

Overview report: **Social Care and Community Transport Review**

For

Bracknell Forest Council



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Research

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1. Executive Summary

The aim of this research was to review and evaluate current awareness, usage and satisfaction with the existing community and social care transport service and to identify ways, if any, in which the service can be improved.

This research has been delivered in the following three key phases:

- 310 **postal surveys** (59 with carers, 137 with Life Line users and 114 with users of Keep Mobile).
- 39 **depth interviews** (24 with service users, 7 with staff and 8 with voluntary groups).
- One **discussion session** with the Access Advisory Group

1.2 Key findings

1.2.1 Journeys made

Eligibility

- Postal survey respondents were likely not to know whether they, or the person they cared for, would be eligible for free social care operated by BFC.

Journeys

- Respondents are likely to be currently making journeys to:
 - Travel to / from out-of-town shopping centres or supermarkets
 - Visit the hospital or doctors
 - Travel to / from town centre shops

These are also the journeys they are most likely to *want* to make.

- Different groups of service users are using transport differently, which may reflect their support needs. For example, older respondents are likely to be using Keep Mobile services or social care transport provided by BFC to get them to day centres or support groups in addition to using Keep Mobile to go on outings and shopping trips.

Choice of how to make local journeys

- Keep Mobile service users and carers who are likely to have used / or have access to some form of transport service are more likely to be agree that they have a choice of transport in Bracknell. Conversely, Life Line users are significantly more likely to have no opinion. This suggests Life Line respondents are less likely to be aware of transport services available to them.
- Taxis were not widely considered a viable alternative form of transport due to the cost and concerns over door-to-door safety.

Service awareness

- Postal survey respondents are particularly likely to have heard of Shopping Trips, Dial a Ride and Excursions provided by Keep Mobile. Carers are significantly more likely to have heard of social care transport services provided by BFC (60%) compared to Keep Mobile users (31%).

Transport services used

- Carers (57%) and Life Line (48%) service users are significantly more likely to be using social care services provided by BFC than those currently registered with Keep Mobile (5%). This is likely to reflect the level of social care implied for each group.
- Service users with learning disabilities were likely to be using, or to have heard of, the learning disabilities Transport Trial. This is widely considered to be a crucial service enabling them to access services or places they would not otherwise be able to.

Other local journeys made

- Respondents are likely to make other journeys locally without using community and or social care transport services; 71% of Keep Mobile respondents, 78% of Life Line users and 89% of Carers.
- Respondents are likely to be making other journeys by car either driven by someone else or by themselves.

Factors affecting how journeys are made

- Different groups of respondents prioritise elements of the services differently. For example, carers are significantly more likely to consider whether there will be an escort or assistant on the service as important (48%) compared to those currently registered with Keep Mobile (23%).
- Carers are also significantly more likely (46%) to identify the qualities of the driver, escort or staff training to be important compared to either Life Line service users (38%) or Keep Mobile users (21%).
- Whilst cost was identified as an important factor for all groups of respondents, a simple cost structure was considered to be particularly important for respondents with learning disabilities.

1.2.2 Barriers to travelling with social and / or community transport services

- There are a number of specific barriers identified by respondents as key reasons why they or the person they cared for did not use community and / or social care transport to make some local journeys. The most frequently identified were:
 - Not knowing the service was available or how to access this
 - Being able to drive themselves or have support to drive them locally
 - Convenience and ease of use
 - Cost of the service

1.2.3 Experience of service use

- Respondents who have used local transport services operated either by Keep Mobile or BFC social care are broadly very positive about the services received.
- For respondents with learning disabilities, the Transport Trial was commented on more frequently than other forms of transport available to them. Despite some initial problems encountered, these were widely considered to be 'teething problems;' respondents remain largely very positive about this service.

Extent to which needs are met

- The greatest proportion of respondents to the postal survey consider that their needs are met either fully or most of the time by Keep Mobile and BFC social care transport services.
- Respondents are broadly positive about the range and type of journeys they are able to make using existing community and social care transport services in Bracknell.

Service availability and arranging travel

- The greatest proportions of survey and depth interview respondents are satisfied with the availability of community and social care transport services.
- Respondents are likely to have found easy to arrange travel with each service, with the exception of respondents with learning disabilities who were unlikely to have accessed Keep Mobile transport. Staff working with this group identified having found this service difficult to book.
- Staff are unable to cancel bookings for service users, which given that some service users have memory problems for example, can cause difficulties for staff.
- Respondents were less positive about the learning disabilities Transport Trial booking system, based on their experiences of double booking and the timings of pick-ups and drop-offs scheduled.

Personal security

- Respondents feel very safe when travelling with each form of transport.
- Some safety concerns were raised due to time spent waiting for services to arrive, particularly social care transport provided by Keep Mobile and the learning disabilities Transport Trial.

Attitude of drivers

- Respondents were strongly positive about drivers' attitudes having found them consistently helpful and friendly.

Punctuality

- For all services, the greatest proportion of postal survey respondents considered themselves satisfied.
- Respondents from all service groups identified that services which took them to and from Day Centres and other services were often early or late in the mornings. This could become a concern where sessions were effectively shortened for some respondents with activities being 'squeezed out.'
- The learning disabilities Transport Trial was considered often to be late or early. This raised concerns relating to reaching destinations on time and also safety concerns should respondents be left outside waiting.

Ease of access

- Respondents were widely considered that services were physically easy to access.

Service information

- Findings suggest there is a need for further information regarding the social and community transport services available in the Bracknell area to be publicised.

- Respondents who are using Keep Mobile services are consistently more likely to be satisfied with how easy it has been for them to find out information about community and transport services compared to Life Line users.
- Respondents would like to find out further information through leaflets / letters, and through carers or social services.
- Written publicity material is less accessible for respondents with learning disabilities who are more dependent on information being verbally supplied to them through carers, friends and support services used.

1.2.4 Learning Disabilities Transport Trial

- Service users with learning disabilities and staff working with this group have not historically used Keep Mobile services; the Transport Trial is considered to be meeting a previously unmet demand.
- Respondents widely considered the booking system for the Learning disabilities Transport Trial to be the aspect of the service most in need of improving.
- Difficulties with the service experienced were seen to be problems stemming from the booking system such as return journeys not being booked, being booked but not included on the drivers schedule or the bus being late.

1.2 Conclusions

- Respondents are satisfied overall with the community and social care transport services in Bracknell.
- Respondents are very satisfied with the service provided by drivers and escorts.
- Respondents are likely to feel that community and / or social care transport needs to be further publicised.
- Keep Mobile fares are perceived to be expensive and the fare schedule has caused some confusion.
- Greater flexibility needed in the Keep Mobile booking system particularly for staff to be able to make changes to some vulnerable respondents' journeys.
- Concerns regarding day centre being able to make trips with high number of wheelchair users and 'walkers'
- Improvements are needed to the learning disabilities Transport Trial booking system to improve service reliability.

2. Introduction

This report outlines the key findings of our review of community transport services provided by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC).

In the following sections we outline the Background and Context of this research and provide a statement of the Methods used in undertaking this. We then outline our Key findings, followed by our Conclusions and Recommendations.

3. Aims and objectives

We understand that currently Community Transport is the umbrella term for two distinctive local services:

1. Community Transport, operated by Keep Mobile. This not-for-profit service is aimed at meeting the transport needs of the over 70s and disabled residents. There is a charge for journeys made using this service.
2. Social Care transport, managed by BFC. This service uses a Council fleet of around 25 vehicles and is free to those registered on the social care database and eligible for Adult Social Care. Social Care Transport also extends to children and young people.

Both services operate with the vision to mobilise and provide access to life opportunities for those that may otherwise not have access to a mode of travel. This includes journeys made to Day Centres, shopping trips, adjacent Boroughs, as well as to events and opportunities for children and young people.

This review of both services has been designed to provide user-led recommendations for the future, to fully utilise available vehicles and time available as well as to ensure that budget available for the service is allocated appropriately to maximise the number of users who feel their transport needs are met.

Taking into account the context of the research, the aims of this research have been to:

- To review and evaluate current awareness, usage and satisfaction with the existing community and social care transport service
- To establish how far the current service meets the needs of the community
- To identify ways, if any, the service can be improved

4. Methodology

This research has been delivered in the following three key phases:

4.1 Postal research

In the process of delivering this research, **310** postal surveys were conducted, of these:

	Sent	Response rate
• 59 were completed with carers	311	19%
• 137 were completed with users of Life Line	715	19%
• 114 were completed with registered users of Keep Mobile	500	23%

The surveys used were targeted to each individual group whilst also providing opportunities for comparison between the responses of each group. Copies of the surveys used have been appended to this report.

To help maximise response rates, all residents who returned the survey were automatically entered into a prize draw. Overall, 310 completed surveys were returned and, using statistical rules, we can be 95% confident that these findings will not vary by any more than 6% overall.

Confidence levels: This indicates how representative findings are of the resident body as a whole. In this instance we have used 95% confidence levels – or more simply put – this requires that the chances of the sample group reflecting the wider resident population will be 95 out of 100. The confidence level is essentially a fixed value which must be looked at in conjunction with standard error.

Standard error: This demonstrates how answers provided by sampled residents potentially vary from the responses that would be obtained if all tenants had responded. In this instance, this means that if the observed statistic for any question is 50%, then if the research was repeated, this percentage will be no less than 44% and no more than 56%. The standard error is calculated on the basis of the total number of possible respondents and the number that have responded to the survey

This represents the statistical reliability for responses to the postal survey as a whole. Whilst for some key questions, we have used overall findings; in most instances we have instead provided findings for each group. This is because each sub-group represents a distinct group:

Group	Relationship
Life Line service users	Life Line respondents are members of the Life Line scheme, who are likely to be eligible to use the Keep Mobile transport service and who may also use other community and / or social care transport.

Keep Mobile service users	Keep Mobile respondents are registered members of the Keep Mobile transport service.
Carers ¹	As registered carers, the person cared for will be eligible to use community and / or social care transport services.

Where responses for each subgroup have been considered, statistical reliability is reduced. The table below outlines overall statistical reliability for subgroups:

Group	Total completions	Statistical reliability
Life Line service users	137	+/- 8%
Keep Mobile service users	114	+/- 9%
Carers	59	+/- 13%

For some questions, total base sizes of respondents are too small to be statistically robust. In these cases, findings are indicative only. Throughout the report, base sizes used are clearly identified.

A postal survey was also sent out to all drivers; 6 survey completions were received.

4.2 Depth interviews

Overall, 39 in-depth interviews were carried out with the following groups:

- 24 face to face interviews with service users
- 7 face to face interviews with staff
- 8 telephone interviews with local voluntary groups

These depth interviews were designed to provide an overview of the perceptions and experiences of service users and those delivering services alongside the transport service.

Participants were identified randomly from each service area to participate and were recruited by BFC.

4.3 Access Advisory Group discussion session

A discussion group was held with the local Access Advisory Group using Logo Visual Technology (LVT) tools to help participant's structure impressions of current service provision and to think strategically about future change.

This discussion was held during respondent's usual meeting times.

¹ Figures have not always been included on charts for carers. This is due to the very low base size of respondents who responded to some questions.

5. Key findings

This section of the report provides an overview of the key findings of this research.

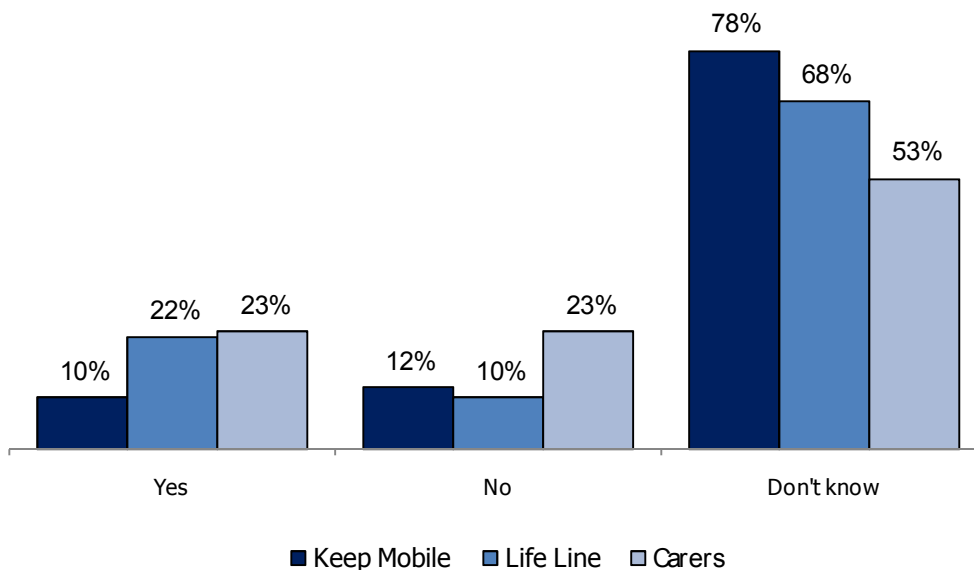
For clarity of reporting, throughout we refer to respondents as being either *satisfied* or *dissatisfied*. This refers to the grouped responses of survey participants who considered that they were either *fairly* or *very* satisfied, or *fairly* or *very* dissatisfied, for example.

5.1 Eligibility

All groups of respondents involved in the postal phase of research were likely not to know whether they, or the person they cared for, would be eligible for free social care operated by BFC.

