

ROUND THE BEND

**A review of local bus
provision by
Scottish Citizens
Advice Bureaux**

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**citizens
advice
bureau**

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Executive Summary

In 2015 Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) published a report, *Remotely Excluded*, which used our advice statistics to identify the major issues facing consumers in rural Scotland. One of the most important themes identified by Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) and our clients was the difficulty people had accessing essential services, such as healthcare and work opportunities, using the bus network. To look more closely at what was happening with public transport across Scotland we carried out regional research lead by 16 of our local CAB members.

We present this report as a collaborative research project covering the experience of 113 local communities in Scotland which identifies some of the key concerns regarding bus provision in Scotland today.

This research gathered information on over 1,200 journeys from 133 home locations to key essential services, focussing on travel times, distances and cost to the following locations: workplace, supermarket, GP surgery, hospital, jobcentre, college, bank branch and post office.

This research identified a wide range of journey times from people being able to reach a GP in less than fifteen minutes by bus, to those who took more than an hour to get to the nearest college. Scotland's Post Office network was the best connected with people in over two thirds of the areas surveyed being able to walk to their nearest one.

While earlier research suggests that 55% of bus users feel buses are good value for money, we found price also varied substantially across Scotland's bus routes ranging from 7p per mile to £1.80 per mile. In the Nairn area bus journeys were identified as costing those on job seekers allowance 15% of their income for one return journey to the nearest job centre, while a round trip to a local supermarket could cost someone on full time minimum wage 5% of their weekly income.

Using information provided by Scotland's local authorities and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport we also established that Scotland spent £48 million on bus subsidies to operators in 2015. This equates to £10.67 per adult in Scotland, and ranges widely from £108 per adult in the Western Isles to as low as £0.55 in Aberdeen City.

Other notable findings include:

- 38% of locations surveyed had no Sunday service that connected them with local hospitals
- In remote rural areas the median cost of a return ticket to the nearest Job Centre was £9.00
- Consumers in the rural areas surveyed face an average 40 minute round trip to access the nearest bank branch
- Residents of rural areas were on average 5 miles from the nearest GP surgery
- College students in remote areas on average face journey times of over an hour and at a median cost of £10 return

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2014 it was estimated that around 420 million bus passenger journeys were made in Scotland¹ with these journeys covering over 330 million kilometres per year². Bus provision is important for the Scottish economy with around one in ten people using the bus to travel to work on a daily basis.³

Bus travel is also important for the 1.3 million holders of a National Concessionary Travel Scheme card, who travel for free at the point of use. Journeys made by holders of the travel scheme card accounted for a third of all bus journeys made in Scotland⁴, with 1.1 million of these cards issued to the over 60's, a further 140,000 to disabled passengers and 14,000 to visually impaired people⁵.

Nearly two fifths (38%) of those using buses in Scotland have a household income of less than £15,000 per year and the majority of passengers (86%) live in Scotland's urban areas. In addition recent investment in bus vehicles has meant that accessible or low-floor buses now make up 90% of all buses on Scotland's roads; this has doubled from 45% in 2005.⁶ Over £655 million was spent on Scotland's bus networks in 2014, 56% (£364m) was from passenger tickets sales while the remaining 44% (£291m) came in financial support from local and Scottish Government.⁷

The majority of bus passengers agree that buses run to time (74%) and over half of which (55%) are good value for money⁸; however increasing pressure on budgets and commercial pressure on bus providers have seen a reduction or withdrawal of routes or services in recent years. In May 2016, one of Scotland's largest public transport operators First Bus announced it was withdrawing services from East Lothian stating they had been "incurring losses...for years."⁹ In addition services in Dumfries and Galloway were cut back in April 2016 after South West Scotland Transport Partnership looked to save £315,000 from its annual budget; despite a campaign by passengers and residents not all of the routes could be maintained.¹⁰

This report looks at research carried out by 16 Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) in their local areas. Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) have analysed the results of the largest collaborative consumer research project that Citizens Advice Bureaux have carried out in Scotland and present some of the key findings and common themes that are repeated across Scotland's bus network.

¹ [Travel Trends in Scotland 2014](#), Transport Scotland

² National Transport Strategy Refresh, Transport Statistics, Transport Scotland, 2015

³ Ibid.

⁴ [Scottish Transport Statistics No 33, 2014](#), Transport Scotland

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ [Jobs risk after planned bus service cuts in East Lothian](#), BBC News, 2016

¹⁰ [U-turn saves Dumfries and Galloway's weekend and evening bus services](#), Galloway News, 2016

Chapter 2: Background and Legislative Framework

Scotland's bus network is made up of over 200 local bus providers and coach services which are owned and run privately, with the exception of Lothian Buses which is local authority owned¹¹. Bus routes are run on a commercial basis unless a local authority or other funder provides a subsidy on a route it feels is a necessary or lifeline service to the local community and it cannot be provided on a purely commercial basis.¹²

The majority of responsibility with regard to safety of bus vehicles, driver training and vehicle inspection regimes are reserved to the UK Government and are covered mostly by the Transport Act 1985¹³. This Act in the main privatised and deregulated the bus market in the UK outside London which, up till then, had been dominated by public owned service providers.¹⁴

The UK Government Department for Transport is responsible for bus licensing and enforcement which is carried out in Scotland by their Traffic Commissioner based in Edinburgh¹⁵. Transport Scotland is the Scottish Government agency responsible for transport matters. They hold responsibility for setting policy on the provision of buses in Scotland and also run the national concessionary card scheme. Transport Scotland also provides funding for local bus provision through the Bus Service Operators' Grant¹⁶.

Local Authorities are responsible for local infrastructure associated with the provision of buses. This includes bus shelters, lanes and the provision of subsidies to bus operators to run buses on non-commercially viable routes that they feel are important to communities in that area¹⁷.

Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) were established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 which split Scotland into regions that reflect "travel to work areas". There are seven RTPs in Scotland whose primary function is to prepare a regional transport strategy and a delivery plan of particular projects. The RTPs are joint boards who bring together local authority councillors (who make up two thirds of the membership) and other regional stakeholders. The seven RTPs are¹⁸:

1. Shetland Transport Partnership (ZetTrans)
2. Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS)
3. North-East of Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS)
4. Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (TACTRAN)
5. South-East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SESTRAN)
6. Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
7. South-West of Scotland Transport Partnership (Swestrans)

Some RTPs are also responsible for the delivery of transport services. For example SPT operate the Glasgow Subway and are also responsible for major bus stations

¹¹ [Our company](#), Lothian Buses, 2016

¹² [Transport in Scotland](#), 2011, SPICe

¹³ [Transport Act 1985](#), Legislation.gov.uk

¹⁴ [Buses](#), 1999, House of Commons Library

¹⁵ [Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain](#), 2016, gov.uk

¹⁶ [Bus Services Operators' Grant](#), 2016, Transport Scotland

¹⁷ [Transport in Scotland](#), 2011, SPICe

¹⁸ [Regional Transport Partnerships](#), 2016, Transport Scotland

across the West of Scotland¹⁹. Some RTPs, for example SPT and Swestrans, are also responsible for the delivery of bus subsidies on non-commercial routes.

