

Voluntary, Community and Demand Responsive Transport User Satisfaction Survey–Summary 2010

Introduction

As part of the Transport & Spatial Planning Business Plan, an annual survey has been carried out to determine user satisfaction of County Council supported voluntary, community and demand responsive transport services.

Methodology

A questionnaire and covering letter was sent out to 25% of users of the following services:

- Community Minibus Brokerage
- Voluntary Social Car Scheme
- Demand Responsive Transport (Rural Wheels, City Wheels and Barrow Dial a Ride)

The questionnaires were a simple single page layout, adapted to each scheme, found at **Appendix 1**. Questions related to satisfaction and open questions were included asking what they did / did not like about the service and what would improve their satisfaction. A small financial incentive was offered in the way of a prize draw for a £20 voucher.

Key Findings

Spreadsheets are attached at **Appendix 2** listing the percentage results to questions and examples of answers to open questions which reflect the general results. Full results of all answers are available on request.

Brokerage

81 questionnaires were completed and returned (37%).

59% of users were very satisfied with the service overall (32% were satisfied giving a total of 91%). This reflects the general response to individual questions regarding the service;

- 40% said it was always easy to get in touch with the brokerage (51% said usually)
- 84% said the brokerage staff were always approachable and helpful, (12% said usually)
- 36% said vehicles were always available for the date and time requested (56% said usually)
- 59% said the vehicles were always clean and comfortable (36% said usually)
- 88% said the hire charge is about right and 2% said it was too high.

When asked what they liked about the service, the low cost was mentioned most often. The drivers being helpful and friendly was also a popular answer.

When asked what they didn't like about the service, travelling to pick up the bus was mentioned most often followed by needing more drivers.

When asked what would improve their satisfaction, the most popular answer was a lower charge.

It is clear that users of the service appreciate the value of the service, helpfulness of the staff and the scheme being flexible and local. However, travelling to pick up the bus and the dead mileage charges incurred as a result is evidently unpopular which shows in the results that a lot of organisations are happy with the cost whereas others in more remote areas are saying the charge is too high.

Demand Responsive Transport

177 questionnaires were completed and returned (41%).

59% of users were very satisfied with the service overall (20% were satisfied giving a total of 79%). This reflects the general response to individual questions regarding the service;

- 63% said it was always easy to get in touch with the Booking Service (34% said usually)
- 77% said the booking service staff were always approachable and helpful, (23% said usually)
- 47% said vehicles were always available for the date and time requested (44% said usually)
- 82% said the hire charge is about right.

When asked what they liked about the service, the drivers were mentioned most often, as helpful and friendly. The reliable and convenient service was also a popular answer.

When asked what they didn't like about the service, having to give 2 working days notice was mentioned most often followed by the restricted hours the schemes are available.

When asked what would improve their satisfaction, morning/evening/weekend availability was the most popular answer followed giving less notice prior to the journey.

Satisfaction is high, however the limited hours of the service and the notice period required are of concern to many users.

Last year was the first year that Demand Responsive Transport Rural Wheels scheme had a complete, county-wide coverage with Rural Wheels being available in Allerdale, Copeland and Barrow since August 2008. Usage has been on the uptake and has been generally received well. With results of the scheme steadily increasing in other areas, we are seeing more scope for sharing journeys to make the scheme more economical.

On the Demand Responsive Transport City Wheels scheme, the change of contracts from Caldew Coaches to Beeline Taxis has seen a significant increase of journeys showing that the change has given more availability to customers.

Barrow Ring and Ride is currently going through a re-tendering process, the results of which should be seen by next years User Satisfaction Survey.

Voluntary Car Scheme

58 questionnaires were completed and returned (58%). A spreadsheet is attached at Appendix 2 listing the percentage results to questions and examples of answers to open questions.

- 76% of users were very satisfied with the service overall (19% were satisfied giving a total of 95%).
- 76% said the hire charge is about right, but 19% said it was too low.

When asked what they liked about the service, the friendly, helpful drivers were mentioned most often. The fantastic/wonderful scheme and door-to-door service was also a popular answer.

When asked what they didn't like about the service, the most frequent response was that sometimes journeys were not available due to not enough drivers.

When asked what would improve their satisfaction, more volunteer drivers was mentioned most often. This reflects the constant challenge of recruiting new drivers, not only to develop the scheme in order to cope with growing demand, but also to replace drivers who leave the scheme due to the age restriction.

Summary

In answer to the question "How satisfied are you with the service overall", an average of 88% stated they were very satisfied. This compares with 73% for 2008-09.

5% stated they were very dissatisfied which is slightly higher compared with 1% in 2008-09.