This shows that respondents such as carers, who are perhaps more likely to have a greater experience of the social care system in Bracknell, are the least likely (53%) group not to know whether or not the person they care for would be eligible for social and / or community transport. Conversely, those already paying to use the Keep Mobile service are significantly² more likely (78%) not to know whether they would be eligible for free services.

Figure 1: Eligibility for free social care transport operated by BFC



Base: Keep Mobile, 81; Life Line, 110; Carers, 43

² Throughout the report, key differences are referred to as 'significantly' different; this refers to figures where the difference is statistically significant.

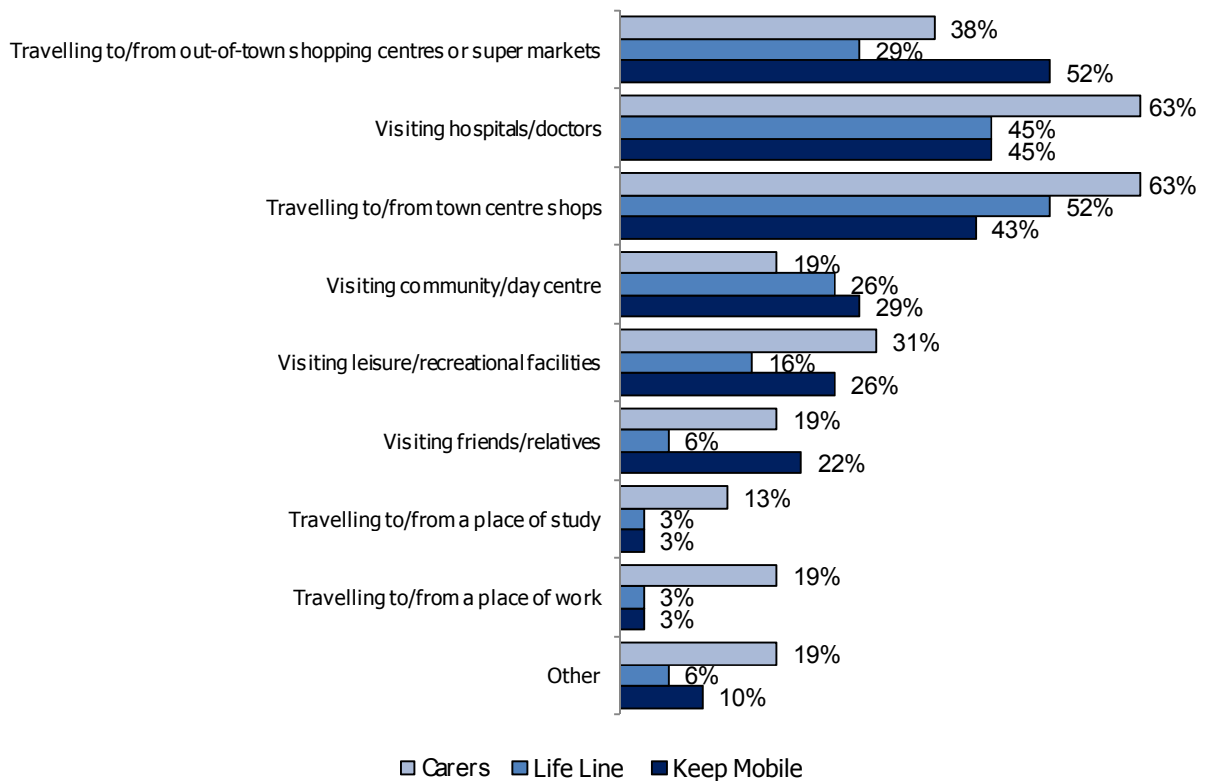
5.2 Journeys being made

5.2.1 Journeys made using social and community transport services

As Figure 2 shows, whilst the order of priority varies between groups of respondents, all postal survey respondents identified the same three key journeys being made. These are:

	KM	LL	C
• Travelling to / from out-of-town shopping centres or supermarkets	1	3	3
• Visiting the hospital or doctors	2	2	1
• Travelling to / from town centre shops	3	1	1

Figure 2: Journeys made using community transport service



Base: Keep Mobile, 58; Life Line, 31; Carers, 16

This view was reinforced during the qualitative phase of research, where findings showed that service users were using social and / or community transport services:

- For Shopping (typically less mobile groups without support)
- To attend work or volunteering placements (typically service users with learning disabilities)
- To get to doctors or hospital appointments
- To access day centres or group activities
- To socialise and see friends

Different groups of service users are using transport services very differently. This may reflect their support needs and how these are currently being supported, for example.

Typically, older respondents are likely to be using Keep Mobile services or social care transport provided by BFC to get them to day centres or support groups in addition to using Keep Mobile to go on outings and shopping trips. Indeed, when thinking about Keep Mobile services, this group tended to identify Keep Mobile with trips:

'For trips it's fine' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'Smashing outings' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

This is a view also expressed by other potential user groups who consider Keep Mobile to be a service which organises days out or shopping trips for older people, but is not a service which they could or would consider using:

'For old ladies, Keep mobile, they should be on time, go where they want to go and bus drivers should help them to their door' (service user, learning disabilities).

'Especially this one [Keep Mobile] for old people' (service user, learning disabilities).

'I would say that the people who need it most, the people like the elderly and people who want to go shopping but can't get out and about' (Service user, learning disability).

'It's sensible for them [elderly] to go out in it [Keep Mobile]' (Service user, learning disability).

This view is not entirely consistent with their experience, however, given a proportion of service users with learning disabilities had used a Keep Mobile service to attend club marmalade within a week of depth interviews taking place.

This suggests that service users may not necessarily recognise who ultimately delivers services used, not relating this to their knowledge or perceptions of services.

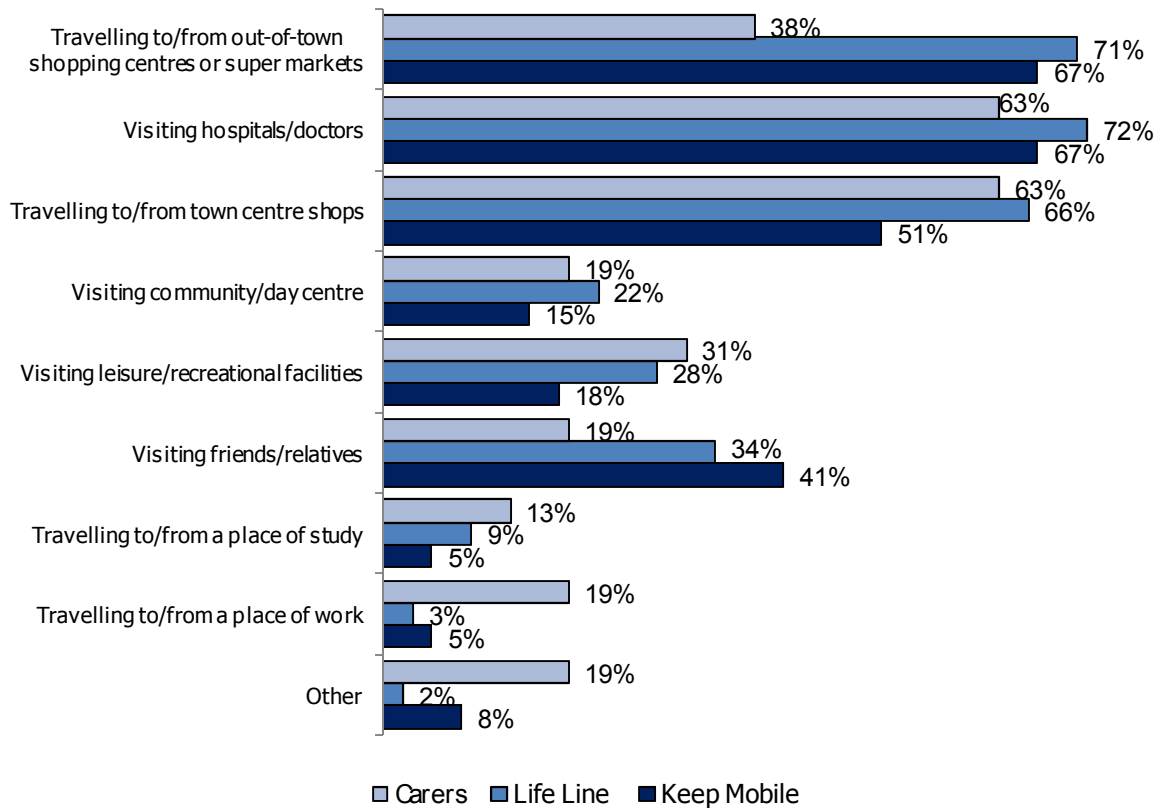
5.2.2 Journeys respondents would like to make

When asked to think about the journeys they would like to make using social and / or community transport services, Figure 3 shows that postal survey respondents would most like:

	KM	LL	C
• Travelling to / from out-of-town shopping centres or supermarkets	1	2	3
• Visiting the hospital or doctors	1	1	1
• Travelling to / from town centre shops	3	3	1

As Figure 3 highlights, carers are significantly less likely to identify that the person they care for would like to use services to go to out of town shopping centre or supermarkets. Whilst further research would be needed to establish the final cause of this finding, it seems likely that this is a reflection of the care support available to these service users, relieving the need from them to shop at supermarkets, for example.

Figure 3: Journeys would like to make using community transport service



Base: Keep Mobile, 39; Life Line, 58; Carers, 16

Some suggestion was made during the qualitative phase of research that typically older, less mobile respondents may be keen to make other types of local journeys using similarly supported transport services.

Comments suggested that there may be some demand for a more flexible, affordable service which they could use to make ad-hoc journeys, with (typically older) respondents keen to retain the level of support available through Keep Mobile of Day Centre services. This need was seen to reflect concerns expressed by some service users and staff regarding making any additional journeys by taxi. Whilst some service users remained very positive about the ability of existing taxi services used, others highlighted cost, support and safety concerns:

‘I wouldn’t want to get a taxi because I’m not very good at walking. I’ve had three new hips. I’m a bit vulnerable’ (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

5.2.3 Choice of how to make local journeys

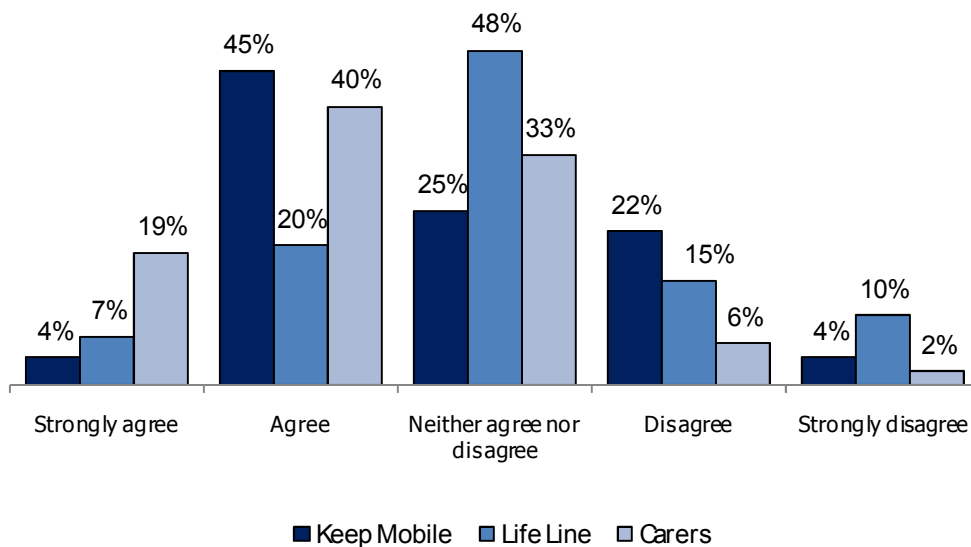
Postal survey respondents were asked to what extent they felt they, or the person they cared for, had a choice of transport in Bracknell.

As Figure 4 shows, agreement amongst postal survey respondents varies between groups. Life Line users in particular are significantly *less* likely than either of the other groups to agree to some extent that there is a choice of transport for them in Bracknell. However, this has not translated into higher levels of disagreement, with half (48%) instead considering that they neither agree nor disagree with this.

This is likely to reflect Life Line service user’s status as a group of respondents whose travel situation is less readily categorised than Keep Mobile service users, for example.

Figure 4 shows a strong pattern that those respondents who we know are likely to have used / or have access to some form of transport service (i.e. Keep Mobile users and carers) are more likely to be agree that they have a choice. Conversely, Life Line users are significantly more likely to have no opinion. This suggests Life Line respondents are less likely to be aware of transport services available to them.

Figure 4: Agreement that there is a choice of transport in Bracknell



Base: Keep Mobile, 97; Life Line, 109; Carers, 48

Comments made during the qualitative phase of research, however, tended to suggest that respondents did not feel that there was a choice of social and / or community transport services for them. This was reinforced when respondents were asked to think about what it would mean for them if Keep Mobile or their usual mode of social and / or community transport service was no longer available. Comments showed respondents struggled to suggest alternative means of transport they could access, with many tending to identify that this would have a dramatic impact on their quality of life:

'I'd get a bus but not in the dark' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'I would have to stay at home' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'It would mean me staying at home' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'I would just stay at home and watch TV' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

Taxis, for example, were widely not considered a viable alternative for many due to the cost and concerns over safety:

'I used to get a taxi and they used to cost money' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'I won't get in a taxi if I don't know the driver' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'I wouldn't want to get a taxi because I'm not very good at walking. I've had 3 new hips. I'm a bit vulnerable' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

Whilst respondents did not consider that there was a choice of services available to them, this was not necessarily considered to have been a negative point.