In 2015 a working group of Scottish Government, Regional Transport Partnerships and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) produced a report, *Develop to Deliver*, in how the organisations could work together better to deliver regional transport strategies. The report cites numerous recommendations including “improving access to health and social care” and “delivering a step change for Bus, Integrated Transport, Ticketing and Information.”²⁰

¹⁹ [About SPT](#), 2016, SPT

²⁰ [Develop to Deliver – Maximising the role of RTPs in furthering improvements to transport in Scotland](#), August 2015

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Citizens Advice Scotland put out an invitation to all CAB in Scotland in March 2016 to assist in collating information regarding local bus journey routes. In total 16 CAB applied to take part; fourteen provided specific route detail set by CAS with analysis of their findings while a further two provided independent research into public transport issues in their area.

The fourteen CAB who took part in the route detail research carried out the following process:

1. Identify a number of “home locations” in their area of research and identify each home location’s rurality index on the Scottish Government’s classification scheme on the six-fold scale²¹.
2. Identify the most easily accessible (not always nearest) eight essential services. For the purposes of this research the following essential services were identified:
 - a. Workplace – a nearby town centre with a significant business presence, local knowledge was used to identify an appropriate location
 - b. Supermarket – a medium or large sized store rather than a convenience sized shop. Supermarket website “find nearest store” functions supported local knowledge to identify the easiest accessible supermarket²²
 - c. Hospital – providing a wide range of care services for outpatients but not necessarily emergency provision. NHS 24’s find local portal assisted local knowledge²³.
 - d. GP Surgery – as identified using NHS 24²⁴
 - e. Bank Branch – including mobile provision if appropriate, identified with local knowledge and checking bank website “find nearest branch” functions²⁵
 - f. Job Centre – identified using Job Centre Plus local office search²⁶
 - g. College/University – using local knowledge
 - h. Post Office –using the Post Office branch finder tool²⁷ including mobile provision if appropriate
3. Identify the journey by bus between each of these essential services and home location. Sunday journeys for workplace, supermarket and hospital were also collated. Note of the following was taken for each journey:
 - a. First bus of the day departure time
 - b. Last bus return departure time
 - c. Length of journey (single leg)
 - d. Distance in miles of journey (single leg)
 - e. Frequency of bus provision on this route (e.g. every half hour/twice a day)
 - f. Cost of journey (return trip)
 - g. Any relevant notes, i.e. multiple buses required and waiting time at changeover

²¹ [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification](#), 2016, The Scottish Government

²² For example [Tesco store locator](#)

²³ [Find your local services](#), 2015, NHS 24

²⁴ *ibid*

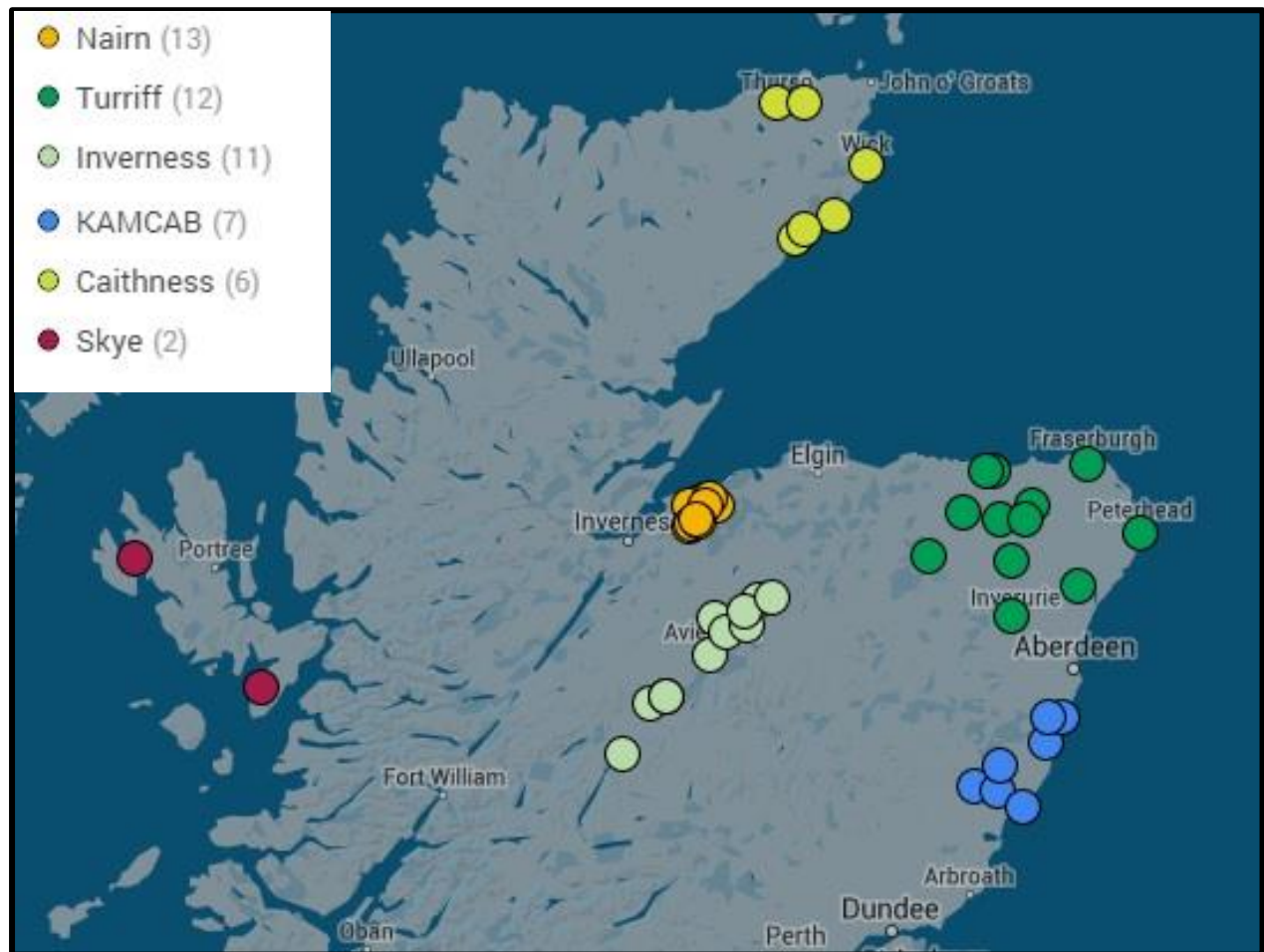
²⁵ For example [RBS Branch Locator](#)

²⁶ [Local Office Search](#), DWP, gov.uk

²⁷ [Post Office Branch Finder](#), 2016, Post Office

In total 1,238 journeys were completed by the fourteen CAB from 115 home locations (see Maps 1 and 2).

