



National Transport Strategy Review

**Consultation Summary Report
2018-19**



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National Transport Review

Consultation with older people in Scotland



Introduction

The Scottish Government's Minister for Transport and the Islands announced a full review of Scotland's National Transport Strategy (NTS) in August 2016. A full review was the key recommendation of a "refresh" of the original NTS, first adopted in 2006.

Since late 2017, Age Scotland has been working with Scottish Government agency Transport Scotland as the Review begins in earnest. By hosting a series of 21 NTS Review workshops at our Age Scotland Network Meetings, we have gathered the views of older people and allowed Transport Scotland the opportunity to hear directly from this key demographic as NTS2 is shaped.

This report summarises our findings from a year of consulting older people on transport.

Timeline

Following a call for evidence in early 2017, Transport Scotland proceeded to invite organisations such as Age Scotland to engage with the Review process by hosting engagement events with the demographic groups represented by these organisations. Age Scotland's well-established and well-attended Network Meetings seemed an ideal way to give the maximum number of older people the opportunity to speak directly with Transport Scotland staff and share their experiences and suggestions on transport, thereby shaping the Review at a very early stage.

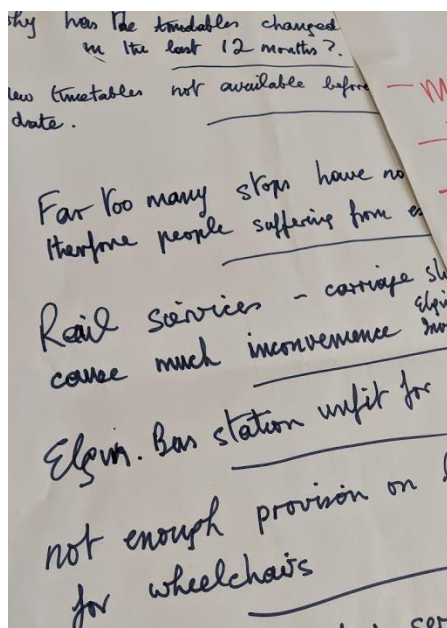


Figure 2 Elgin workshop feedback

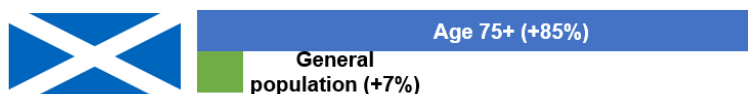


Figure 1 Scottish population growth 2014-40 (Source: National Records of Scotland)

The 90-minute NTS workshops were added to the agenda for as many Age Scotland Network Meetings as possible in 2018. Most Network Meetings take place in Spring and Autumn, with a break during the Summer.

Hosted by Age Scotland, these workshops provided an early opportunity for older people to talk about transport issues openly in a broad and general manner.

Age Scotland's Role in the NTS Review process

In addition to facilitating workshops at regional Age Scotland Network Meetings, attended by over 300 older people in 2018, Age Scotland's **transport questionnaire** was also circulated at these workshops and elsewhere at older people's events around Scotland. Views collected via the questionnaire provided both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Age Scotland has also attended, consulted and presented at other **transport-related events**, including Scottish Rural Action's event, *Rural Transport Convention: Exploring the Future of Rural Transport in Scotland* which took place in Inverness on 11-12 September 2018.



Figure 3 Edinburgh workshop

Age Scotland was a member of the NTS Review's **Tackling Inequalities Working Group (TIWG)**. The remit of the TIWG, which was set up in 2017, was:

To set out policy proposals on how transport can assist in addressing inequality and differences between people to make Scotland fairer.

The TIWG set out to consider the following key topics:

- Transport accessibility, supporting accessibility, and links to the Accessible Travel Framework
- Transport affordability (e.g. consistency/type of cost; socio-economic factors; concessions, particularly around Public Transport)
- Rural/urban specificities (e.g. rural bus services, options around travel from remote areas, urban issues relating to non-direct routes, accessibility issues in rural and edge of town areas)
- Geographical inequality (access for all to all services in a Fairer Scotland)
- Technology, innovation and industry and its impact on inequality (including the European Accessibility Act)
- Integrated transport modes and accessibility between modes of transport
- Transport to health (inequalities in health access, sustainability, responsibility for provision)
- Equality rights of, and 'safety nets' for, passengers (not just consumer rights)
- Examples of good practice

The first meeting was held in Autumn 2017. By Summer 2019, the TIWG has met on seven occasions in total - the first five meetings featured group discussions, presentations from experts and the formulation of draft policy proposals. Age Scotland delivered a presentation to the TIWG in early 2018 setting out the charity's policy positions on transport.