Whilst suggesting improvements to the services they did use, respondents widely considered themselves satisfied with the overarching aims of their usual mode of social and / or community transport suggesting that choice may be less important than an effective and reliable service which meets their needs.

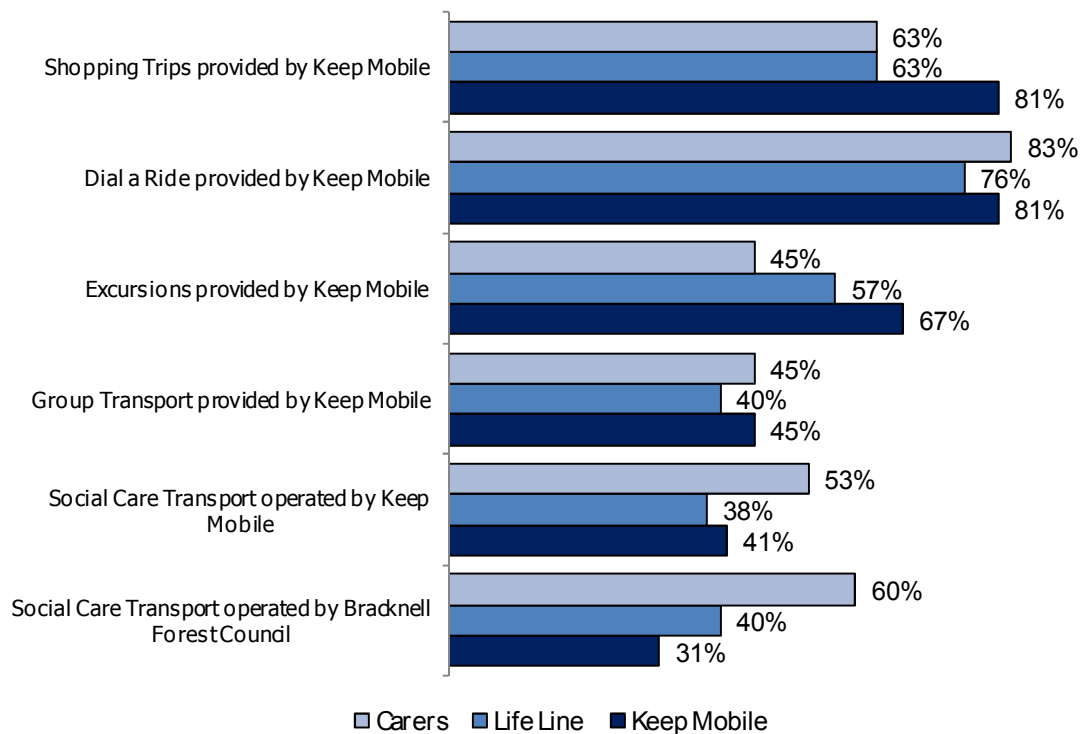
5.2.4 Transport service awareness

Whilst postal survey respondents are broadly likely to have heard of Shopping Trips, Dial a Ride and Excursions provided by Keep Mobile, some key differences emerged in terms of the levels of awareness between groups.

For example, statistically significant differences can be seen between the proportion of carers who have heard of social care transport services provided by BFC (60%) compared to registered users of Keep Mobile (31%).

Likewise, registered users of Keep Mobile are consistently more likely to be using services provided by Keep Mobile compared to either Life Line users, or carers. For example, 81% of Keep Mobile service users have heard of Shopping Trips compared to 63% of other respondents.

Figure 5: Transport services heard of



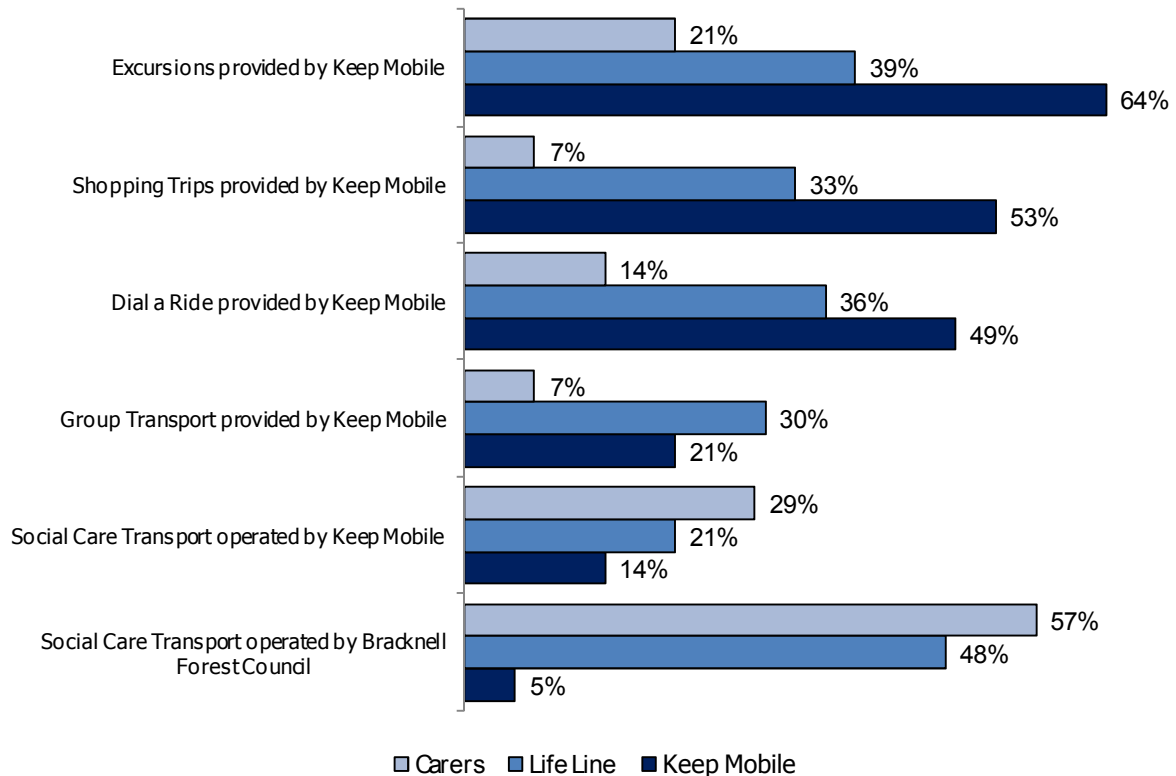
Base: Keep Mobile, 96; Life Line, 89; Carers, 40

5.2.5 Transport services used

Reflecting patterns seen in levels of service awareness, as Figure 6 shows, carers (57%) and Life Line (48%) survey respondents remain significantly more likely to be using social care services provided by BFC than those currently registered with Keep Mobile (5%).

This is a finding we would have anticipated seeing, given the likely level of social care dependency implied for each of the groups considered.

Figure 6: Transport services used



Base: Keep Mobile, 91; Life Line, 33; Carers, 14

In addition to these services, service users with learning disabilities were also likely to be using, or to have heard of, the learning disabilities Transport Trial. This is widely considered to be a crucial service for this group of users as it enabled them to access services or places they would not otherwise be able to:

Without the Transport Trial 'I'd have to give up volunteering at Ravenswood' (service user, learning disabilities).

'I don't usually go out in the evening but because this £2 bus has come in I do now' (service user, learning disabilities).

Were the learning disabilities Transport Trial not to continue, respondents and staff considered that this would be a significantly backwards step for this group of service users:

'I would have to stay at home' (service user, learning disabilities).

'All their independence would be taken away' (Staff, learning disabilities).

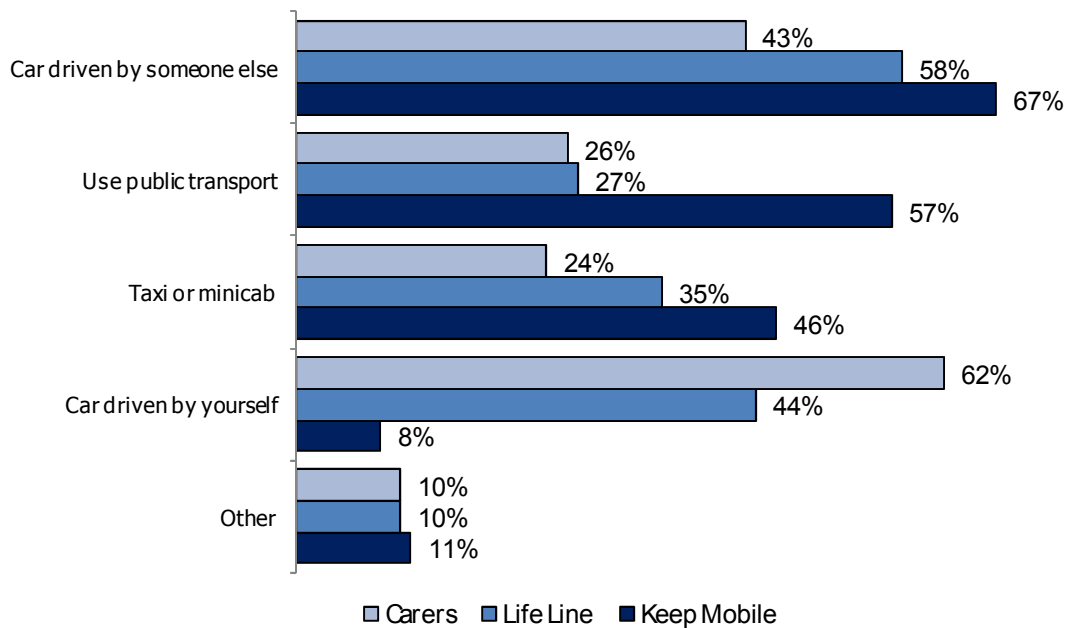
5.2.6 Other local journeys made

When asked whether they, or the person they care for, made any other journeys locally without using community and or social care transport services, the greatest proportion of all groups of postal survey respondents responded that they did (71% of Keep Mobile respondents, 78% of Life Line users and 89% of Carers).

All groups of postal survey respondents were significantly more likely to be making other journeys by car, either being driven by someone else or driving themselves.

Those respondents registered with Keep Mobile were particularly less likely to be able to drive themselves (8%) compared to either Life Line (44%) users or carers (62%) which may suggest a greater level of dependency on social care and community transport services.

Figure 7: How other journeys are being made



Base: Keep Mobile, 63; Life Line, 77; Carers, 42

Comments made during the qualitative phase of research support this finding that service users are likely to be making other journeys by car:

'I have my mum to drive me' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'My wife would drive me' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

There is some suggestion that this can leave service users heavily dependent on the help and support of others, reducing their independence and flexibility. This is evidently leaving some respondents feeling reliant on friends and family:

'[Keep Mobile] takes me out and about and I am less dependent on family members who are very busy' (Keep Mobile user, postal survey).

'Independence - able to access services and activities without relying on family' (Keep Mobile user, postal survey).

'Relieves carer from driving' (Carer, postal survey).

'Has given my son independence. He is able to access all his activities without relying on family transport' (Carer, postal survey)

'On Fridays I have a car. My support worker takes me in her car' (Learning disabilities service user)

For service users with learning disabilities, such reliance may be seen to run counter to the aims of the social care being provided to them, which aims to enable service users to lead as independent lives as possible:

'We're directing and educating members to be involved in the local community and leading much more independent lives. So they need to be able to get there!' (Staff, learning disabilities)

'The people who are using the service, they're trying to make them independent' (Staff, driver).

Further to this, when considering the transport options available to service users with learning disabilities, comments highlighted the potential disabilities to them should others need to drive them. For example, whilst respondents may expect that carers would drive them if needed, this would not necessarily be the case as care policies may not allow for this, or where the carers themselves may be unable to drive.

Where support workers were able to drive service users, this would have a significant time impact on the number of support hours then left available to the individual service user, as their support time would effectively be taken up by driving the individual to a venue rather than helping them with other care needs.

For some service users, however, driving is unlikely to be an option at all; with some staff highlighting some groups of service users are unlikely to be able to have access to a car at all:

'The type of people we work with don't have their own transport' (staff, family centre).