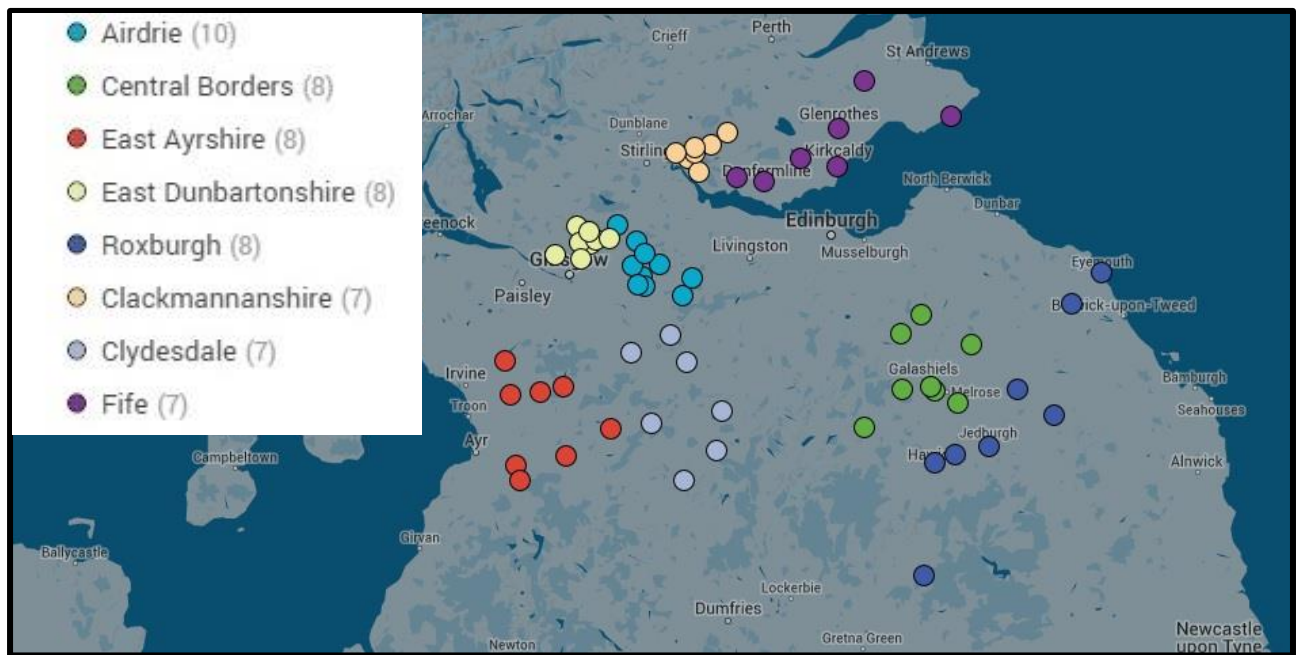
Map 1: Home locations (North of Scotland)



In the main, routes were easily identified using Traveline Scotland planning tools or local bus company timetables if appropriate. However a number of issues were identified during the research.

Journey times for routes could vary substantially depending on the time of day. In order to get a time that could be compared with results across Scotland the fastest journey time available was used in comparisons.

Map 2: Home locations (South of Scotland)²⁸



Price information was difficult to collate across all areas of Scotland. While Traveline Scotland does provide price information for some routes it was noted this was not always accurate as it did not always consider day or regional “saver” tickets. Additionally, information provided by bus operators online differed extensively with some providing full ticket details for single, return and day tickets and others not supplying any pricing information at all. In addition, following consultation with local bus stations, volunteers in some areas were told ticket prices could not be provided and this could only be obtained from the bus driver. This made the pricing research difficult in some areas in particular.

²⁸ Digital interactive version of this map is [available online](#)


Chapter 4: Travel to GPs & Hospitals

One of the recommendations of the *Develop to Deliver*²⁹ transport report is to improve access to health and social care. This resulted from findings in the 2011 Audit Scotland report *Transport for health and social care*³⁰ which stated as one of its main findings:

“Reducing or removing funding from transport services can have a significant impact on people on low incomes, older people and people with ongoing health and social care needs. But the potential effect of changes to services is not often assessed or monitored and alternative provision is not put in place. The public sector needs better information on individual needs and on the quality of the transport services they provide.”

The report noted that while much was spent on patient transport services, taxis and in-house fleet services often public transport for everyday trips to GPs, outpatients or visitors to hospital might not meet the needs of those who rely on public transport.

In our research we looked at journeys to GP's and to local hospitals from each of the home locations surveyed. This revealed that GP services were often a very locally provided service with 46% of the areas having a GP surgery within walking distance. For those using a bus to travel to a GP the average distance being travelled was 4 miles and a median journey time of 18 minutes.



GP Key Travel Facts

Surveyed areas in walking distance: 46%
Median bus travel time: 14 minutes
Average distance requiring a bus journey: 4 miles
Median cost for return journey: £2.85

Analysis based on Urban/Rural classification³¹ showed those living in urbanised Scotland (Large Urban and Other Urban areas) unsurprisingly had the shortest and quickest journeys compared to small towns and rural areas (see Table 1). Interestingly however, remote rural areas were slightly better connected than accessible rural areas for GP surgeries. This was mainly down to 38% of remote rural areas having a local GP surgery in walking distance; however, median journey times were also slightly lower.

The longest travel times collated by CAB undertaking the research were seen in rural Aberdeenshire with the journey from the rural area of Cookney to the nearest GP surgery in Portlethen taking 90 minutes. This journey time is so long as it requires numerous bus changes, firstly travelling North to Aberdeen and south again to Portlethen.

²⁹ [Develop to Deliver – Maximising the role of RTPs in furthering improvements to transport in Scotland](#), August 2015

³⁰ [Transport for health and social care](#), August 2011, Audit Scotland

³¹ [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification](#), 2016, The Scottish Government


Table 1: Journey details for trips to GPs

| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | GP in walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban | 25 | 12 (48%) | 1.9 miles | 12 minutes | £2.37 |
| Accessible/Remote small towns | 26 | 20 (77%) | 2.3 miles | 11 minutes | £1.90 |
| Accessible rural | 32 | 9 (28%) | 5.2 miles | 18 minutes | £2.95 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 11 (38%) | 5.1 miles | 15 minutes | £3.00 |
| All | 112 | 52 (46%) | 4 miles | 14 minutes | £2.85 |

People living in this area who relied on public transport, would find it easier to use a GP surgery further away but better connected, such as in Aberdeen city. It should be noted however that GP surgeries work on a catchment area basis and it would be unlikely that someone from outside an area would be accepted as a patient³².

Other examples include:

- In Dalwhinnie the bus route does not run between the home location and the closest GP surgery in nearby Laggan. This meant that residents in Dalwhinnie would either have to travel by a different method of transport or travel to a different GP surgery further away.
- Patients who live in Cromdale have limited connections to Grantown on Spey where the local GP surgery is a distance of 4 miles. However due to timetabling the last bus is 3.45pm meaning that patients travelling from this area would not be able to get a late afternoon appointment. This may be especially difficult for those working during the day.



Hospital Key Travel Facts

Median bus travel time: 37 minutes

Average distance requiring a bus journey: 13 miles

Median cost for return journey: £4.10

No Sunday service in remote rural areas: 38%

As hospitals are a more centralised service than GPs there were fewer journeys achievable by walking, with 11% of the surveyed locations within walking distance of a hospital. The average distance for those using the bus was 15 miles with a median journey time of 37 minutes.

³² [Registering with a GP Practice](#), Practitioner Services, NHS National Services Scotland

Analysis based on Urban/Rural classification showed those living in urban and accessible rural areas had the shortest travel times and cheapest median fares (see Table 2). While urban areas both had the shortest travel times and distance to cover, the average price per mile travelled was higher in these areas than in more remote locations. For example, while the median cost in remote rural areas (£7.75) was more than double that of urban areas (£3.40), the cost per mile in urban areas (68p) was double that of remote rural areas (34p).

