access problems and pollution, traffic accidents and community severance by encouraging:

- Key services and employment sites to be located in local centres accessible by safe walking and cycling routes or bus services.
- The improvement of noise and air pollution levels and traffic accident rates through traffic management and measures that reduce the need to travel.
- The development of new housing in urban areas rather than greenfield sites.
- Integration between land use and transport planing.
- Town centre planning which considers personal security and physical accessibility issues.

4.25 However, there are still a number of obstacles to delivering a more effective planning system.

- Policies promoting services in accessible locations are not consistently applied, often because of pressure exerted locally by retail and leisure developers who want to build in out-of-centre locations. Consistency is necessary to reverse the entrenched culture of car dependency and established land-use patterns.
- In general, local planning authorities do not actively identify and promote development sites to benefit those experiencing or at risk of social exclusion. There is a need for integrated strategies rather than independent initiatives reacting to current situations.
- There are no incentives for private developers to consider the needs of those experiencing or at risk of social exclusion.
- Proposals to relax the rules controlling whether the use of a property can be changed could allow small shops and services to close in favour of more profitable enterprises such as mobile phone and coffee shops.

4.26 The next chapter looks at what can be done to address some of the problems identified in this and earlier chapters.

[109] Fuel Duty Rebate (FDR) is now also known as Bus Service Operators' Grant, following the introduction of regulations on 1 May 2002. The term Fuel Duty Rebate is used throughout this report.

[110] Audit Commission (2001) Going Places: Taking People to and from Education, Social Services and Healthcare

[111] DWP is considering changes to the rules of the Travel to Interview Scheme, to allow reimbursement for some journeys which are not covered at present.

5.1 Chapter 3 demonstrated that the problems identified in this report can be overcome. There are many promising approaches in this country and abroad that could make a substantial impact if adopted more widely. However, as the previous chapter highlighted, there are a series of policy barriers that inhibit progress.

5.2 This chapter sets out some initial thoughts on potential improvements.

Objectives

5.3 Chapter 1 highlighted the social costs of poor transport in relation to work, learning, and healthcare. While the external costs and benefits to the economy and the environment have been recognised for some time, the social costs have not been given due weight.

5.4 Furthermore, while there has been increasing emphasis on tackling pollution, community severance and child pedestrian accidents, policy has not focused on reducing inequalities between socio-economic groups.

5.5 To ensure these social costs and inequities are addressed, it is suggested that transport policy needs to give due weight to the following objectives:

- To improve access to work, learning, healthcare, food shops and other key activities for people experiencing, or at risk of, social exclusion.
- To reduce the inequalities in pollution and child pedestrian accidents between deprived communities and the national average.

How to achieve them

5.6 Changes in three areas are required to achieve these objectives:

- Mainstream transport
- Specific transport for pupils, patients, social services clients and jobseekers
- Reducing the need to travel

<u>Mainstream Transport</u>

5.7 Ideas under consideration include:

1) **Clearer accountability for improving outcomes through accessibility and impact planning**: Local Transport Plans could include an audit of accessibility to work, learning, health care, food shops and other key locations. This would assess levels of need and whether people can get to places in a reasonable time and cost, safely and reliably. Depending on local problems, local targets for improvement could be set such as journey times to services; cost of public transport relative to motoring; service frequency and reliability; crime and fear of crime on and around public transport, and the gap between the number of trips made by the poorest socio-economic group and the average.

Local transport planning could also involve an assessment of whether some communities suffer disproportionately from the impact of traffic through pollution and child pedestrian accidents. This would ensure that increased funding is linked to improvements in outcomes. Accessibility and impact planning would need to involve Local Strategic Partnerships (where they were in place). This would ensure that transport services met the needs of local health care, learning and employment services, but also ensure that these agencies factor in transport considerations when considering the location and timing of services.