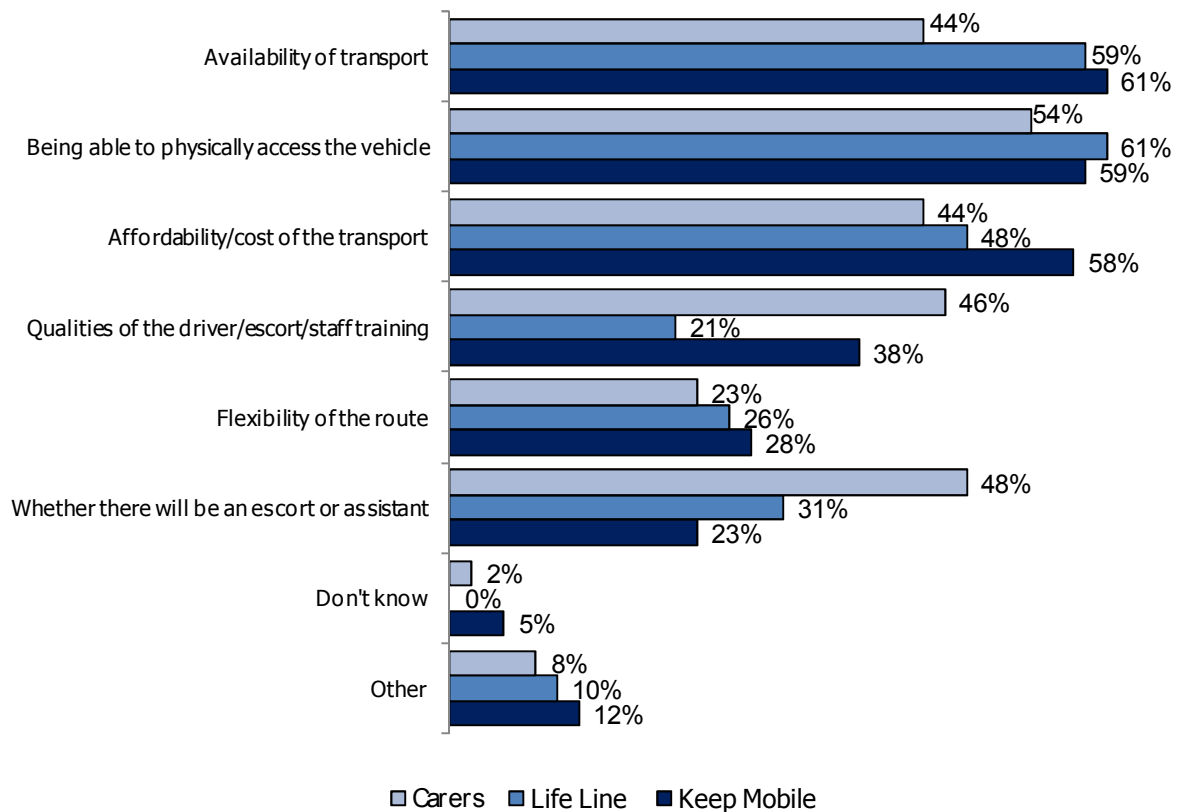
5.2.7 Factors affecting how journeys are made

When asked to consider the factors which they felt were the most important to them when deciding whether or not to use social and community transport services, Figure 8 highlights some key differences in perceived factors importance between groups of respondents.

For example, carers are significantly more likely to consider whether there will be an escort or assistant on the service important (48%) compared to those currently registered with Keep Mobile (23%).

Likewise, carers are also significantly more likely (46%) to identify the qualities of the driver, escort or staff training to be important compared to either Life Line service users (38%) or Keep Mobile users (21%).

Figure 8: Important factors when deciding whether or not to use community transport services



Base: Keep Mobile, 104; Life Line, 110; Carers, 48

Likewise, comments made during the qualitative phase of research suggest that the perceived importance of factors also differs in importance between groups of service users.

For example, whilst cost was identified as an important factor for all groups of respondents, a simple cost structure was considered to be particularly important for respondents with learning disabilities.

This reflected two key factors. Firstly, the current fare structure for Keep Mobile services was considered to be overly complicated for some service users. Secondly, emphasis was placed on the importance for service users to know exactly how much their proposed journey would cost them, to enable them to effectively budget for this:

'The other thing is, the feedback that I get is that it [Keep Mobile] is expensive and that kind of restricts their needs for the day centre because they can only afford to come once or max twice a week and they do say that it is quite expensive' (Voluntary Group representative).

'They [Keep Mobile] cost a lot, that's the only thing. They do mileage, don't they? They charged me about £24 and I could never work out why and they never gave me a receipt thing. So I rang them up one day and I asked for one and they didn't send one. The lady was really sharp on the phone' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'[Keep Mobile have] very complicated fare structures' (Staff interview, learning disabilities).

'We have clients who say they can't come in this week because they can't afford it, or Keep Mobile won't pick them up or they're too expensive if they hire them' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

5.3 Barriers to travelling with social and / or community transport services

When postal survey respondents were asked to consider whether there were any specific reasons why either they or the person they cared for did not use community and / or social care transport to make some local journeys, the most frequently identified barriers were:

1. Knowing the service was available and how to access these (33):

Overall, postal survey respondents were likely to consider that they either were unaware what transport services were available to them, or that they did not have enough information about these. Those registered with Keep Mobile were more likely to report having had information about the range of services available:

'I was absolutely unaware that they [transport services] existed. I would very much like more information about them. I am 84 and a little disabled. I walk with a frame' (Life Line postal survey).

'Details not available, so haven't considered it [transport services]' (Keep Mobile postal survey).

'Do not know anything about them [transport services]' (Life Line postal survey).

This was a barrier frequently identified by all other groups of respondents during the qualitative phase of research.

2. Respondents are able to drive themselves or have support to drive them locally (26):

Respondents from the postal survey were likely to identify having access to a car. This could either be as a driver or passenger:

'I can cope with local journeys by car but did not know there was any alternative' (Life Line postal survey).

'Our daughter has her car and takes us where we need or want to go.' (Life Line postal survey).

Having access to a car remained a strong presumption against using social and community transport for respondents in the qualitative phase of research also. However, as previously noted, for some service users such as those using Family Services, it is unlikely that they will have reliable access to a car. Likewise, being dependent on others driving them to locations can be considered counter to the aim of independent living for service users such as those with learning disabilities.

3. Convenience and ease of use (15):

For some groups of respondents, the perceived convenience of the service has been cited as a barrier to using community and social care transport services. Comments made by postal survey respondents suggest that services may not be seen as the easiest way for

respondents to make journeys (e.g. those with their own car may find this more convenient) or lack the confidence to go out using any unfamiliar service:

'Convenience. Confidence' (Life Line postal survey).

'I am nearly 94 years old. I can't walk very well so I don't go out' (Life Line postal survey).

This was not a finding strongly reflected in findings from the qualitative phase of research. However, this is perhaps not surprising given all respondents involved in depth interviews were likely to be using some form of social and / or community transportation.

For these respondents, this barrier instead tended to relate to the time spent either waiting for services to arrive and also to the length of time which some respondents could spend on the bus. This related to the perception that the first people to be picked up could then be on the bus for a considerable period of time before reaching day centres, for example:

'The first person is on the [Keep Mobile] bus for an awfully long time because they have to go around and pick everyone up' (Voluntary group).

4. Cost of the service (14):

Respondents to the postal survey were likely to identify cost as a key barrier to them using social and / or community transport services in Bracknell. This related both to the actual cost of Keep Mobile services and also to the perception that any change of transportation would be more expensive than their current mode of transport:

'Too expensive' (Life Line postal survey).

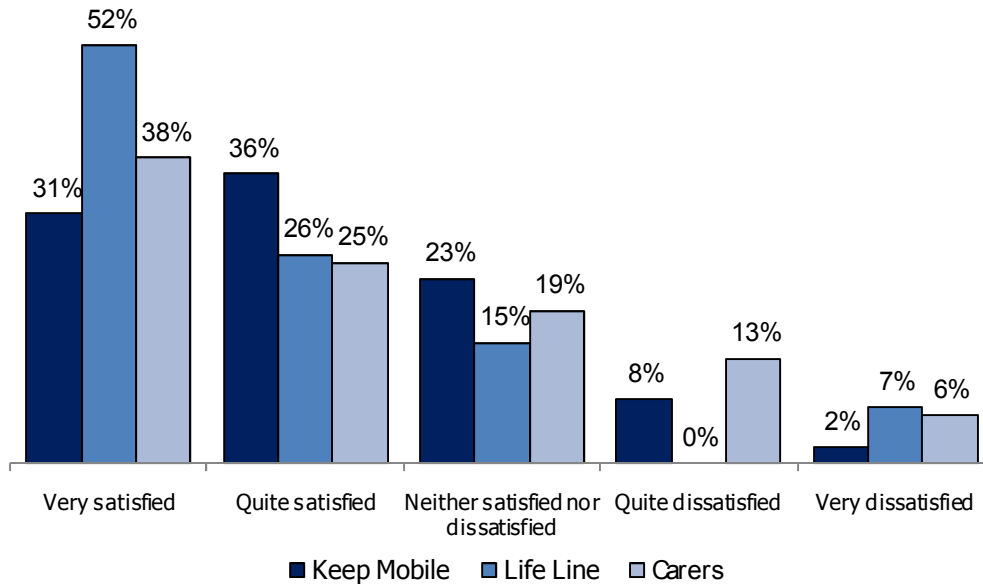
'Cost because she gets free bus travel [concessionary fares]' (Carers postal survey).

Cost was also highlighted as a key barrier by respondents to the qualitative phase of research. This related both to the perceived high cost of using Keep Mobile, particularly for individual journeys, and also to feelings that the existing fare structure was not transparent for users, and could cause confusion.

5.4 Experience of service use

As Figure 9 shows, in the case of each group of postal survey respondents, the greatest proportions of those who have used local travel services operated either by Keep Mobile or BFC social care consider themselves satisfied with the services overall.

Figure 9: Overall satisfaction with transport services



Base: Keep Mobile, 97; Life Line, 27; Carers, 16

This is reflected in the comments made by service users during the depth interview phase of research. Thinking specifically about the Keep Mobile service provided, comments included:

'They've been very good to me, Keep Mobile' (Depth interview, DC service user).

'Very useful service which we couldn't do without' (Voluntary group, depth interview)

Likewise, thinking about the social care transport services provided directly by BFC, comments were broadly very positive:

'You absolutely get first class attention' (Depth interview, DC service user).

'As soon as the bus arrives it's enjoyable because you get someone to talk to when you're on your own all the time. Immediately on the bus you've got company' (Depth interview, DC service user).

For respondents with learning disabilities, the Transport Trial was commented on more frequently than other forms of transport available to them. Despite some initial problems encountered, these were widely considered to be 'teething problems,' respondents remain largely very positive about this service:

'I think it's very good and reliable' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'I didn't like the idea of Keep Mobile. I like that one [Transport Trial] better because that's better' [sic] (Service user, learning disabilities).

'I don't usually go out in the evening but because this £2 bus has come in I do now' (Service user, learning disabilities).

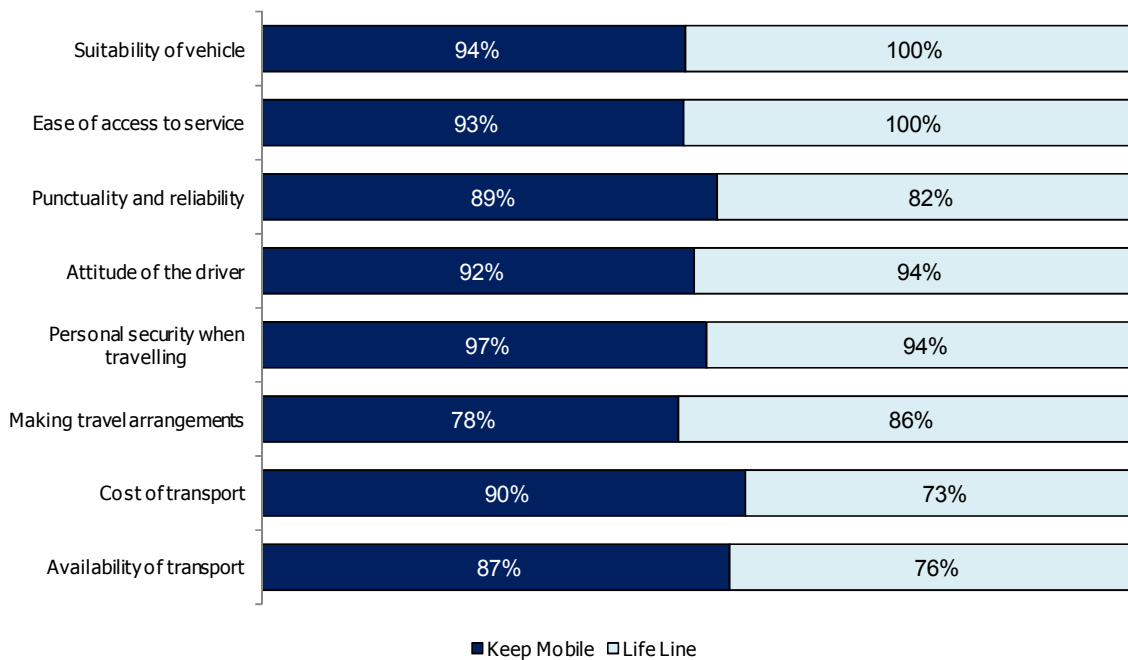
5.4.1 Extent to which needs are met

Respondents were asked to consider to what extent they considered that the transport services provided by Keep Mobile and BFC meet their travel needs.

As Figure 10 shows, for each of the criteria given, the greatest proportion of respondents consider that their needs are met either fully or most of the time.

Those respondents currently registered with Keep Mobile are significantly less likely (78%) than Life Line users (86%) to consider that their needs are being met with regards to making travel arrangements.