Table 2: Journey details for trips to Hospitals

| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | Walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban) | 25 | 4 (16%) | 5 miles | 20 minutes | £3.40 |
| Accessible/ remote small towns | 26 | 7 (27%) | 10 miles | 43 minutes | £5.20 |
| Accessible rural | 32 | 0 (0%) | 10.4 miles | 30 minutes | £3.25 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 1 (3%) | 23 miles | 55 minutes | £7.75 |
| All | 112 | (11%) | 13 miles | 37 minutes | £4.10 |

Travel to medical appointments can be difficult in rural areas at particular times, especially for morning appointments. For example, Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service highlighted that a journey from Portpatrick to Dumfries for a 9am appointment is not possible. This is due to a change of buses required in Stranraer, where the second bus leaves before the first arrives.

For hospital travel there were a reasonable number of areas surveyed (23) that did not have any services running on a Sunday. This was most prominent in remote rural areas with 38% of surveyed areas not having public transport access to hospitals on a Sunday (Figure 3). In addition, one quarter (25%) of accessible rural areas surveyed had no Sunday provision to hospital. In comparison, every small town and over 80% of urban areas surveyed had access on Sunday. Given the Scottish Governments intention to deliver 'seven day services' in the NHS³³ this finding is of some concern. The Scottish Government has identified remote and rural areas as key to the delivery of seven day services and is running a specific work stream to improve diagnostic and elective treatments at weekends in rural areas³⁴. With this

³³ [Sustainable 24/7 NHS Update](#), 2015, Scottish Government

³⁴ [Seven Day Services Position Paper](#), 2013. Scottish Government

aim in mind it would appear important that communities are linked up with hospitals on Sundays to realise the aim of seven day services.

Travel to medical appointments can be difficult using public transport for those with mobility difficulties. Parkhead CAB noted in their research that Community Transport Glasgow run the Healthy Journeys Patients Transport Services³⁵ to assist people who find it difficult to travel to medical appointments. This is a free service delivered by volunteers, who use their own cars to take patients to and from their GP or hospital appointments. Of those who had used the service, 30% had missed appointments in the past using public transport and 47% had put off going to medical appointments because of difficulties getting there on buses.



"I've been late lots of times for appointments because I have to walk to get the bus and it takes me a long time - by the time I get to the doctors surgery, I am exhausted".

"I've missed appointments because I have poor balance and I'm not confident going out by myself".

On the case with Parkhead CAB

Mrs M is an 85 year old lady who lives with her daughter in North East Glasgow. She was referred to the Healthy Journeys project in May 2014 by her GP surgery.



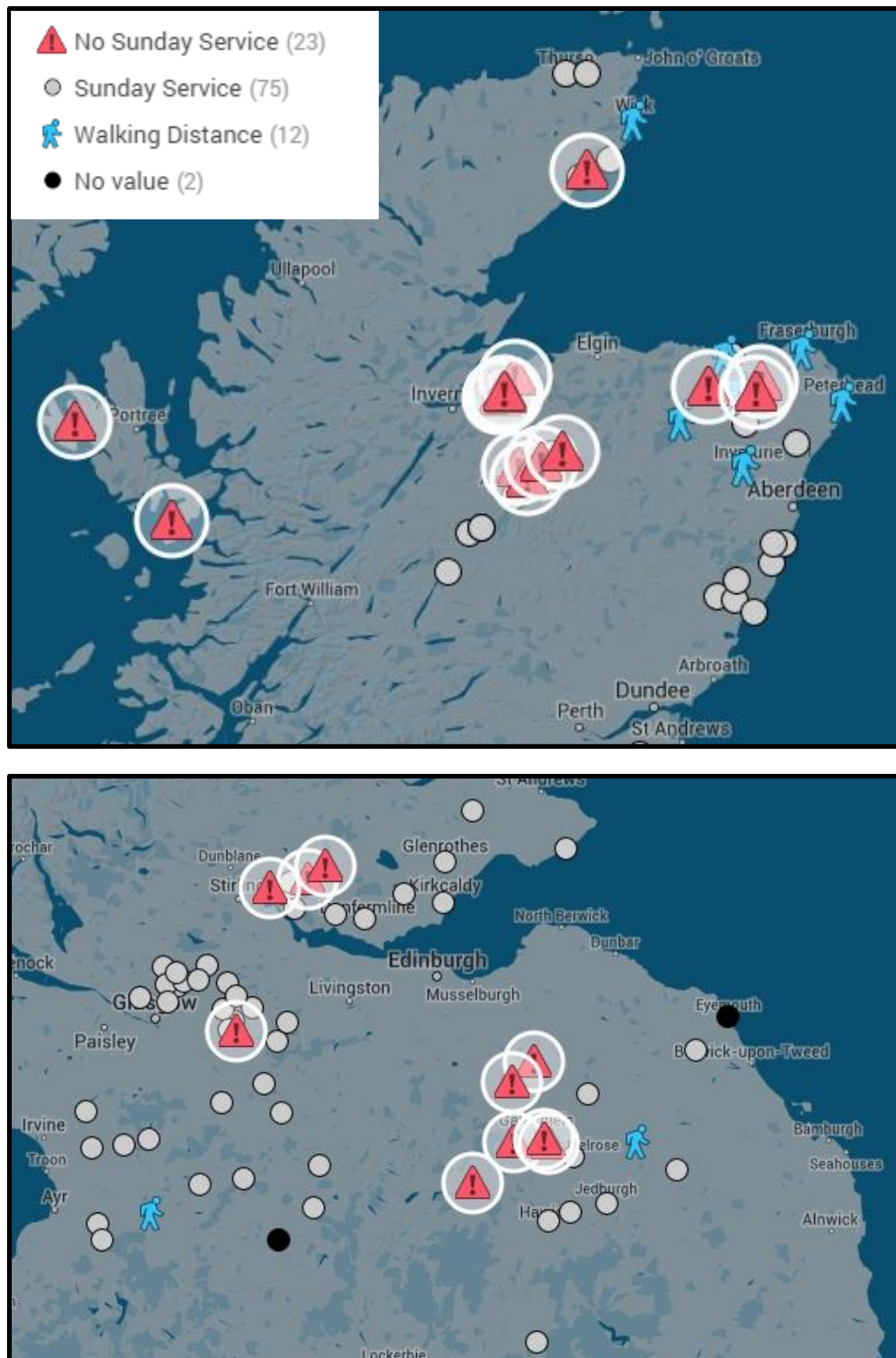
Mrs M has many health problems that make walking difficult. She has osteo-arthritis in both knees and qualifies for knee replacement surgery. However, a heart condition means the risk of the operation is too high. She also has leukaemia and receives blood transfusions every fortnight. This involves a visit to the Royal Infirmary to have blood tests done and then, if everything is satisfactory, she goes to Stobhill Hospital the following day for the blood transfusion.

It is an uphill walk to the nearest bus stop, which means it is impossible for Mrs M to use public transport. She had tried to use the Scottish Ambulance transport but said it took her two days to recover because she was exhausted, having been out all day and it was too much for her. Before the patient transport service came along, Mrs M was using taxis but the costs of this were becoming unmanageable. Although she never missed an appointment, she says she put off going to the GP lots of times as it was such a struggle to get there.



³⁵ [Healthy journeys patient transport project](#), Community Transport Glasgow

Map 3: Sunday services to hospitals³⁶




³⁶ Interactive Digital version of this map is [available online](#)

Chapter 5: Travel to Jobcentres & Work

Travel to Jobcentres is necessary for individuals on certain social security payments and meetings with work coaches are an essential requirement in the Universal Credit system. It is key, therefore, that public transport systems support individuals making journeys to and from the Jobcentre. It is also key that public transport is available to areas where work is provided to ensure jobseekers have the opportunity to take up gainful employment.