Network Meeting Workshop Format

Transport Scotland and Age Scotland collaborated at Age Scotland Network Meetings to deliver a 90-minute NTS review workshop. This involved a presentation by Transport Scotland's NTS Review Team and crucially focussed on discussion with, and input from workshop attendees.

After a brief introductory talk in which the background to the Review process and its purpose were explained, the workshop attendees were invited to consider two topics for discussion, prior to completing the workshop questionnaire:

- 1. Why do we think Transport is a vital issue for older people?***
- 2. We want our growing population of older people to be able to enjoy the best quality of life in their communities. What do older people need from our Transport system in order to help make this happen over the next 20 years?***

To allow people to discuss these questions practically, attendees were divided into smaller groups and asked to “brainstorm” and write down their ideas. Where possible, a member of staff from Age Scotland or Transport Scotland joined each group to facilitate the discussion and function as a scribe to ensure maximum inclusivity.

Following a few minutes of discussion, groups then verbally shared their findings with the plenary workshop, which often provoked further discussion and genuine interest and engagement in the subject at hand.

Transport Scotland staff then wound up the meeting by summarising views and thanking attendees for their participation.



Figure 4 Port Appin workshop

Transport Scotland staff were responsive throughout the workshops, encouraging as much participation as possible and offering to look into, and report back on, more specific issues that were raised by attendees.

Age Scotland also sought to gather data on older people’s views on transport at these workshops via a questionnaire. The data gathered from the questionnaire will be used to inform future policy positions taken by the charity.

Workshops were held at the following locations:



- Aviemore
- Dumfries
- Glasgow
- Inverurie
- Nairn (x2)
- Prestwick
- Thurso
- Sauchie
- Elgin
- Orkney
- Stornoway
- Nairn
- Orkney
- Inverness
- Lairg
- Edinburgh
- Jedburgh
- Castlemilk
- Dundee
- Port Appin (organised by Appin Community Trust)
- Helensburgh (organised by Grey Matters)

Figure 5 Age Scotland NTS workshops mapped

As the programme of workshops progressed, Age Scotland was able to incorporate a summary of interim findings. A PowerPoint presentation which used graphics set out the findings and the next steps of the process.

Age Scotland Questionnaire

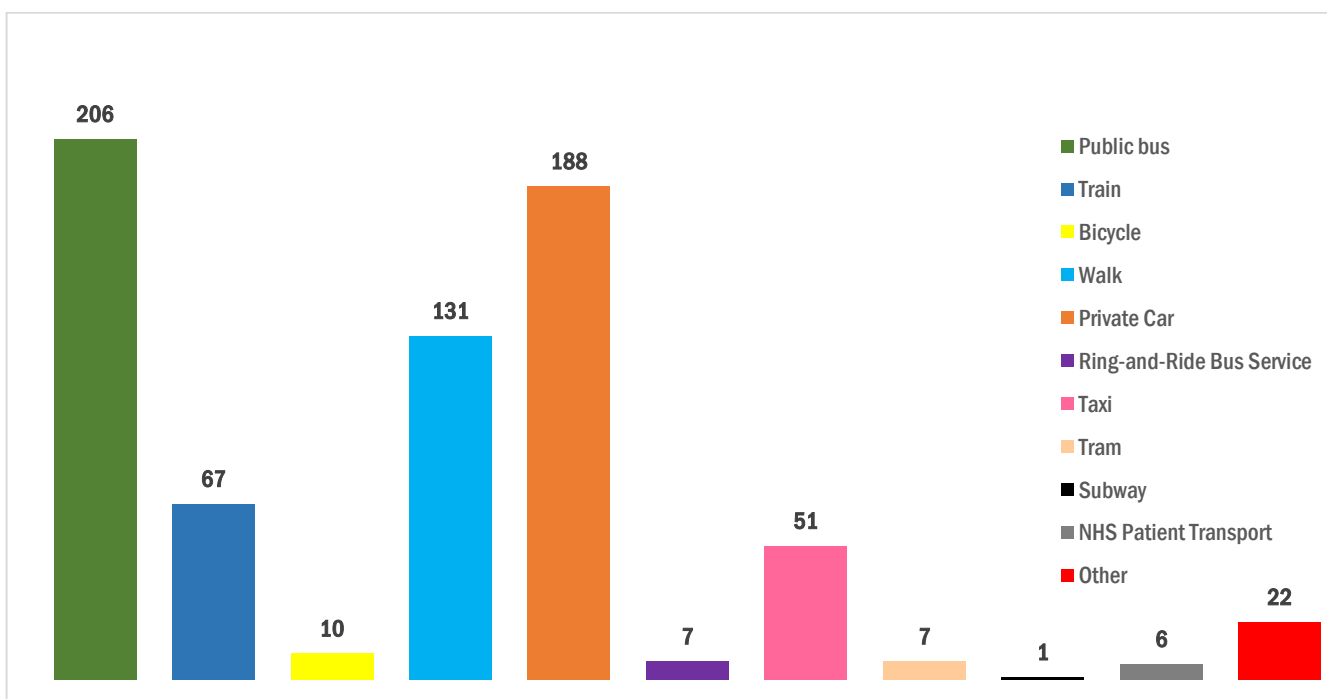
The NTS review workshops gave Age Scotland the opportunity to seek feedback from older people at a point in time when they were actively involved in the discussions about transport.