Figure 10: Extent to which the service provided by Keep Mobile and BFC meet travel needs



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 64-78; Life Line, 11-18

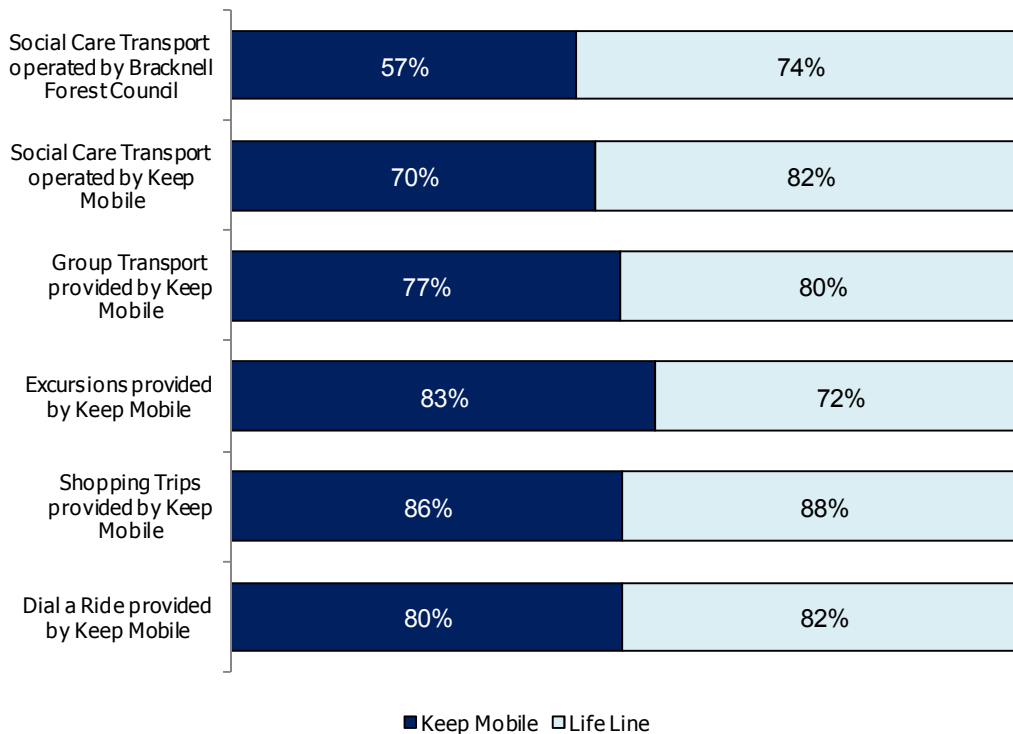
Respondents are broadly positive about the range and type of journeys they are able to make using existing community and social care transport services in Bracknell. However, satisfaction with services available is linked to whether or not they were aware of services available, e.g. Dial a Ride for local journeys.

5.4.2 Service availability

Figure 11 outlines the proportions of registered Keep Mobile and Life Line survey respondents who considered themselves to be satisfied to some extent with the availability of each of the community and or social care transport services suggested.

As Figure 11 shows, for each service, the greatest proportions of respondents consider that they are satisfied with the availability of community and social care transport services.

Figure 11: Satisfaction with the availability of community and or social care transport services



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 14-66; Life Line, 17-23³

This is a finding reflected in responses during the qualitative phase of research, with respondents being broadly satisfied with the availability of services.

This was not, however, a universal experience, with service users with learning disabilities being unlikely to have accessed Keep Mobile services. Staff working with this group identified clear difficulties in booking this service:

'Only on very few occasions have members been able to use the [Keep Mobile] service' (Staff interview, learning disabilities).

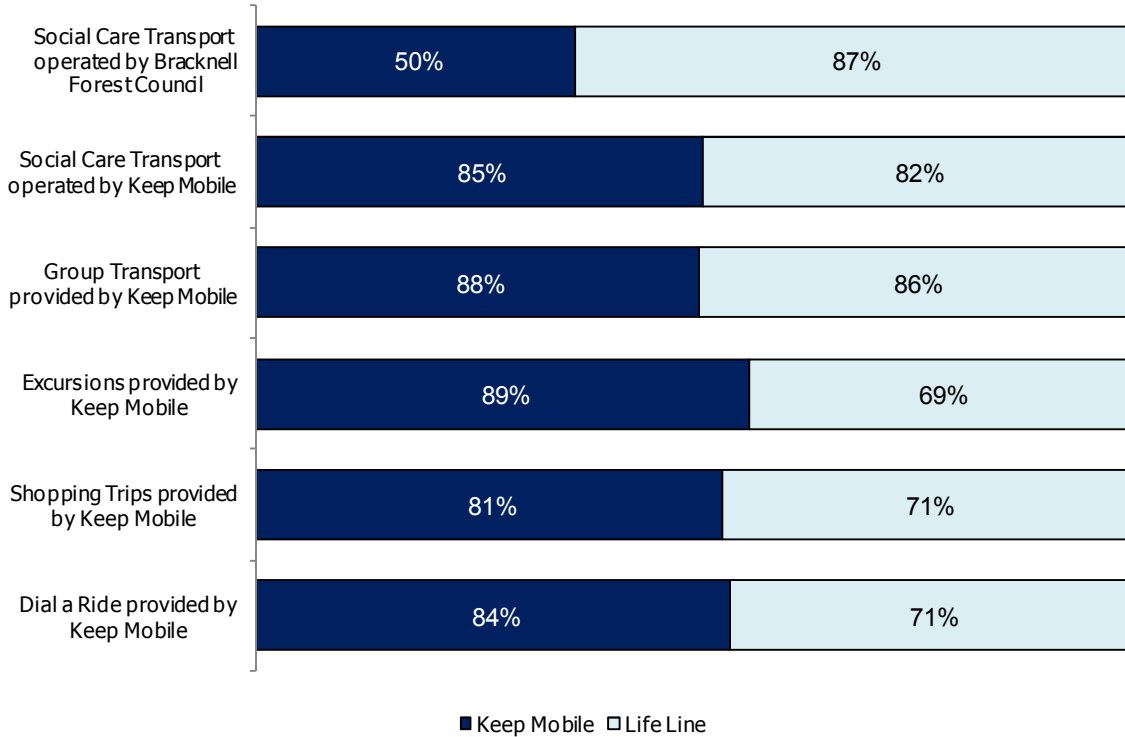
'A partnership that never really got started' (Staff interview, learning disabilities).

³ Carers have not been included in this section of the research due to the exceptionally low base size of respondents to this Section.

5.4.3 Arranging travel

As Figure 12 shows, when thinking about how easy or difficult respondents have found it to arrange travel services using each of the suggested services the greatest proportion of respondents are likely to consider it had been easy to some extent to arrange travel using each type of service.

Figure 12: Ease of arranging travel services



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 14-63; Life Line, 7-15

Respondents are broadly satisfied with the way all transport services are booked. However, others have found services difficult to always plan journeys so far ahead of time, and to book journeys:

'There have been times in the past when I have had to have a talk with Keep Mobile and I know it sounds awful, I hate saying this but they haven't been very helpful at all' (Voluntary Group representative).

'As we have to work with crisis [situations], you can't account for everything' (Staff, family centre).

'It [Keep Mobile] isn't a friendly service, I can't say they are nasty or rude, but it just isn't friendly' (Voluntary Group representative).

'I know they [Keep Mobile] are harassed with old people ringing them up all the time, but I just feel they could be a little bit nicer down there, I actually

volunteered my services as a courier, but was treated so badly' (Voluntary Group representative).

For those respondents responsible for organising day centre or service transport, it was noted that it would be more helpful if changes were made to the cancellation service. Staff are unable to cancel bookings for service users, which given that some service users can have memory problems, for example, can cause difficulties for staff:

'We're not allowed to actually overrule the booking that they've got [with Keep Mobile] or make any changes to that unless they've been taken ill' (Day Centre staff).

'Better communication between call centre and drivers as I personally waste a lot of time going to pick up clients only to be told sorry I cancelled or I don't want to go to the place I've booked for [Day Centre services and learning disabilities Transport Trial]' (Driver, postal survey).

'If we've phoned Keep Mobile before, they won't deal with us they say it has to come from the actual member, now if that's the case we've got people with short term memory problems or they get very nervous about using the phone, it would be nice if we were able to do that for them' (Voluntary Group representative).

'Sometimes we get members because of short-term memory impairment and things like that, they forget to cancel [Keep Mobile] and when they do they get this letter through that quite frightens them, this is the feedback that I've got from a couple of members, a letter demanding that they've got to pay money and they've actually forgotten to cancel the transport, [...] there was one lady who had been taken into hospital and she lived on her own and she didn't have a family, obviously she couldn't cancel the transport and that was quite upsetting for her'(Voluntary Group representative).

Suggestion was also made that, particularly for older or physically disabled respondents, they would like to be able to travel more flexibly or spontaneously:

'Sometimes it would be nice if we could be a bit more spontaneous' (Day Centre service user, older people).

This was typically less likely to be identified by service users with learning disabilities, who have access to the learning disabilities Transport Trial which enables them to travel to any destination within the designated area boundaries.

Whilst respondents were broadly very positive about the learning disabilities Transport Trial booking system, one barrier had been experienced by some who had, on occasion, found staff struggled to either understand what they were saying and the journey they wanted to make.

Staff, however, were significantly less positive about the learning disabilities Transport Trial booking system, based on their experiences of double booking and the timings of pick-ups and drop-offs scheduled:

'There is a lot of trouble with bookings at the moment. You could say its early days but in my opinion it should have been sorted out because it's been 6 months' (Staff interview, driver).

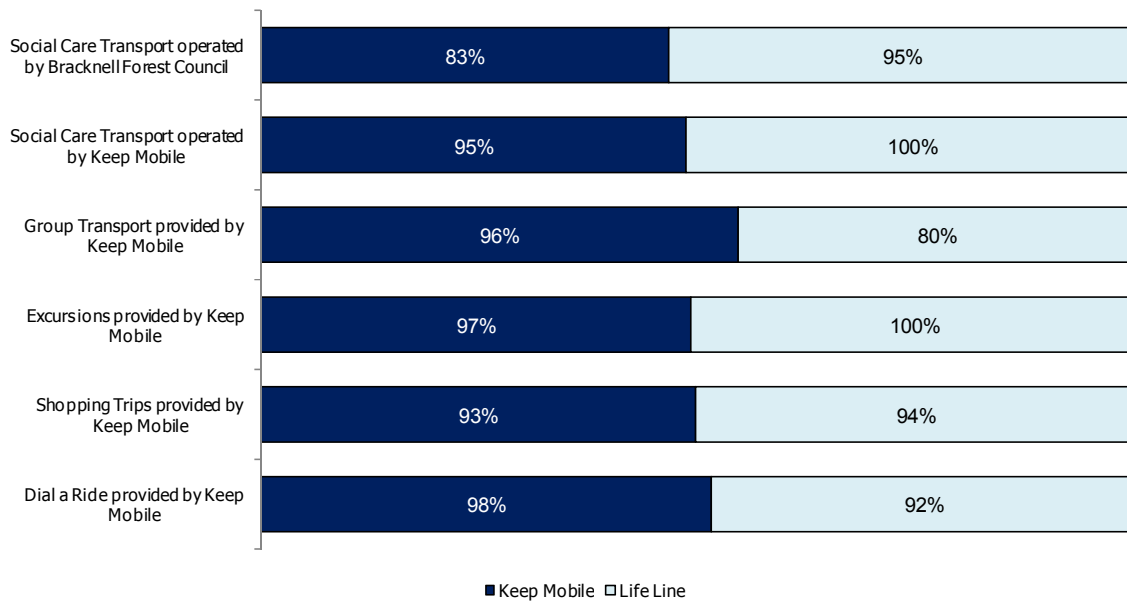
'When all the jobs pan out nicely, every half an hour or so it's the best job in the world but sometimes I had to be in seven different places at the same time. Why would they possibly book me to be in seven places at 10am?' (Staff interview, driver).

'What I'm having to do, because I know most of the people I'm picking up, I know I can get there a few minutes early, say ten or fifteen minutes early and be ten or fifteen minutes late for the next one instead of being in two places at 10am' (Staff interview, driver).

5.3.4 Personal security

As Figure 13 shows, the majority of respondents using each of the services feel safe when travelling with each of the services suggested.

Figure 13: Respondents feeling safe using services



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 12-65; Life Line, 10-20

Comments from the qualitative phase of research reinforced this, with strong feelings of safety being expressed for each form of transport:

'Very safe' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'The girls come straight to the door. We get assistance all the time' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'No need to worry about anything' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

Some safety concerns were raised, however, in relation to time spend waiting for services to arrive. For example, in the case of Keep Mobile, where transport is late to pick up from Day Centre services, service users have on rare occasions been left waiting outside.