Some benefits claimants are able to reclaim reasonable travel costs for their journey to the Jobcentre. Additionally a number of bus operators³⁷³⁸ and Scotland's national trains servicer delivered by Scotrail³⁹ offer discounted travel for jobseekers with appropriate proof from the Department for Work and Pensions. See page 13 for details.



Jobcentre Key Travel Facts

Surveyed areas in walking distance: 11%
Median bus travel time: 40 minutes
Average distance requiring a bus journey: 13 miles
Median cost for return journey: £5.80

In our research we looked at journeys to job centres from each of the home locations surveyed. Job Centres were within walking distance for 10% of the locations we surveyed, mostly in urban areas. For those using a bus to travel to the nearest Jobcentre the average distance being travelled was 13 miles, with a median journey time of 40 minutes.

Analysis based on Urban/Rural classification showed those living in remote rural areas had the longest journey times with the median one way journey taking one hour (see Table 3). The median time taken for travel in accessible rural areas (33 minutes) was broadly comparable to the travel time from small towns (38 minutes). The only rural area, as defined by the Scottish Government, where a walkable journey could be made to a Jobcentre was Cumnock. Map 4 shows journey times to the nearest Jobcentre.

The longest travel times collated by CAB undertaking the research were seen in the Scottish Borders, with the journey from the rural village of Yetholm to the nearest Jobcentre in Galashiels taking 96 minutes. This is the best connected Jobcentre in terms of public transport as while the Jobcentre in Hawick is geographically closer it is not closer in terms of public transport, with journeys taking three buses and over 2 hours.

Large distances for some island communities mean particular difficulties getting to and from essential services. For example our research identified that some Skye residents who were attending medical assessments for Personal Independence Payments and other disability benefits the nearest assessment centre is in Inverness. Due to difficulties in accessing public transport that connect with services to Inverness from large parts of the island, home assessments are more regularly required. This in turn increases the waiting times for applicants.

³⁷ [Half price tickets for jobseekers](#), 2016, Stagecoach

³⁸ [Discounted Tickets for Glasgow Job Seekers](#), 2016, First Bus

³⁹ [Abellio offers jobseekers perks in new Scotrail deal](#), 2015, BBC News

Table 3: Journey details for trips to Jobcentres

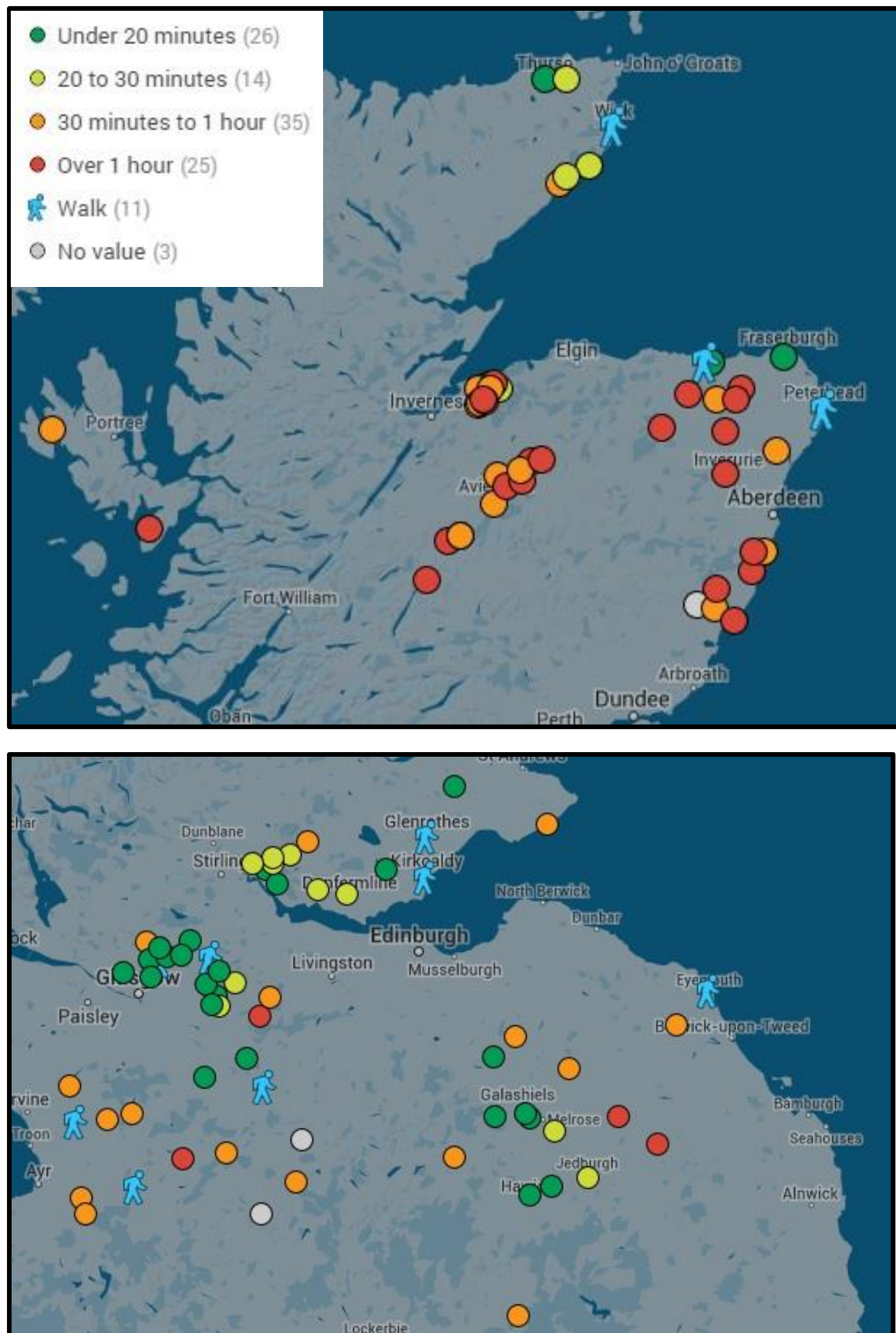
| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | Walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban | 25 | 4 (16%) | 5 miles | 25 minutes | £3.90 |
| Accessible/Remote small towns | 26 | 3 (12%) | 10 miles | 38 minutes | £5.60 |
| Accessible rural | 31 | 0 (0%) | 10 miles | 33 minutes | £4.90 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 1 (3%) | 25 miles | 58 minutes | £9.00 |
| All | 111 | (11%) | 13 miles | 40 minutes | £5.80 |

The prices quoted in Table 3 are full cost tickets and various bus firms do offer discounted tickets. For example, Caithness CAB highlighted that Stagecoach offer half price tickets, to the nearest 5p, to job seekers who hold a “Jobcentre Plus travel card”. These are available to individuals on the following criteria and are distributed by local Jobcentres:

- Universal Credit claimant;
- Jobseekers Allowance claimant;
- Incapacity Benefit claimant;
- Employment and Support Allowance claimant;
- Income support claimant;
- and if:**
- 18 years and older;
- Unemployed for more than three months and less than twelve months (nine months for those under 25)|
- a Jobcentre is helping the claimant find work⁴⁰

⁴⁰ [Half price tickets for jobseekers](#), 2016, Stagecoach

Map 4: Jobcentre travel times⁴¹



⁴¹ Digital interactive version of this map is [available online](#)

Workplace Key Travel Facts



Surveyed areas in walking distance: 9%
 Median bus travel time: 30 minutes
 Average distance requiring a bus journey: 8 miles
 Median cost for return journey: £5.20

In analysing journeys to a workplace local researchers looked at nearby town centres to their home locations. While not every person will be able to be employed in this area, and many will have to commute further distances, it did provide a snapshot of what some people will experience on their daily commutes to and from work.