2) **Greater flexibility to achieve outcomes:** A clearer outcome focus would need to be combined with greater flexibility to achieve these objectives. This flexibility could come through reforming the regulatory barriers relating to demand responsive transport, taxibuses, community transport, integrated ticketing; the use of concessionary fares for a wider range of client groups and a reduction in the notice period for shifting to Quality Contracts.

3) **Joined up and better targeted resources:** Local authorities require sufficient resources to tackle the gaps identified through accessibility planning. Resources could be more efficiently deployed by better coordination between spending on mainstream buses and spending on home to school, social services, patient and community transport. This could be through single coordination units handling all expenditure and through single vehicle and driver pools and despatch centres. In the long term, transport spending could be more equitably distributed across socio-economic groups, and social exclusion objectives should be given due weight alongside economic and environmental objectives, including within transport appraisals.

In the 2002 Budget the Government announced that it would review the support mechanisms for buses as part of the forthcoming Spending Review and the current review of the 10 Year Transport Plan. The review will ensure that support for buses is effective in meeting the Government's environmental, economic and social objectives. In particular, the Government will review fuel duty rebate to assess whether it provides effective support for deprived areas and groups.

4) **Skills, expertise and capacity:** Accessibility and impact planning will require a stronger capacity within transport authorities to consult communities on their transport needs, and undertake needs assessment. For instance, this will include more sophisticated geographical information systems to map job vacancies, unemployment hotspots and transport routes. The ability to work in partnership, for instance with crime and disorder partnerships tackling crime and fear of crime, will also be important.

Specific Transport

5.8 Key changes could include:

- **Work**: A clearer deal between people seeking work and the state. This could include targeted measures to help the minority of people for whom transport is a significant barrier to work. This would mean helping people to get to interviews and jobs in a reasonable time and cost, in return for clearer responsibilities to travel reasonable distances to work. This could include helping jobseekers to broaden the areas in which they are seeking work, and providing transport to or from out-of-town locations or for shift work.

  The Government announced in the 2002 Budget that £5 million per annum would be made available to fund transport solutions for jobseekers in the 63 areas covered by job action teams. It will also expand personalised travel planning services in Jobcentres.

DWP is considering changes to the rules of the Travel to Interview Scheme, to allow reimbursement for some journeys which are not covered at present.

- **Learning:** ensuring that transport routes are more sharply focused on schools, colleges and training providers; ensuring that adequate provision is made for pupils participating in after-school activities, and ensuring that the cost of transport to schools and colleges does not restrict access to education.
- **Healthcare**: better advice on how to get to hospital through mainstream transport; greater publicity for the hospital travel costs scheme; greater choice over the timing of hospital appointments to fit in with travel needs; and a better integration of support available from non-emergency patient transport, the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme and the Social Fund.

Reducing the need to travel

5.9 Improving transport is not the only way to solve the 'accessibility deficits' identified by this report. Over the medium- to long-term, improving local service delivery in the places where people experiencing or at risk of social exclusion live may provide a more cost-effective solution in some cases.

5.10 Local planning authorities can help this process by conducting assessments to identify service gaps and actively promote suitable sites through their Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Local Strategic Partnerships.

5.11 While transport providers need to factor in access to work, learning, healthcare and other activities, the key delivery agents for these services also need to ensure that their location and timing make them accessible to all sectors of the community.

5.12 This will be particularly important when decisions are taken to close or relocate schools, hospitals and GP practices and in planning the location of new services, including shops and employment sites.

5.13 Outreach and virtual delivery through ICT can also significantly help less mobile people or people living in isolated areas to access services. However, the benefits of home delivery have to be balanced with people's desire for social interaction which personal mobility can bring.

Next Steps

5.14 This report has shown that transport problems can be a significant barrier to social inclusion and sets out some initial thoughts on potential improvements. Over the next few months, the SEU will be working with other Government departments and external organisations to develop these in more detail. We would welcome any comments on this report. They should be sent to:

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5.15 The ideas under consideration are subject to spending review decisions. A final report in the autumn will provide further details.