Data was gathered in the form of a questionnaire. Input on the questions was sought from other teams across the charity. The Questionnaire had nine questions; this allowed us to produce a concise questionnaire that could be completed and handed in at the workshop, ensuring a high rate of return.

Throughout 2018, at both NTS review workshops and at other Age Scotland events around Scotland, some **300 completed questionnaires** were returned and analysed. The questions and findings were as follows:

questionnaires
300
completed

Question 1: What modes of transport do you frequently use?



By far the most commonly used modes of transport by respondents were, in order, **public buses, private cars and walking.**

Responses given under “other” included **community transport and mobility scooter.**

In Stornoway, one of the most rural¹ of our workshop locations, only 32% of respondents said they frequently travelled by bus. Use of private cars meanwhile was much higher in this rural area and this was reflected in all rural areas across Scotland.

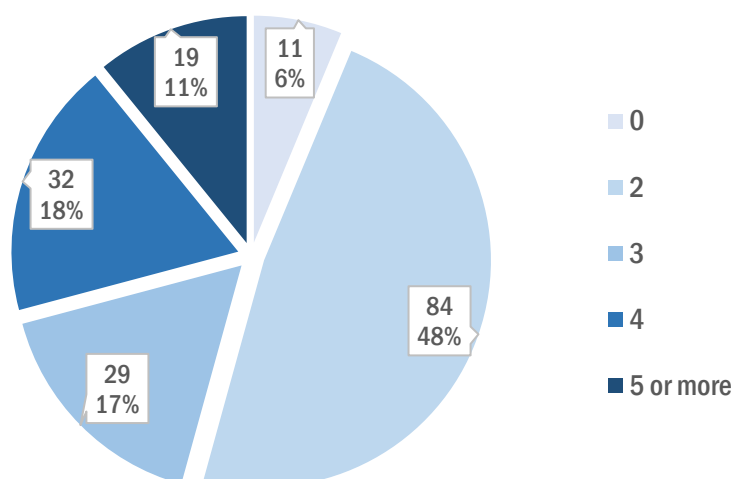
The inclusion of options on Edinburgh Trams and the Glasgow Subway was deemed important for respondents in Edinburgh and Glasgow especially, yet respondents used trams or the Subway infrequently compared to their use of buses. The use of these services been older people from outwith these areas may have been higher if the concessionary entitlement were not limited to Edinburgh and Glasgow residents only.



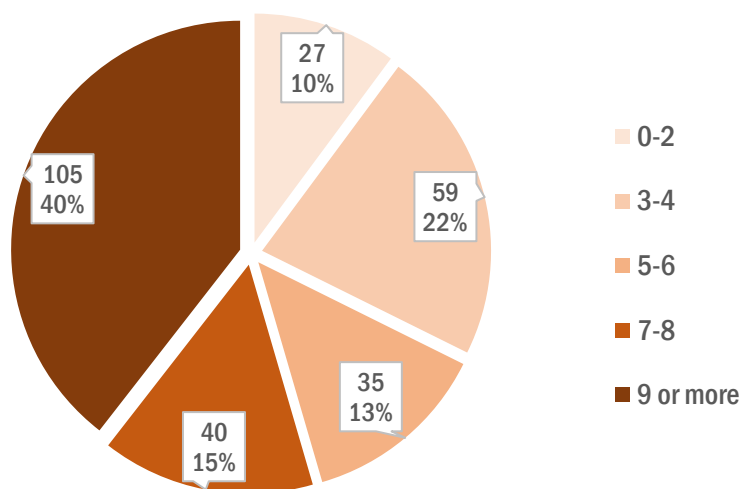
2 in 3 respondents said that the bus was their most commonly used form of transport

¹ Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2016

Question 2A: How many journeys do you make in a normal day?



