



Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Public Transport: Impact on Fraserburgh's Community



Public transport can have a positive impact on people when:

Everyone has access to a sustainable, affordable, accessible, available, appropriate, and safe public transport service.


This is why it is one of Scotland's Place & Wellbeing Outcomes.

Public Transport involves buses and trains running on fixed routes and charging set fares.

The evidence tells us¹:



Public transport can encourage active travel.



Public transport accompanied by active travel is linked with increased physical activity and reduced obesity.




Public transport is linked with improved mental wellbeing.




Public transport can reduce carbon emissions.




Public transport can improve access to services and facilities and connect communities.



If public transport or active travel routes are not well maintained or do not feel safe, then they are unlikely to be used.



Certain groups are disproportionately affected by the lack of available and affordable public transport.



Certain groups such as women, students and older people are likely to be at higher risk of transport poverty.

1. Source: [Evidence Behind Place Standard Tool & Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)

What we are seeing from the data² and what we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Fraserburgh in 2023/24.

Dependence on public transport

Almost a third of Scotland's households don't have access to a car. This can increase to half of households in deprived areas. Across Aberdeenshire 15% of households do not have access to a car, although this must be considered through the lens of the rural geography of Aberdeenshire. With high levels of poverty and deprivation across parts of Fraserburgh, much of the population is dependent on public transport, especially buses.

15% of all households in Aberdeenshire have no access to a car, compared to 28% in Scotland. (2019)

48% of households in socially rented housing have no access to a car compared to 56% in Scotland. (2019)

A total 4204 journeys were recorded for the Fraserburgh 'A2B' Dial-a-Bus service between April 2023 and March 2024.

3% of people use the bus to travel to work in Aberdeenshire, compared to Scottish average of 9%. (2022)

Cost is a concern

Transport in Fraserburgh is considered limited, unreliable and expensive. The Fraserburgh community finds it difficult to access essential services out with Fraserburgh, like healthcare and education while others highlighted that the cost-prohibitive nature of transport options to Aberdeen hindered economic opportunities and upward mobility, making it harder and often, impossible for people to commute to work.

I'm worse off when I do shifts in Aberdeen. I don't drive, buses are beyond expensive. Even monthly tickets hardly knock anything off the cost to make it viable and I work bank work in care – some months a monthly ticket is wasted, so I have to pay on the day. – Local care worker, Fraserburgh

The cost of travelling from Fraserburgh to Aberdeen is almost 25% of what an adult in Fraserburgh earning the living wage can expect to take home per day. Expenditures on commuting accounting for more than 10% of outgoings is considered to contribute to making individuals 'transport poor' and is a shackle to escaping poverty.

Prices go up, service goes down. It's a disgrace! – Local bus user

2. Data sources: [SHS Data Explorer](#); [statistics.gov.scot Bus Availability](#); [Travel to Work](#); [Transport Scotland](#), Aberdeenshire Council 2024

As soon as I turned 22, I had to start paying my fares. I could manage on student loans and the meagre college bursary when I had free travel, but now it's a struggle to make ends meet every month. - Fraserburgh student

Working-age adults and older students in Fraserburgh feel like a “pinched middle”, neither in the older age group which receives the concessionary benefits to bus travel or in receipt of free travel through the Young Scot card. People have reported turning down placements or job offers because the travel from Fraserburgh is unaffordable and unreliable.

Without free bus travel for over-60s, I'd be trapped in Fraserburgh. No hospital appointments, no meeting friends, no sense of independence or choice. It's a lifeline for older people and the retired –
Fraserburgh resident

Booking a hotel in Aberdeen and getting lifts to attend hospital appointments works out cheaper than two return tickets and it's always an all-day thing anyway – leave early, get back late due to timetables – Fraserburgh Resident

Approximately 68% of young people (eligible 5yrs -21yrs) in Aberdeenshire have claimed a free bus travel card. This is comparable to the 69% for Scotland. (2023) ³

It is estimated that 88% of adults over 60 years (eligible over 60) have claimed a free bus travel card, reflecting a steady increase over recent years. (2023)³



Safety & Reliability

Most people speak of public transport as a burning issue in Fraserburgh. Some of the other concerns that were raised in local conversations with residents and bus users were:

- Reliability and safety of vehicles, especially older fleet vehicles which are often used locally for rural journeys.
- Changes to timetables reducing services significantly, meaning long waits from Aberdeen to Fraserburgh.
- Drivers not stopping or turning up for scheduled routes which take people to work and school and back again, leaving people stranded in Aberdeen with no alternative but a long wait for the next bus.
- Large numbers of young people congregating on buses leaving travellers feeling intimidated.

I messaged the bus company after a couple of horrible trips, but all I received was a generic 'sorry about your experience, have passed on your feedback' email. –

Resident

My friend's bus was 50 minutes late meaning she missed her hospital appointment. It cost her over £20 she couldn't afford and now has to wait 3 months for a reschedule, wondering if she'll miss that too –

Fraserburgh resident



Fraserburgh satellite connectivity

- Rural settlements reliant on buses to and from Fraserburgh suffer from a lack of service, particularly in the evenings.
- Large gaps in timetables outside school hours deny young people the flexibility to travel.
- Many residents in Fraserburgh rely on more than one bus to attend their work, school or caring responsibilities out-with the Fraserburgh area.
- Satellite communities report difficulty in getting taxis after 10pm.
- Those living rurally and reliant on public methods of transport report feeling isolated and fearful of being unable to act in an emergency.

Disabled individuals report finding healthcare the most difficult service to access from a rural perspective.

'Forced' car ownership in rural parts of the Fraserburgh area where there is a lack of reliable public transport puts real pressures on budgets, particularly among the lowest incomes.

My daughter is liable to fail her course at college as she's consistently late for her placement. Getting there on the bus is a nightmare; half the time one of the two buses she needs is late or a no-show –

Fraserburgh parent

There's no car garage in Sandhaven and no buses to get back when my car was being serviced in town. The price of diesel is more expensive locally – it can be 4p dearer in Fraserburgh than in Peterhead –

Fraserburgh Resident

The availability of both public transport and active travel impact on one another and achieving both outcomes would bring great benefit to the people of Fraserburgh. Find out more in the accompanying Active Travel: Impact on Fraserburgh's Community Briefing.

Visit the [website](#) for more information on [Fraserburgh Project Town activity](#). Follow us on X [@place4wellbeing](#) to keep up to date with our latest news and place-based resources.