Safety concerns due to late arrivals were, however, also frequently attributed to the learning disabilities Transport Trial. Difficulties outlined related to what respondents saw as 'teething problems' related to the booking system, with ensuring returned journeys had both been booked and were registered on the drivers log being identified as repeat problems, and also in ensuring that service users were called if the service would be late:

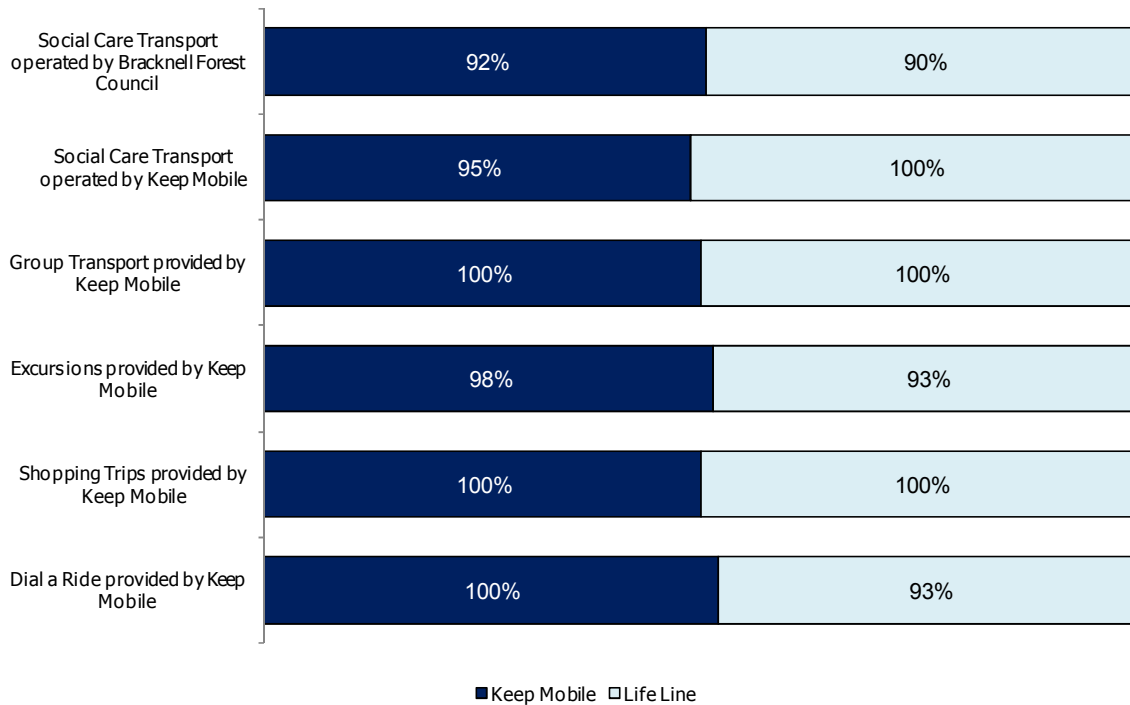
'It was booked for half past three and it didn't turn up. She was worried, she was waiting in the dark, she didn't have no phone on her because she'd left it at her sisters and she was crying, she was cold and I was expecting her at my house at 4 o'clock and she didn't turn up so I was getting worried. The bus didn't pick her up at all' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'I'd booked it for seven o'clock to pick me up and bring me back at nine o'clock and they didn't pick me up until ten o'clock. Something could have happened in that time' (Service user, learning disabilities).

5.3.5 Attitude of drivers

Respondents were asked to what extent they considered the attitude of service drivers to have been good or poor. As Figure 14 shows, for each of the services, the majority of respondents considered that the driver's attitude had been good.

Figure 14: Satisfaction with the drivers' attitude



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 13-61; Life Line, 7-15

This was reinforced during the qualitative phase of research, with comments being strongly positive regarding driver's attitudes. Whilst some respondents have experienced problems in the past, respondents tended to know or recognise drivers and to consider them very helpful and friendly:

'The [Transport Trial] driver is friendly' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'The [Keep Mobile] drivers are lovely, I can see that they do care a lot about their jobs' (Voluntary Group representative).

'I've found them [BFC drivers] very helpful and very good' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'99.9% of the [Keep Mobile] drivers are absolutely wonderful and lovely' (Voluntary Group representative).

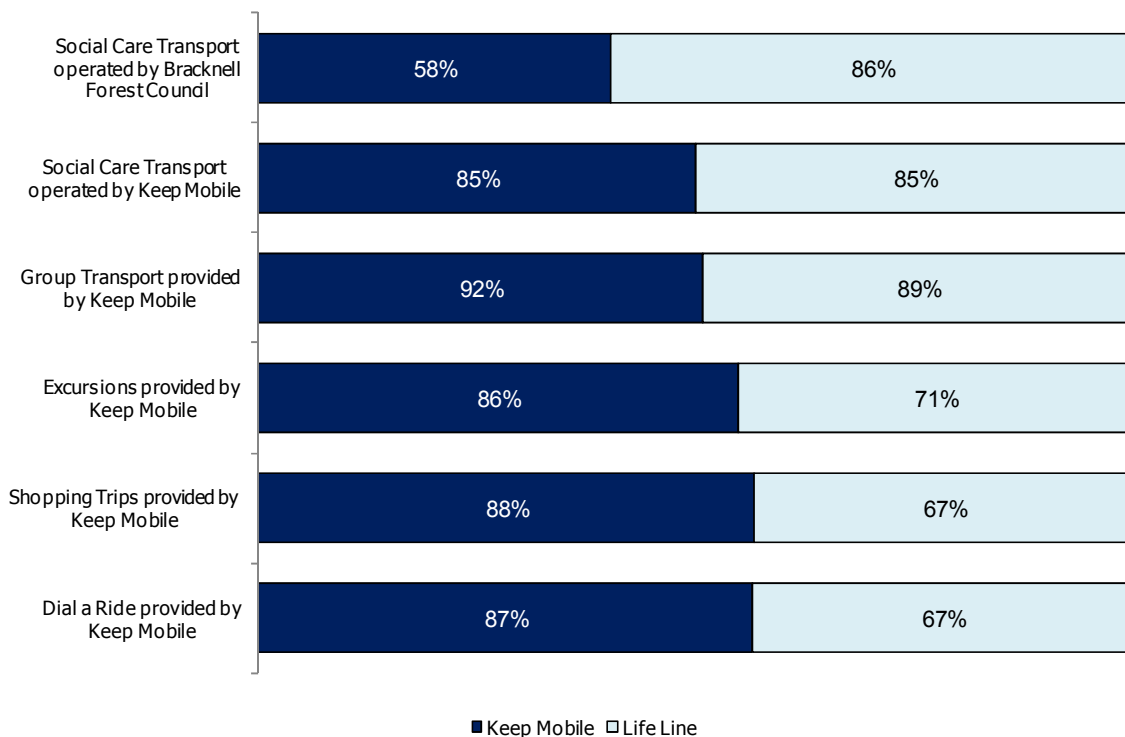
5.3.6 Service punctuality and reliability

When asked to consider the extent to which they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall punctuality and reliability of services provided, as Figure 15 shows, for all services, the greatest proportion of respondents consider themselves satisfied.

However, some differences do emerge, with Life Line service users being less satisfied than Keep Mobile users with services such as the Excursions, Shopping Trips and Dial a Ride services.

Keep Mobile users are also significantly less likely (58%) than Life Line users to be satisfied with the social care transport services operated by BFC.

Figure 15: Satisfaction with the punctuality and reliability of services



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 12-59; Life Line, 9-21

The qualitative phase of research highlighted the punctuality and reliability of all services to be an area which could be improved.

Overall, the degree to which punctuality was actually an issue appeared to depend largely on the type of services respondents were using:

Social care transport operated by Keep Mobile and Bracknell Forest Council

Respondents from all service groups identified that services which took them to and from Day Centres and other services were often early or late in the mornings:

'They [Keep Mobile] might be a bit late sometimes or a bit early on other days but on the whole they're very good really' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'It [BFC service] comes when it comes' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'Sometimes they're [BFC service] a bit late but usually they're just very good' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

This is not, however, widely identified as necessarily being a problem. Both service users, staff and voluntary group organisers recognise that the timeliness of the service is often reflection of service users simply not always being ready to leave when the transport arrives.

However, there was some feeling that services, particularly Keep Mobile should be able to build more time into their timetable to allow for this. This was raised as a concern in response to a feeling that some service users and their families were not receiving the service they were entitled to due to late arrival and early pick-ups from group sessions and services:

'The only bad thing about them [Keep Mobile] is that they sometimes turn up late then they turn up early to take them home again' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'Pick up / drop off times [BFC services] vary enormously depending on the route and the particular driver' (Driver, postal survey)

'I can guarantee you if you are here today around about 2.30, quarter to three you will see people getting their coats on and getting ready to be on the [Keep Mobile] bus when some of them haven't got here to half past ten, quarter to eleven. Keep Mobile will turn up about that time' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'Sometimes they [Keep Mobile] drop the stroke victims off at 11 [...] and it finishes at 12.30' (Voluntary Group representative).

'Because they tend to come in later there's a lot of negative about the time they [Keep Mobile] get in here because if they get here late they've missed out on some of the activities' (Day Centre staff, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'One lady who was on crutches, she was picked up at 10.15, taken all round the houses [by Keep Mobile] and arrived at the hall at 12.40 and we finished at 1pm (Voluntary Group representative).

This can have implications for the running of sessions with groups being interrupted and disrupted; shortened sessions can see activities 'squeezed out.' For example, one respondent noted that their session raffle was vulnerable to short sessions which was a particular concern as this was their 'main source of income.'

Whilst recognising that timings were highly dependent on service users being ready when the transport arrived, there was also some feeling that timings could sometimes be excessive and unfair for the individuals involved:

'You're paying for a service and you want it to meet your needs not Keep Mobile's needs' (Day Centre service user).

'There were a few times in the past where they've been dropped off [by Keep Mobile] at lunch time but still picked up at half past 2 and then obviously they have to pay for the service that we give and we charge them for a full day and they've only been there for a couple of hours' (Voluntary Group representative).

Whilst a degree of movement in pick up and drop of times were expected by all groups of respondents, it was felt that Keep Mobile could do more to minimise this:

'I've got to speak to them [Keep Mobile] again because I don't know whether they've misunderstood and they think we start a bit later, but it's been getting later. Sometimes it's the traffic which is understandable [...].I tried to tactfully say perhaps you could come a bit earlier but it's very difficult' (Voluntary Group representative).

Alongside this, some suggestion was made that where Keep Mobile drivers arrived early but were not intentionally pressurising service users to leave, there was an impression that users could feel compelled to leave as soon as they became aware that their driver had arrived:

'If you see someone waiting for you, you think it's time to go, even if it isn't your time to go' (Day Centre service user, Older People and Physically Disabled).

This was seen to relate to 'pressure from the depot,' and was not a problem identified with similar transport services provided by BFC.

Learning disabilities Transport Trial

Service users were likely to consider that the learning disabilities Transport Trial had often been late or early when collecting them.

Similarly, this was considered likely to be a problem when service users needed to reach their destination by a specific time:

'I'm not going to use it [Transport Trial] because if they're late I'm going to lose my job' (Service user, learning disabilities)

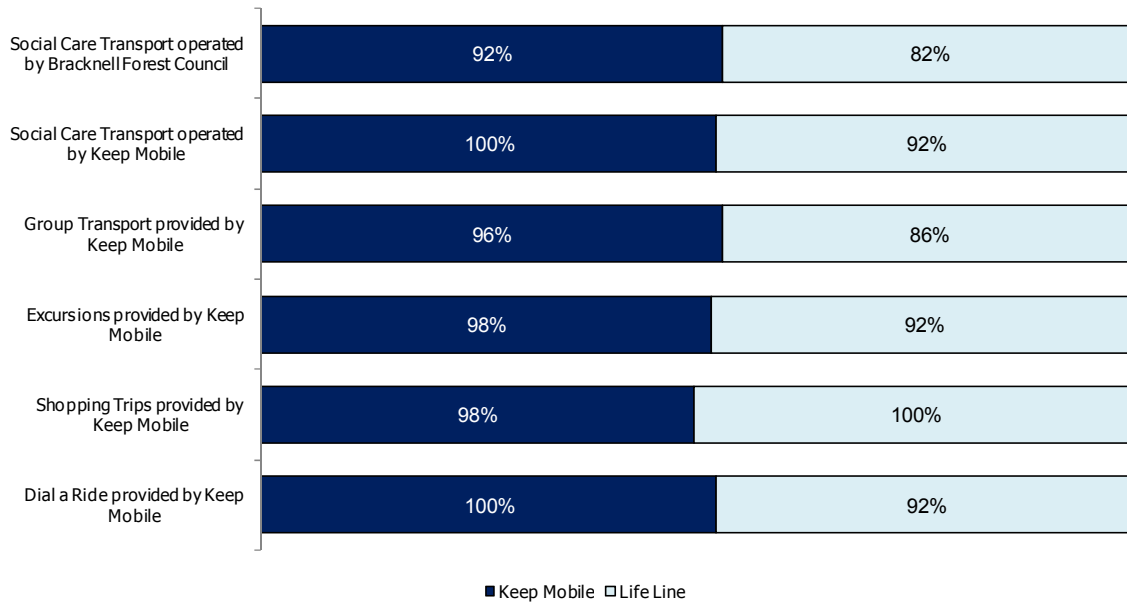
Concerns instead centred on the worry caused by late services and the potential safety concerns raised:

'These people tend to panic a bit when there's no carers with them' (Staff, driver).

5.3.7 Ease of access

Respondents were then asked to consider how easy or difficult they found it to access services. As Figure 16 shows, the majority of respondents considered themselves satisfied with their ease of access to each type of service.

Figure 16: Satisfaction with the ease of access to services



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 12-5; Life Line, 7-22

All groups of respondents were broadly very satisfied with the vehicles used for each service in terms of their physical accessibility.

A key area of difficulty identified by staff and voluntary group organisers responsible for arranging transport, however, was that they had experienced difficulties relating to the number of wheelchair and walker places vehicles were actually able to provide.