Question 2B: How many journeys do you make in a normal week?



Most respondents made at least **two individual journeys per day. Most made more than **seven journeys a week**.**

These questions helped us identify how frequently older people travel. This provides insight into usage patterns which can help to ensure strategic planning meets the needs of older people.

Question 3: What is the reason for your journeys?



The most popular reason given by respondents for travelling was for **shopping**. This was followed closely by **socialising**, and then by a need to attend **medical appointments**.

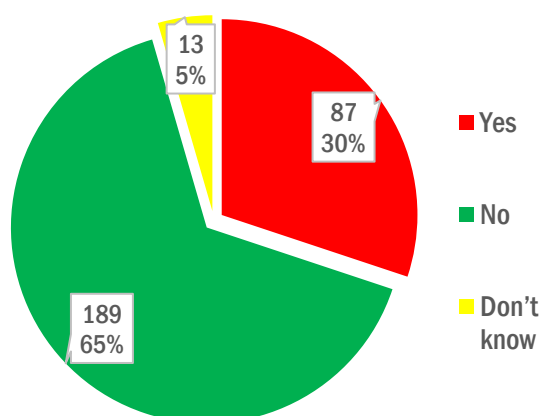
A striking finding was that **4 in 10 respondents travel for volunteer work**, highlighting the extent of the valuable unpaid work which older people in Scotland carry out.

Attending medical appointments was a reason given by a clear majority of respondents. As Scotland's population continues to age, medical conditions for which the prevalence increases with age will become more common. A transport system fully integrated with healthcare services is therefore deeply important.

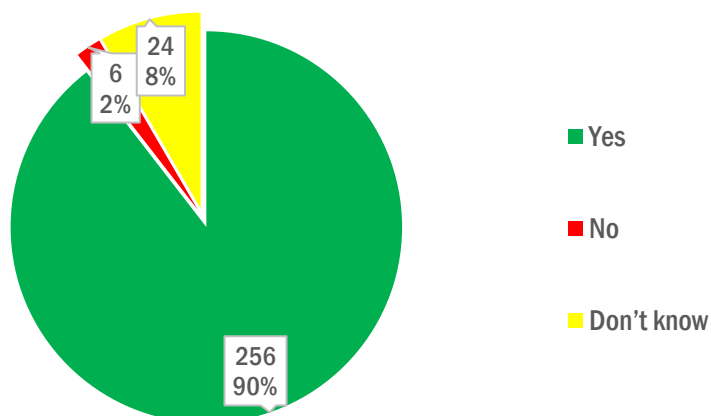
Question 4: Have you, or a family member, experienced difficulty in travelling to a medical appointment in the past year?

A significant **30% of respondents said they or a family member had experienced difficulty in travelling to a medical appointment** in the past year.

This highlights the importance of effective transport infrastructure in the delivery of healthcare.



Question 5: The Thistle Assistance Card (a SESTRANS initiative in south-east Scotland) allows a person who needs extra assistance, such as someone living with dementia, to travel safely on public transport. Do you think this service should be offered in all parts of Scotland?