Our designated work locations were within walking distance for 9% of the locations we surveyed; this increased to 16% in urban areas and 20% in accessible small towns. For those using a bus to travel to the designated workplace location the average distance being travelled was 8 miles with a median journey time of 30 minutes.

Analysis based on Urban/Rural classification showed those living in urban and accessible rural areas had the shortest travel times and cheapest median fares (see Table 4). While urban areas had the shortest travel times and distance, the average price per mile travelled was higher in these areas than small town commutes to larger population areas. For example, while the median cost in small towns (£6) was significantly higher than the median cost borne by those travelling in urban areas (£3.15) the cost per mile was 63p in urban areas compared to 36p for travel to work from small towns.

Table 4: Journey details for trips to Workplace

| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | Walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban | 25 | 4 (16%) | 5.3 miles | 22 minutes | £3.15 |
| Accessible/Remote small towns | 26 | 4 (15%) | 9.6 miles | 36 minutes | £6.00 |
| Accessible rural | 32 | 0 (0%) | 7.8 miles | 25 minutes | £3.40 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 2 (7%) | 13.4 miles | 39 minutes | £5.80 |
| All | 112 | 10 (9%) | 9 miles | 30 minutes | £5.20 |

Of concern in relation to jobseekers is that in some areas Sunday working would not be a viable option given that for 27% of the locations surveyed no bus service ran to identified workplace locations on this day. This was particularly acute in rural areas where 29% of journeys were not available on a Sunday. For example, Turiff CAB noted in their research that no buses were available on a Sunday for the villages of

New Blyth, Aberchirder and Cuminestown. Additionally, Citizens Advice and Rights Fife highlighted that services from the rural village of Luthrie to Cupar did not run on a Sunday and services on Skye were limited making journeys not possible.

Nairn CAB noted significant issues with public transport not reaching the Inverness area until after 9am, making it difficult for commuters in this area to work in the nearby city. This has a significant impact for people who work or are required to reach services in Inverness. These areas also face costly journeys when the first available journey has been used. Table 5 show the cost for two example journeys and the percentage of the cost against weekly earnings.

Table 5: Cost affordability of bus journeys in the Nairn area

| Bus Journey – Cawdor to Inverness Centre Return (£10.85) | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------|--|----------|----------|------|---|
| | Jobseekers Allowance (Weekly) | | Minimum Wage (Based on a 37.5 hour week) | | | | Average Salary (Highland region per week) |
| | 18 to 24 | 25 or over | Under 18 | 18 to 20 | 21 to 24 | 25 + | £466.52 |
| | £57.90 | £73.10 | £145.13 | £198.75 | £251.25 | £270 | |
| Percentage % | 18.7% | 14.8% | 7.5% | 5.5% | 4.3% | 4% | 2.3% |

| Bus Journey – Piperhill to Nairn Sainsburys Return (£7.85) | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------|--|----------|----------|------|---|
| | Jobseekers Allowance (Weekly) | | Minimum Wage (Based on a 37.5 hour week) | | | | Average Salary (Highland region per week) |
| | 18 to 24 | 25 or over | Under 18 | 18 to 20 | 21 to 24 | 25 + | £466.52 |
| | £57.90 | £73.10 | £145.13 | £198.75 | £251.25 | £270 | |
| Percentage % | 13.6% | 10.7% | 5.4% | 3.9% | 3.1% | 2.9% | 1.7% |

On the case with Central Borders CAB



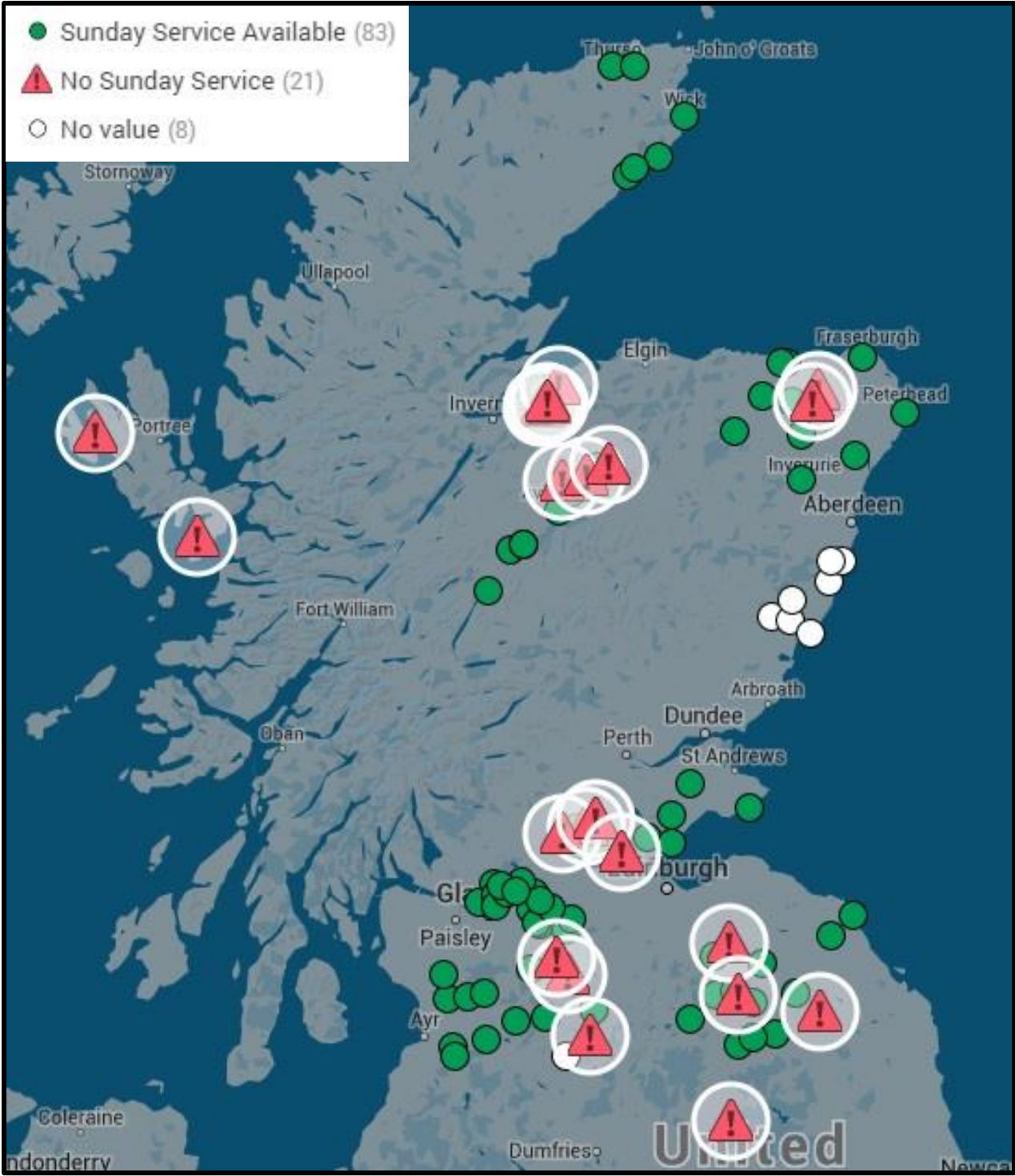
CAB Volunteer who resides in Lauder was late finishing one afternoon due to a busy session. He had missed the last direct bus to Lauder (leaves at 15.23) but managed to get a bus as far as Earlston – where he should have a few minutes to pick up a connection to take him home.