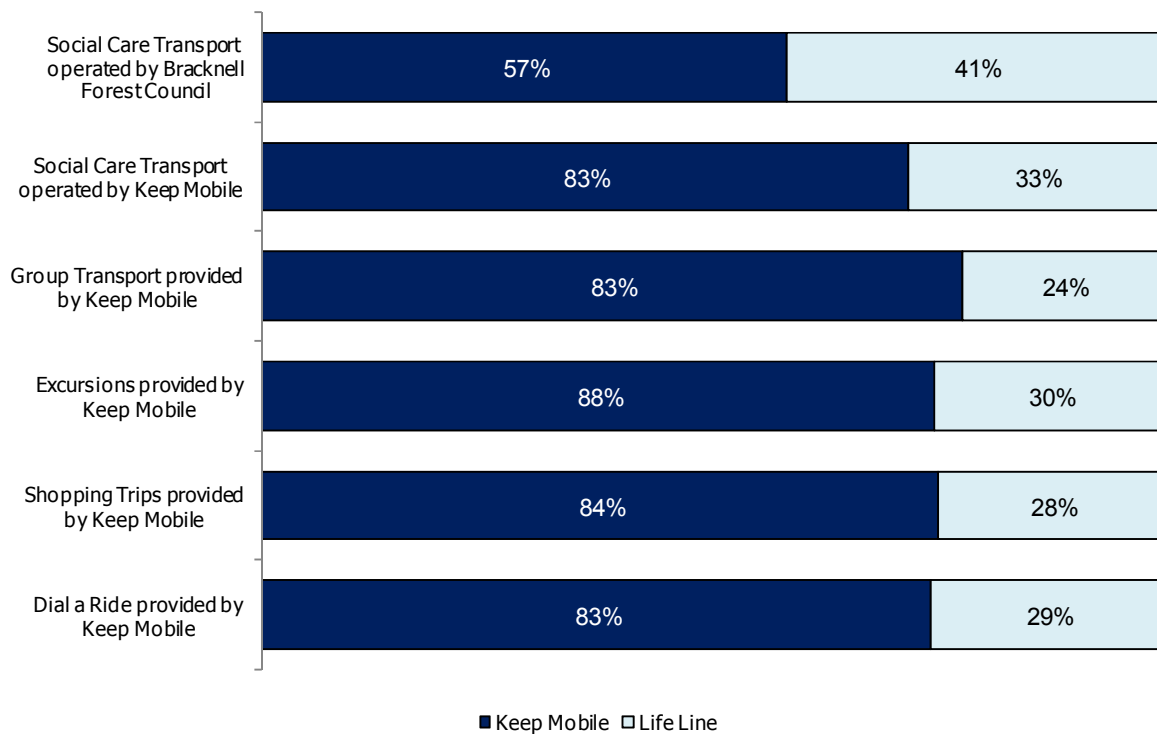
This could be a particular problem for Day Centre and Keep Mobile social care transport services which are likely to have high numbers of physically disabled service users.

5.3.8 Service information

As Figure 17 shows, respondents who are using Keep Mobile services are consistently more likely to be satisfied with how easy it has been for them to find out information about community and transport services compared to Life Line users.

For example, whilst 83% of Keep Mobile users are satisfied with ease of finding out information about Group Transport services provided by Keep Mobile, compared to just 24% of Life Line service users.

Figure 17: Ease of finding information out about community and transport service



Base: Range Keep Mobile, 14-65; Life Line, 25-31

Findings suggest there is a need for further information regarding the social and community transport services available in the Bracknell area to be publicised:

'I don't think it's advertised what they're [Keep Mobile] providing' (Day Centre Staff, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'I don't think hardly anyone knows they [Keep Mobile] run the shopping trips or Dial a Ride' (Day Centre Staff, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'I don't think everyone that might use them knows about them [Keep Mobile]' (Day Centre Staff, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'I think they [Keep Mobile] could advertise more' (Day Centre staff, Older People and Physically Disabled).

When postal survey respondents were asked how they had found out about the transport services available to them, most frequently identified methods were:

- Word of mouth from friends, neighbours and family (40)
- From Day Centres or other services and groups attended (22)
- Information sent to home (16)

When asked to think about how they would like to find out information about the transport services available to them, by leaflet or letter (137) was the strongest preference identified, with carers or social services also a preferred option (23).

This was a preference reinforced during the qualitative phase of research, where Day Centre service users were keen to have further information posted to them, or passed on by their carers.

However, interviews with respondents with learning disabilities highlighted that this group in particular are highly dependent on information being verbally supplied to them, either through carers, friends and support services used. This was considered to be a particularly important information route given with reading material may be difficult to access:

'Members don't access literature well' (Staff interview, learning disabilities).

'They don't even know the [Transport Trial] system exists. The paperwork's been sent out to homes and some people say they don't know anything about it. Maybe they don't read the stuff that comes through the mail' (Staff interview, driver).

Prior to the arrival of the learning disabilities Transport Trial, staff working with service users with learning disabilities had tried to overcome this barrier by inviting representatives of Keep Mobile into the Day Centre to introduce the service available. Whilst this is based on the perceptions of one respondent only, this was felt to have proven to be an exceptionally difficult task, although the visit did take place:

'Seemed to be a great reluctance to give a few hours of their time' (Staff interview, learning disabilities).

It was also highlighted that information about the learning disabilities Transport Trial had been sent to all eligible service users, yet users frequently identified not having received any information about this service:

'I've been told that there were leaflets about the transport trial but, not to my knowledge' (Service user, learning disabilities).

This further supports the view that leaflets or other literature may not be a widely effective way of reaching these service users.

6. Looking forwards

All groups of respondents were asked to think about how they would like to see community and/ or social care transport improved in the future. A discussion group was also held with the Access Advisory panel to consider their impressions of the services provided and how these could be improved going forwards.

Overall, service users, staff and carers identified six key areas where they would like to see service improvements. These have been outlined in further detail in the sub-sections below:

6.1 Booking transport

Key suggestions

Keep Mobile:

- Easier for groups to arrange travel
- Longer hours to contact Keep Mobile and scope for others to arrange travel for some individuals.

Learning disabilities Transport Trial

- Improve reliability of booked system
- Practical pick-up times agreed



Keep Mobile

Services users with learning disabilities and staff working with this group have not historically used Keep Mobile services. Staff have found it difficult to arrange group travel with Keep Mobile and service users have found the service complicated.

Whilst the learning disabilities Transport Trial now seems to be substantially meeting service users individual travel needs, respondents identified that they would like to book and use Keep Mobile for group travel in the future.

Respondents using Keep Mobile to attend support groups or Day Centres tended to identify the communication side of the booking process as the key area they would like to see improved.

For example, whilst transport may be booked for a specific time, services tend to arrive within a 'window' around the booked time. Respondents would like precise pick-up times to be better communicated as uncertainly can cause some users to worry.

Centre staff and voluntary group respondents suggested they would like to be able to have greater involvement in arranging journeys for some service users. For example, in the cases of respondents with mental health problems, centre staff would like the booking system to allow them to cancel journeys on their behalf.

Learning disabilities Transport Trial

Respondents widely considered the booking system for the learning disabilities Transport Trial to be the aspect of the service most in need of improving.

Difficulties with the service experienced were seen to be problems stemming from the booking system such as return journeys not being booked, being booked but not included on the drivers schedule or the bus being late.

Comments suggested that times being booked for journeys were often not realistic, with time-slots being double booked or insufficient time being left between booked pick-ups for the driver to reach the second pick-up on time.

Overall

Respondents were keen to see communication with Keep Mobile and the learning disabilities Transport Trial improved. Comments suggested respondents would like to see an out of hours contact number which they can use to contact services over the weekend and at night.

In the case of the learning disabilities Transport Trial this was felt to be particularly important in case of emergency, or in the event of the bus not arriving when expected.

6.2 Marketing and publicity

Key suggestions

All groups of respondents consider there is a need for more information to be available about the range of services available across the Bracknell area.



Respondents felt all social and community transport services needed to be more effectively publicised. Information and awareness is considered to be limiting current levels of service use:

'I'm just amazed that there's not more people using this service' (Staff, driver).

For the greatest proportion of those eligible to use these services, leaflets or letters are a widely suggested form of publicising and increasing awareness of services available. Information being passed on by carers and day centre staff was also suggested, however respondents also noted this approach can have limitations were more than one carer is supporting individuals.

Written literature is not considered to be an appropriate way to reach service users with learning disabilities. For this group, word of mouth seems to dominate existing

information routes with some suggestion made that carers and Day Centre staff play a key role in promoting services. This suggests that effectively communicating with relevant staff and carers may be an effective way to target service users with learning disabilities.

6.3 Reliability and timings

Key suggestions

- Ensure service users consistently reach Day Centres and support groups on time
- Ensure return journeys are booked with Keep Mobile or noted if not required
- Improve the learning disabilities Transport Trial booking system



Keep Mobile and BFC services

Respondents regularly identified that transport taking service users to Day Centres or support groups was early or late and are keen for this to be improved.

Whilst a weekly 'variation' in pick-up and drop-off times was accepted, it was highlighted that arrivals were often consistently late and departures likely to be early. Early pick-ups was particularly considered to be a problem with Keep Mobile services.

This was highlighted as an area for improvement as arriving late and leaving early reduces the time spent by individuals in the services they are entitled to or have paid to attend, and is disruptive for planned sessions.

Learning disabilities Transport Trial

Respondents identified that the learning disabilities Transport Trial service was regularly late or early to collect service users. Problems with the booking system were widely attributed as the cause of this, with common problems being that:

- Return journeys are not always being booked
- Pick-up times were double booked or impossible for drivers to make

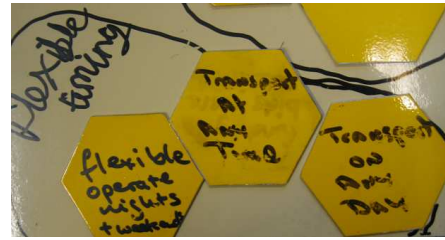
Respondents are strongly positive about the role performed by the learning disabilities Transport Trial and consider that improving the booking system is crucial to fulfilling the services potential:

'If they can sort out the booking side of it, then it will be a brilliant service' (Staff, driver)

6.4 Flexibility

Key suggestions

- Respondents would like to be able to use services more flexibly to make local journeys.



The flexible travel afforded to service users with learning disabilities through the learning disabilities Transport Trial is considered to play an important role in enabling services users to live as independently as possible.

A greater level of flexibility is something which service users, staff and voluntary groups would also like to see in the transport services available to them:

'One that's a bit more flexible during the day' (Day Centre staff, Older People and Physically Disabled).

'I just wish they were a bit more flexible' (Voluntary Group representative).

As respondents are currently using family, friends, or voluntary schemes such as the 'Good Neighbours' scheme to reach doctors or hospital appointments, this is an aspect of the service they would like to see improved.

However, a more flexible travel services is provided by using Dial a Ride service; although journeys can only be booked by service members a minimum of two working days before travel.

Suggesting flexible travel as an area in need of improvement suggests respondents are either not aware of this service, or that the service is not meeting needs effectively.

This is both in terms of the journeys already being made (e.g. easier to arrange slight changes to pick up times or venues) and also in terms of services similar to those provided by Dial a Ride. Respondents and groups both identify using local voluntary schemes, such as 'Good Neighbours' but highlight that these services are limited and can only be used for limited journeys:

'We do use the voluntary taxi service but it can only be used for things like the doctor or hospital – they can't extend the service due to manpower' (Voluntary Group representative).

Whilst comments suggest that additional journeys they may wish to make could be made using a taxi, service users are likely to feel cost is a barrier and also feel that insufficient support would be provided by using a mainstream taxi company.

6.5 Realistic prices

Key suggestions

- Keep Mobile prices are felt to be too high for some journeys
- The Keep Mobile fare structure is confusing and respondents would like to see this simplified
- The learning disabilities Transport Trial price is widely considered to be value for money with respondents keen for this to be maintained



Keep Mobile

There is a strong belief that Keep Mobile services are expensive to use, with cost being a key area identified as in need of improvement:

'If they dropped the prices they'd get people a bit more' (service user, learning disabilities).

'If it was cheaper it would be better. It cost me five pound to get here and five pounds to get home. Every time, and I come here twice a week. That's £20 a week that I've got to find' (Day Centre service user mobility).

There is a feeling that whilst for group booking, the service is value for money, for ad hoc or individual journeys, this is 'a waste of money' (Day Centre service user mobility).

Respondents therefore consider that fares for some local journeys need to better value for money.

Fare structures are also considered in need of simplification. These are considered by respondents to be a barrier to both groups and service users accessing services available:

'They [Keep Mobile] do mileage, don't they? They charged me about £24 and I could never work out why and they never gave me a receipt thing. So I rang them up one day and I asked for one and they didn't send one. The lady was really sharp on the phone' (Service user, learning disabilities).

'I couldn't go on with the variation in the money, I wanted a set price but they [Keep Mobile] couldn't do that, I didn't understand why it was so different every month with the money' (Voluntary Group representative).

Learning disabilities Transport Trial

Whilst some respondents considered that the learning disabilities Transport Trial should be a free service, it was widely considered by respondents that the current cost of journeys was about right. Respondents considered that this cost should be maintained with journey tokens being considered particularly positive.