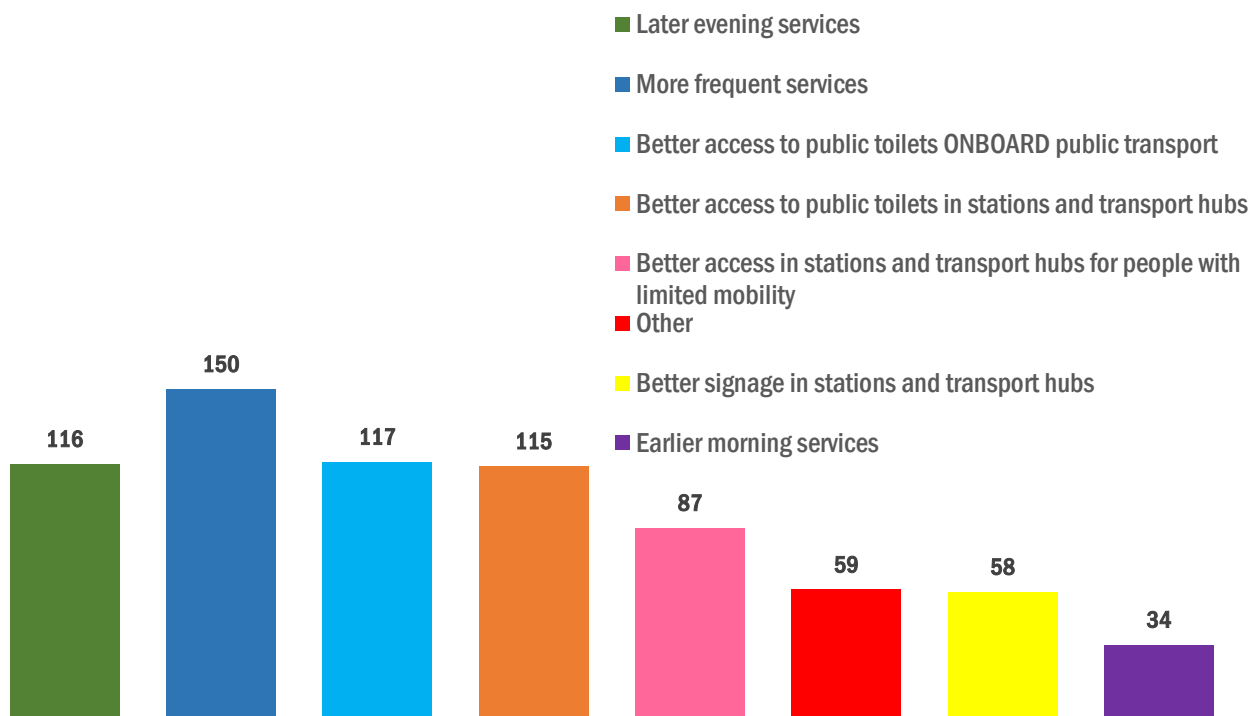
The Thistle Assistance Card scheme was extremely popular with respondents and knowledge of its existence was more widespread than expected. There was overwhelming support amongst respondents for such a scheme to be rolled out across Scotland.

This supports Age Scotland's ongoing work² with partners in the third sector, private sector, local authorities and Police Scotland to improve passenger safety in Scotland.

"I need buses that I can actually access and not struggle to get on and off."

² <https://www.scotland.police.uk/whats-happening/news/2018/may/new-initiative-help-older-bus-passengers-travel-confidence>

Question 6: What would help you to use more public transport?



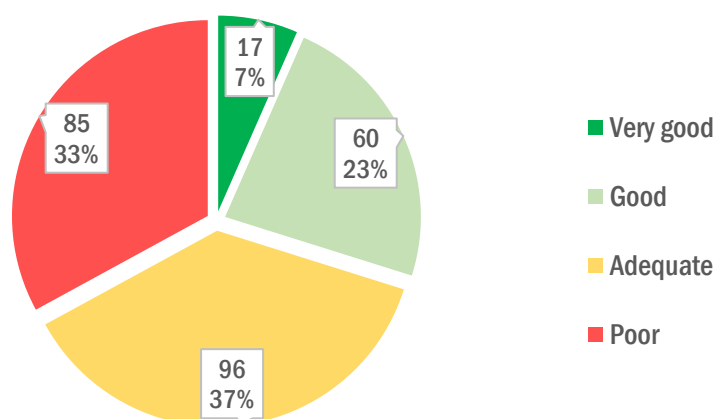
The single most important thing that would persuade a majority of respondents to use more public transport was **more frequent services**. This was more pronounced in rural areas where scheduled buses were few and far between, or in some cases, non-existent. In these cases, older people were effectively disenfranchised from the National Concessionary Travel Scheme; completely unable to use their entitlement to free bus travel. This puts people at a significant financial disadvantage and ultimately means they will make fewer journeys – increasing loneliness and social isolation.

"I'm stranded in the house unless I get a lift from a friend. There are buses but they're so infrequent I can't use them."

Of roughly equal importance thereafter, respondents also cited **later evening services**, **better access to public toilets on transport** itself, and **better access to toilets in stations and transport hubs** as things that would make them more likely to use public transport.