The usual practice is for the driver of the Galashiels to Earlston bus, to signal ahead and let his colleague, driving the Earlston to Lauder bus know, that there are passengers for the connecting service. However, on this occasion the Volunteer just said he was going to Earlston (where the route terminated).

This resulted in the 2nd bus leaving early before the 1st bus arrived. Our Volunteer was stranded. This is a regular occurrence and he often either walks or hitches a lift. Due to the adverse weather on this occasion he decided to call the bus depot and complain – this resulted in a First Bus staff member driving out from Galashiels to pick him up and drive him home.



Map 5: Sunday services to workplace⁴²




⁴² Digital interactive version of this map is [available online](#)

Chapter 6: Travel to Supermarkets

In the UK consumers spent £177.5bn on groceries in 2015, the majority of which (60%) was spent in supermarkets⁴³⁴⁴. For this project we therefore asked researchers to look for the nearest supermarket that would sell a wide range of goods that most consumers would look for as part of their grocery shopping.

In grocery terms it will be true that many consumers, especially in rural areas, will use convenience-sized stores (less than 3,000 sq ft.), which represent 21% of the UK grocery market⁴⁵. Additionally online shopping is increasing for groceries and currently represents 8.9% of the UK total spend, with 50% of shoppers in Europe willing to consider switching to this method for their groceries⁴⁶. However a measurement was taken for supermarkets given the wider availability of non-food products.



Supermarket Key Travel Facts

Surveyed areas in walking distance: 15%
Median bus travel time: 19 minutes
Average distance requiring a bus journey: 7 miles
Median cost for return journey: £3.40

Supermarkets were one of the better connected services in our surveyed areas with most being connected either by walking, or a bus journey of less than twenty minutes. Prices on the whole were closely matched to the distance travelled with only those in remote rural areas being charged above £4 for a return journey (Table 6).

Issues were identified with long journey times in rural Aberdeenshire to large supermarkets with travel times of over one hour in some areas. However, most of these locations *do* have access to smaller shops, such as convenience co-operatives and discounters such as Aldi and Lidl. This would potentially reduce the number of times an individual would need to travel to a large supermarket.

⁴³ This figures includes Hypermarkets (60,000 sq ft+) superstores (25,000-60,000 sq ft) and small supermarkets (3-25,000 sq ft)

⁴⁴ [UK Grocery Market](#), 2015, IGD UK

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ [The Future of Grocery](#), 2015, Nielsen

Table 6: Journey Details for Trips to Supermarkets

| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | Walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban | 25 | 8 (32%) | 2.5 miles | 14 minutes | £2.60 |
| Accessible/Remote small towns | 26 | 7 (27%) | 4.4 miles | 18 minutes | £3.00 |
| Accessible rural | 32 | 0 (0%) | 7.8 miles | 25 minutes | £3.40 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 2 (7%) | 12 miles | 26 minutes | £5.30 |
| All | 112 | 17 (15%) | 7 miles | 19 minutes | £3.40 |

The most expensive return journey for travel to a supermarket was seen in Caithness with a return ticket that would cover the routes to a supermarket in Wick from the remote rural village of Occumster costing £6.20 over a distance of 19 miles. This journey takes over an hour in each direction for the fastest service and up to two and a half hours for the slower services in operation.

While the Clackmannanshire villages of Sauchie and Glenochil are classed as 'other urban' areas and are not far from the nearest supermarkets (1.9 miles and 3.8 miles), the journey times of 21 minutes and 34 minutes make them one of the slowest route speeds of our sample. So while connectivity and price might not be poor in these areas journey times can make the journey less attractive to make.

On the case with Airdrie CAB



Mr B is single, 27 and living with his parents. He is unemployed and receives income based Job Seekers Allowance, £146 every fortnight (£73/week). Mr B lives in Calderbank and is worried about the impact of travelling expenses on his ability to find and remain in employment, as he is most likely to find work either in Airdrie town centre or in Glasgow city. He has experienced delays using his local bus service which at times is a barrier to him successfully travelling as and where needed.

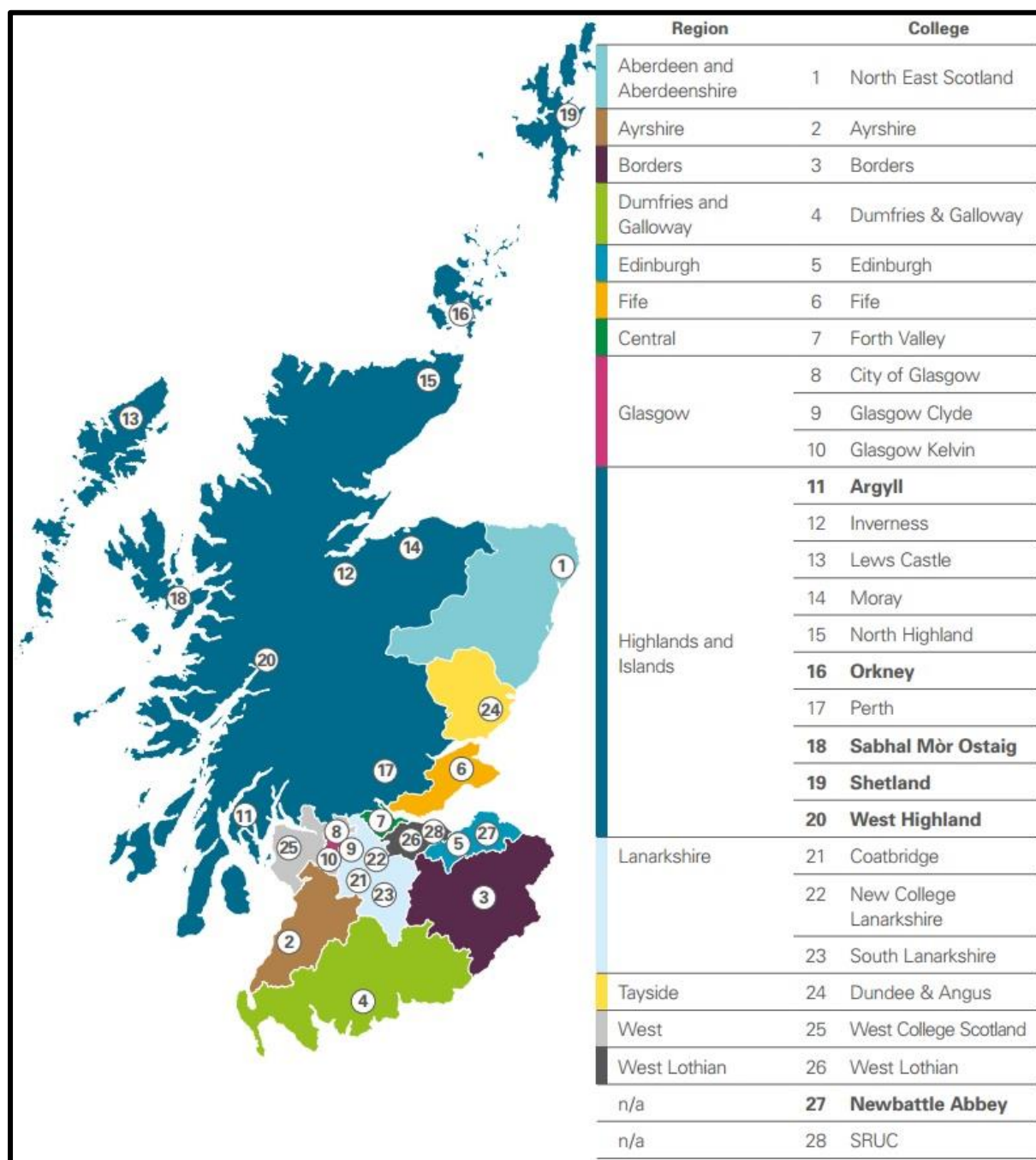
He is also considering going to college in August to do a full time course but has heard from friends that travelling expenses from the college do not cover the true total cost that is incurred. He has similar concerns for the cost of travelling should he find employment in Glasgow. Whilst the research focused per the instructions on nearby towns for work, where an individual finds employment further away in North Lanarkshire or neighbouring local authority, the cost and accessibility of travel do present as barriers.