Cost concerns were raised, however, regarding the initial outlay of £20 to buy tickets. Given the difficulties some respondents experienced with finances and budgeting, respondents suggested an instalment payment scheme would be appropriate and may broaden use of the scheme.

6.6 Service structure

Key suggestions

- Greater involvement for service users in directing services delivered
- Greater coordination between services



Respondents made two suggestions relating to the way in which community and social care transport services are managed in the Bracknell area:

6.6.1 User led management

Suggestion is made throughout that services available are not being used to capacity by eligible service users with a number of specific barriers being identified as contributing to this.

Suggestion was made that barriers could be more readily identified and addressed by involving service users and those working directly with transport services in the management of these services.

6.6.2 Greater service coordination

Respondents would like to see greater coordination between transport services in the Bracknell area.

For example, respondents identified that whilst some Day Centres find their vehicles too expensive to run on a regular basis, other voluntary groups reported struggling to find transport when Keep Mobile is unavailable. Reflecting this, some respondents' highlighted greater coordination between services would be beneficial.

7. Conclusions

1. Respondents are satisfied overall with the community and social care transport services in Bracknell.

Respondents are satisfied with the transport services available in Bracknell overall and consider that the existing service does meet their needs.

2. Respondents are very satisfied with the service provided with drivers.

Respondents were very positive about the service provided by transport drivers. Drivers were widely considered to have been very helpful and friendly to service users.

3. Respondents are likely to feel that community and / or social care transport needs to be further publicised.

Respondents are unlikely to know whether or not they are eligible for free social care transport operated by BFC and, more broadly are likely to consider that they would like to have more information about the range of transport services available to them. Respondents tended to have used only one type of transport, and identified that they would like to make other types of journeys which are already available within the area.

Leaflets and letters are a popular way of reaching those who are likely to be eligible for services with alternative approaches needing to be considered to reach groups who would not find this appropriate.

Literature relating to the learning disabilities Transport Trial has recently been sent to services user with learning disabilities, yet this research has highlighted that eligible service users have remained relatively unaware of the service. Word of mouth has been suggested as an appropriate alternative to reaching this group.

4. Keep Mobile fares are perceived to be expensive and the fare schedule is confusing.

Respondents tend to feel that Keep Mobile is expensive, particularly for individual journeys. The fare system can be confusing for some, particularly those with learning disabilities suggesting some simplification and clarity may encourage further use.

5. Greater flexibility needed in the Keep Mobile booking system

Staff identify a need to be able to make changes to some service users travel arrangements, particularly where family are not able to make these on their behalf, in the case of particularly vulnerable service users.

6. Concerns regarding day centre being able to make trips with high number of wheelchair users and 'walkers'

This research highlights that respondents are likely to consider it important that vehicles are accessible.

Some staff and voluntary groups expressed concern regarding the capacity of Keep Mobile and Day Centre transports to accommodate all types of wheelchairs, and also the increasing number of wheelchair and walker users attending some venues and support groups.

7. Improvements are needed to the learning disabilities Transport Trial booking system.

The learning disabilities Transport Trial is considered a highly beneficial service which enables service users a greater degree of independence and enables travel at times and to places which may have been difficult to access previously.

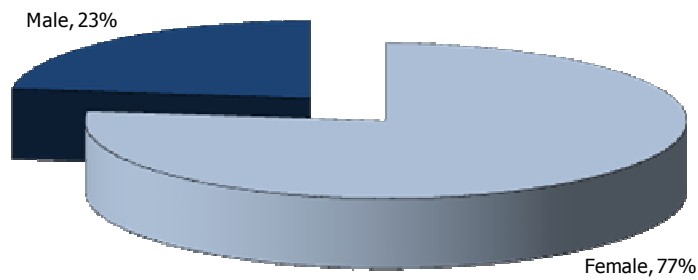
Difficulties experienced with the learning disabilities Transport Trial have led to some negative impressions of overall reliability of this service. Problems identified relate almost exclusively to return journeys not being booked by the service user, or not being transferred to the driver's schedule. This suggests improving the booking system would increase service user's satisfaction and confidence in the service.

Appendix 1: Postal survey demographics

Gender

As Figure 18 shows, the greatest proportion (77%) of respondents to the postal surveys were female.

Figure 18: Gender

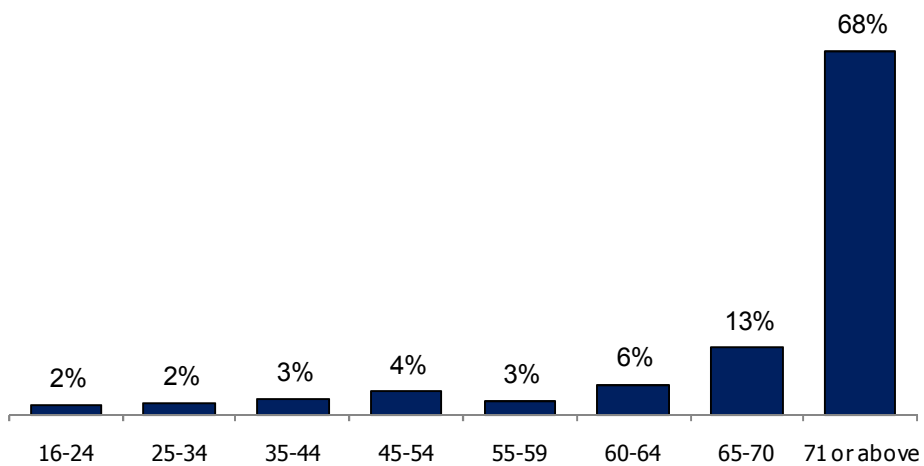


Base: 277

Age

The greatest proportion (68%) of respondents are aged 71 years or above.

Figure 19: Age

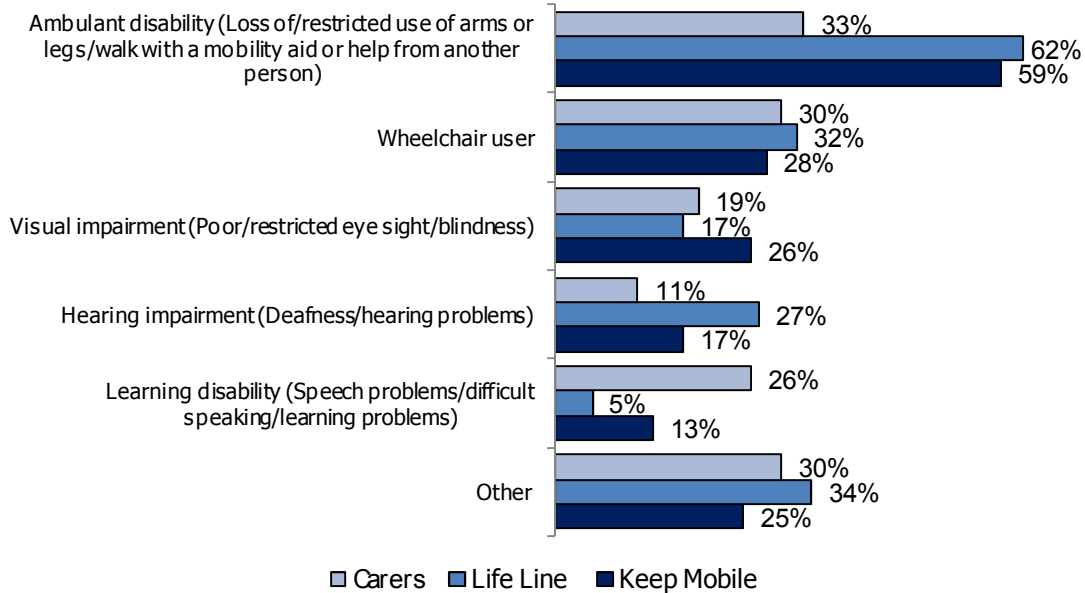


Base: 278

Type of disability

Respondent were most likely to report having an ambulant disability.

Figure 20: Type of disability

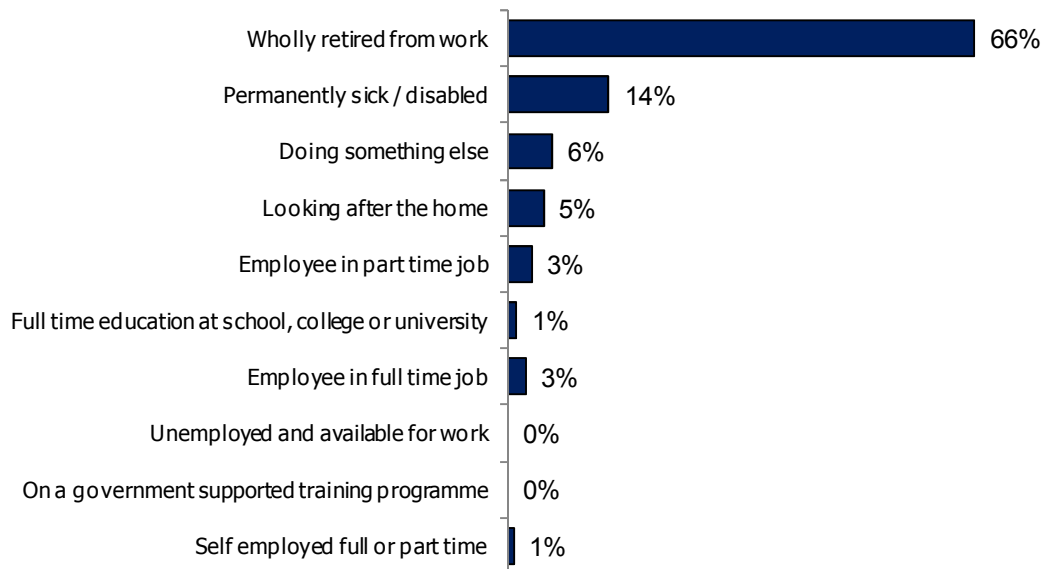


Base: Keep Mobile, 69; Life Line, 77; Carers, 27

Economic activity

Overall, as Figure 21 shows, two thirds (66%) of respondents are wholly retired from work,

Figure 21: Economic activity

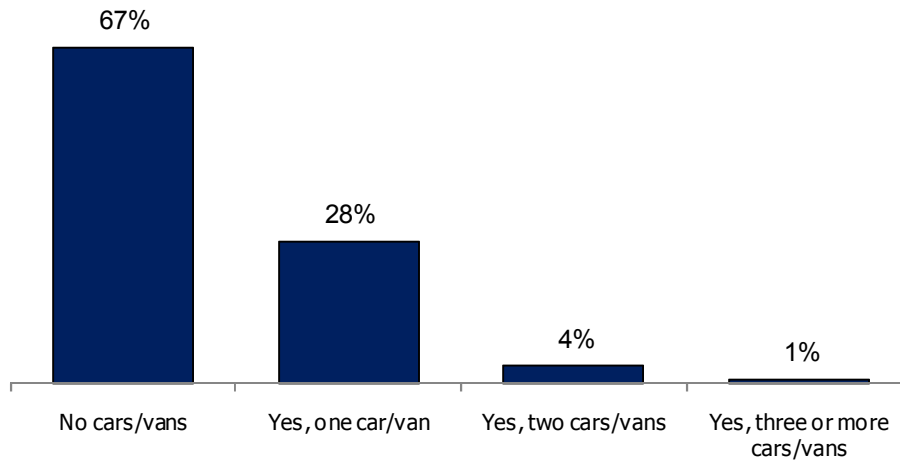


Base: 237

Vehicle ownership

Whilst 67% of respondents do not own either a car or van, a third (32%) own one or more of these.

Figure 22: Vehicle ownership

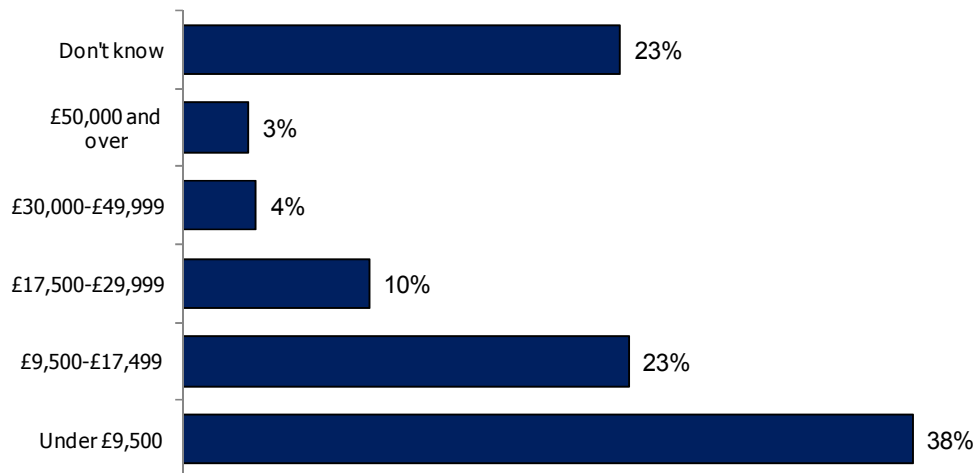


Base: 218

Household income

Whilst almost a quarter (23%) of respondents do not know what their households income is, the greatest proportion (38%) report having an income below £9,500.

Figure 23: Household income



Base: 239

Ethnicity

The majority (95%) of respondents consider themselves to be White British or Irish.