Some of the suggestions under "other" included **better integration in ticketing** across different modes of transport, **clearer and more accessible timetable information** (online and app based information was not considered accessible for many people), and **easy-access buses** (i.e. no steps). Criticism of the layout of Inverness Station was a common theme in the northern workshops.

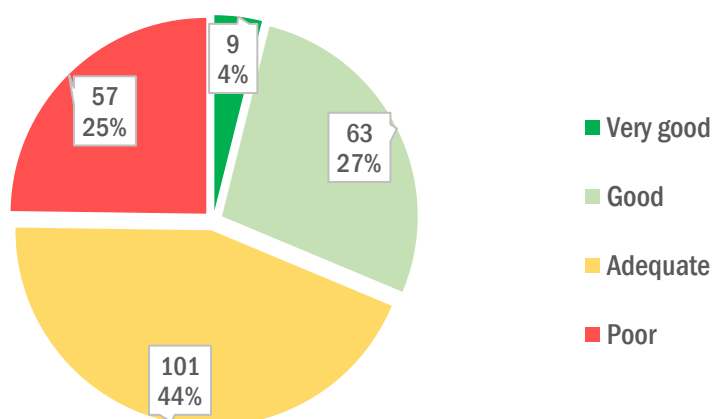
Question 7A: At stations and transport hubs, what do you think of access to toilets?



Only 30% of respondents were positive (rating as Good or Very Good) about **public toilet access in stations and transport hubs**. A significant 33% of respondents rated this as Poor, while some 37% expressed a neutral opinion.

For people living with certain medical conditions, regular access to toilets is important, particularly on longer journeys with one or more changes. Organisations responsible for the delivery of transport solutions should consider how this need could be better served.

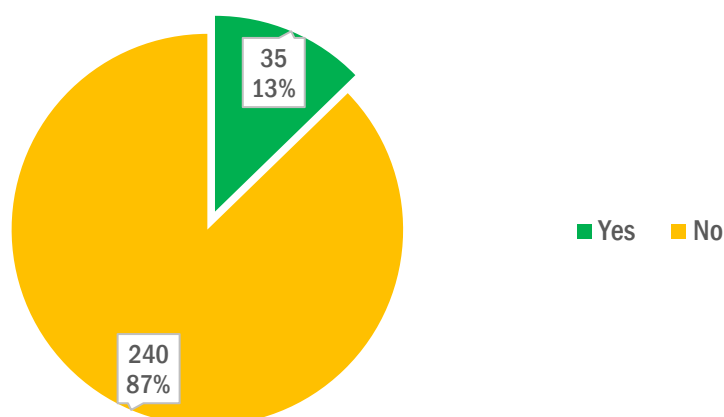
Question 7B: At stations and transport hubs, what do you think of signage?



Satisfaction with signage in stations and transport hubs was mixed. Around one third of respondents were positive about signage, while a quarter of respondents were negative. The remainder thought signage was adequate.

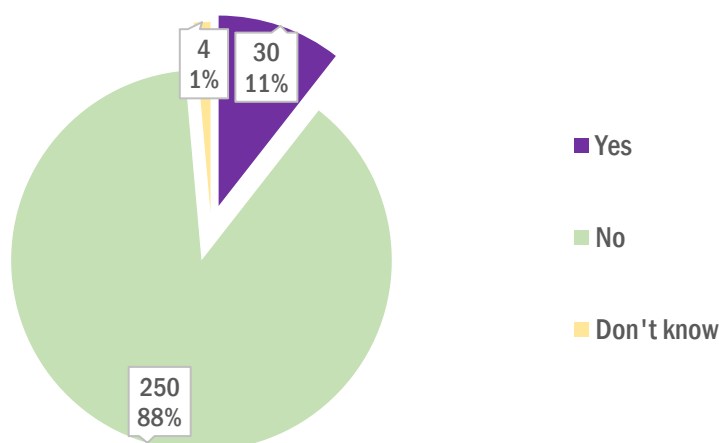
It is widely recognised that the benefits of clear, effective signage in transport hubs are not just helpful to older people, but to all passengers. It is particularly helpful however for those with sight loss or those living with dementia to be able to navigate using clear signage.

Question 8: Are you a UK Military Veteran? (i.e. Have you served as either a regular, reservist, National Service or Merchant Seafarer supporting a military operation?)



