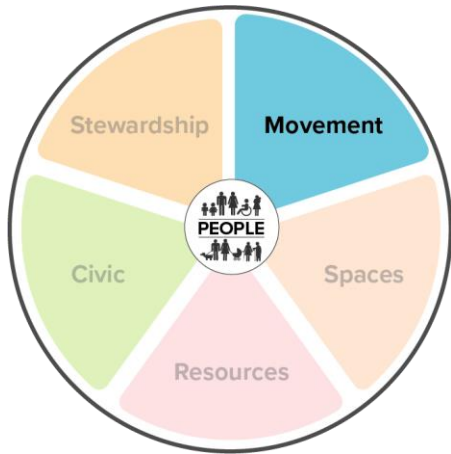




Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Alloa Project Town

Public Transport: Impact on Alloa'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](#)

Public Transport Usage

In the preceding month: **78%** of adults in Clackmannanshire had not used a local bus.²

In the preceding month: **84%** of adults in Clackmannanshire had not used a train.²

14% of households in Clackmannanshire do not have access to a car for private use.³

3% of journeys made to work in Clackmannanshire are made by bus, compared to 9% across Scotland.⁴

Bus Passes

46% of eligible under 22 y/os in Clackmannanshire have claimed a free bus travel card. This is lower than the 68.3% rate for Scotland. (2022)⁵

91% of adults in Clackmannanshire 60+ hold a concessionary pass, but **59%** had not used it at all in the preceding month.⁶

What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Alloa in 2023



Limited Provision

Clackmannanshire has a single train station in Alloa, meaning public transport provision is predominantly buses. Routes and timetabling are considered limited and often not meeting people's needs.

Although results from the recent Scottish Households Survey suggest that Clackmannanshire has relatively high levels of car access, it is known that half of households in deprived areas of Scotland do not own or have access to a car. Alloa South and East is an area of high deprivation with 100% of its population classed as living in SIMD Quintile 1, and it is therefore likely that many households do not have access to a car.

“ We want to make sure the most vulnerable have access and the connectivity they need and require to be part of the community we all take for granted. (Local Service Provider) ”

2. Data source: Scottish Household Survey

3. Data source: Scottish Household Survey

4. Data source: ScotPHO Profiles

5. Data source: FOI release

6. Data source: Scottish Household Survey



Connectivity

Poor connectivity and public transport links within Clackmannanshire, and onwards beyond the county, are consistently raised as a significant problem. Settlements within the county can feel isolated from each other.

People particularly highlight the impact this has on:

- Access to nearby urban hubs like Stirling, Falkirk and Dunfermline – places that are geographically close to Clackmannanshire, but can feel very far away for people relying on public transport.
- Access to secondary and tertiary healthcare services, including Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert. Poor public transport provision can cause additional stress and cost for people attending appointments, and people are missing appointments due to not being able to get there.

- Access to community services and support. This is highlighted particularly for certain groups, like unpaid carers or those experiencing problem substance use, who are already experiencing inequalities.
- Access to training and employment opportunities. Transport is often cited as the main barrier to gaining employment. For those currently in employment, public transport often doesn't align well to their working hours and location meaning they have to drive.
- Access to social opportunities. Dial-a-Journey have reported a significant increase in the number of door-to-door journeys they are facilitating for social, leisure and group outings.

Bus timetabling and infrequency of some route services result in long journey times even over short distances, especially if the journey requires interconnections.



Due to having to use more than one bus and trying to tie up the bus times, this can often result in long waits for people, often standing in miserable weather, it is very time consuming and the journey will take longer than the actual appointment or visit.” (Clackmannanshire Resident)



Reliability

Of adults who use public transport in Clackmannanshire, only 65% feel buses are on time – the second lowest rating of Scottish local authorities (Scottish Household Survey, 2021). People do not trust that buses will arrive on schedule. The perceived uncertainty and unpredictability of bus services puts people off using them.



Public transport isn't reliable. (Local Group Participant)





Accessibility

Accessibility of public transport for those with hearing or vision loss, disabilities or reduced mobility is a concern.

Pedestrian routes to bus stops, and stops/shelters themselves being unsuitable, poorly maintained or inaccessible.

- Concern that infrequent services means if a wheelchair space is already taken on the bus, there will be an unrealistic long wait until the next bus.
- Lack of confidence using public transport alone.

Only 53% of adults who use buses in Clackmannanshire believe fares are good value (Scottish Household Survey, 2021). Cost of public transport is a barrier for those in low income/poverty, for whom car ownership is also likely not to be an option.



Communities reliant on bus services have seen service levels fall and fares increase, which disproportionately impacts younger people, lower income groups, and those with additional physical mobility requirements.
(Forth Valley Connectivity Commission)



Safety

Safety concerns:

- Feeling unsafe for women and other marginalised groups, particularly at night.
- Worries about anti-social behaviour on buses.
- Streetlighting near bus stops at night.



It is also not safe for queer couples because of the attitudes of the rest of the community. (Local Group Member)



There is recognition that it can be difficult to address public transport issues from private providers. Local third sector transport schemes exist to enable people to access health, employment and other services. There is a desire for realistic shared solutions.