13% of respondents indicated that they were veterans. At Network Meetings where the definition of a veteran was explained verbally to attendees, straw polls showed that the number self-reporting as veterans rose slightly. This reaffirmed our experience that **many people who are veterans do not consider themselves as such**, believing that the “qualifying criteria” for calling yourself a veteran is much higher than it actually is.

Question 9: Are you, or is someone you care for, living with dementia?



11% of respondents said that they, or someone they cared for, were living with dementia. A small number of respondents answered honestly that they did not know, suggesting that they or someone they cared for may have been experiencing some symptoms associated with dementia but had either not sought or not yet received a formal diagnosis.

Further Analysis of Age Scotland Questionnaire

Veterans and dementia were two influencing factors deemed worthy of comparison against all respondents.

Veterans

Veterans tended to make significantly fewer journeys in a normal day and a normal week than non-veterans.

For veterans, **attending medical appointments was a significant reason** for travelling, while the **number of veterans who said that socialising was a reason for travel was noticeably lower than average.**

Veterans were **more likely to report difficulties in travelling to medical appointments** in the past year (36% v 30%).

Dementia

Older people who were themselves, or cared for someone else, living with dementia were **more likely to use a private car** than public transport. They also tended to make more journeys every week than those not living with, or caring for someone living with dementia. From the feedback provided, 44% said they made 9+ journeys a week, compared to 38% of respondents in general.

Getting to **medical appointments was the top reason for travel** amongst this group, while shopping and socialising were more important for respondents in general.

It was reported by 44% of people in this group that they, or a family member, had experienced **difficulty in getting to a medical appointment** in the past year, which was higher than respondents in general.

Conclusions

Through discussion at workshops and completed questionnaires, we have identified several **key themes** relating to transport and older people.

We received completed questionnaires from 300 older people by the end of our consultation. From the evidence gathered, veterans and people living with dementia (or caring for someone who lives with dementia) feel disadvantaged when it comes to using transport.

Older people feel there are clear shortcomings across Scotland's transport infrastructure, regardless of their geographic location. The key themes highlighted by older people were consistent across urban, rural and island communities. These **key themes** include:

- Inaccessible bus vehicles
- Infrequent bus services
- Poor access to toilets in stations, transport hubs and onboard vehicles
- Lack of evening bus services
- Poor integration across different modes of transport

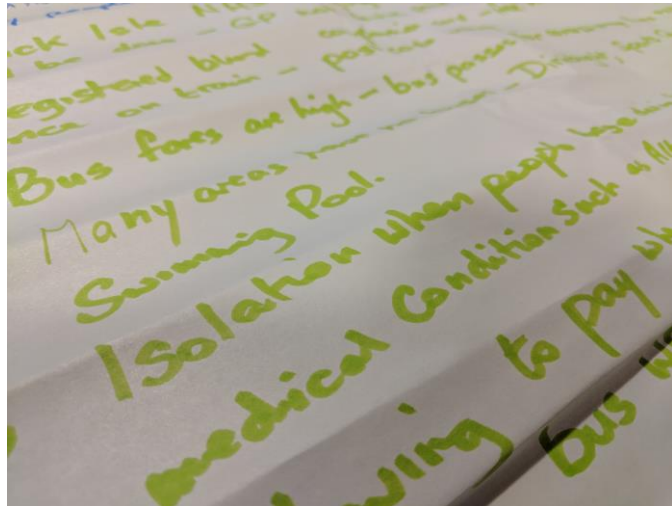


Figure 6 Naim workshop feedback

The feedback on the workshops given by those who attended was extremely positive. Feedback at non-Network Meetings (Grey Matters and Port Appin) was given verbally – the format was popular and attendees appeared to engage well with the discussion points, offering opinions and suggestions.

Age Scotland considers the engagement and consultation carried out with older people as part of the NTS Review to be a success. Our involvement in this process has cut across all of our strategic aims, which are:

1. We promote positive views of ageing and later life.
2. We help older people to be as well as they can be.
3. We tackle loneliness and isolation.

Next steps

Age Scotland will continue to work with Transport Scotland to highlight the draft strategy and the forthcoming consultation, which will help shape the new National Transport Strategy.

Age Scotland is grateful to the hundreds of older people and older people's groups from across Scotland who have contributed to this consultation process by giving up their time and sharing their experiences.

This report was produced for Transport Scotland by Simon Ritchie, Policy and Campaigns Officer at Age Scotland. For more information, please contact simon.ritchie@agescotland.org.uk or call 0131 668 8047.