Chapter 7: Travel to Colleges

Recent regionalisation carried out by the Scottish Government of Scotland's college sector has seen the reduction in Scotland's incorporated colleges from 37 to 20 (with a further 6 non incorporated colleges).⁴⁷ While the changes have not impacted on the size of the college estate in the majority of cases, course availability may have changed resulting in some students having to travel further than before as course delivery may be focussed in regional centres rather than offered at all sites. For the purposes of this research we reviewed the closest college to the home location.

Map 6: Location of Scotland's colleges⁴⁸



⁴⁷ [Scotland's Colleges 2015](#), 2015, Audit Scotland

⁴⁸ From Audit Scotland Report, bold colleges are the non-incorporated colleges



College Key Travel Facts

Surveyed areas in walking distance: 6%
Median bus travel time: 44 minutes
Average distance requiring a bus journey: 15 miles
Median cost for return journey: £6.00

Of all the essential services that we reviewed, colleges had the longest journey times, were furthest from the home locations and most expensive to get to.

Analysis based on Urban/Rural classification showed those living in urban areas had travel times that were less than half that of all the other areas (see Table 7). Remote rural areas had an average distance of 26 miles to their furthest college, with a median time of just over one hour and a cost of over £10 for a return ticket. The costs taken for this survey are full price tickets and there are many schemes in place for registered students to benefit from discounted travel tickets or bursaries for travel costs.

Table 7: Journey Details for Trips to Colleges

| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | Walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban | 25 | 5 (20%) | 6 miles | 23 minutes | £3.25 |
| Accessible/Remote small towns | 26 | 2 (8%) | 13.4 miles | 46 minutes | £5.90 |
| Accessible rural | 31 | 0 (0%) | 12.1 miles | 41 minutes | £5.30 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 0 (0%) | 26 miles | 65 minutes | £10.50 |
| All | 111 | 7 (6%) | 15 miles | 44 minutes | £6.00 |

The furthest distance to travel to a college, not in a remote rural area, was from Lanark where students would have to travel around 20 miles to Motherwell or 25 miles to East Kilbride. Despite the long distance covered the service to East Kilbride is frequent at every 15 minutes during peak times and every half an hour off peak. In addition the journey time to East Kilbride is scheduled to take 34 minutes.


Turriff CAB noted that there are limited courses available at the college locations in the North East of Scotland meaning that students may have to travel further than others to reach a provider for their chosen course. However they do note that North East College Fraserburgh run a special bus for students to and from the campus due to the commercial services not being available in all areas.

Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service revealed that connections on the Rhins of Galloway peninsula to nearby colleges did not run early enough to get students to the college for an assumed start time of 9am. They found that services from Kirkcolum and Leswalt to Stranraer did not connect in time for the bus travelling to Dumfries college. Additionally those travelling from Stranraer to Glasgow to attend one of the cities Universities do not have train or bus services that run early enough to get students to the city on time.

Chapter 8: Travel to Bank Branches and Post Offices

As more services have become available digitally and footfall has fallen in traditional physical bank branches⁴⁹ the number of banking facilities in communities has fallen in recent years from over 20,500 in 1988 to 8,800 in 2012. The Campaign for Community Banking estimates that over 1,200 communities have lost the last or only bank in their community with hundreds more expected to be closed in the next five years particularly in rural communities⁵⁰. This is despite commitments by the industry⁵¹ and influence from the UK Government⁵² to stem the rate of closures especially where there is only one facility in the area.

World Bank figures⁵³ show that in 2013 there were 25 bank branches per 100,000 adults in the UK. This is considerably less than in Spain (74), France (38) or USA (34) but higher than the rate in Germany (15). Despite the improvements in online and mobile banking, many consumers still require access to counter services. Research⁵⁴ for the Competition and Markets Authority market study into personal accounts shows that 8 in 10 consumers access counter services at least once a year, and two fifths use them once a month. Two-thirds of banking customers also said that having a convenient local branch was either essential or very important.



Bank Branch Key Travel Facts

Surveyed areas in walking distance: 33%

Median bus travel time: 16 minutes

Average distance requiring a bus journey: 7 miles

Median cost for return journey: £3.15

Our research showed a mixed picture across the areas we looked at in terms of ease of access to a bank branch using public transport. Branches were within walking distance for 10% of the locations we surveyed, primarily in small town areas where those locations in walking distance increase to 58%. For those using a bus to travel to the nearest bank branch the average distance being travelled was 7 miles with a median journey time of 16 minutes. This increases to an average distance of 10 miles in remote rural areas.

Despite small towns having the highest walking distance rate for bank branches, for those small towns that do not have a branch within walking distance this can mean longer distances than the average. For example in East Ayrshire the distance to the nearest bank branch from Darvel and Drongan are both over 8 miles.

⁴⁹ Bank Branch Closures, 2015, House of Commons Library

⁵⁰ [Campaign for Community Banking](http://communitybanking.co.uk), 2016, Communitybanking.co.uk

⁵¹ [Anger as 'last bank in town' deal is ditched](#), 2015, Daily Mail

⁵² [Banks agrees protocol on branch closures](#), 2015, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills & HM Treasury

⁵³ [Commercial bank branches \(per 100,000 adults\)](#), 2013, World Bank

⁵⁴ [Personal Current Account Investigation](#), 2015, GfK NOP

Table 8: Journey Details for Trips to Bank Branches


| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | Walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban | 25 | 11 (44%) | 2.1 miles | 13 minutes | £2.50 |
| Accessible/Remote small towns | 26 | 15 (58%) | 5.1 miles | 14 minutes | £3.30 |
| Accessible rural | 32 | 4 (13%) | 7.3 miles | 17 minutes | £3.40 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 7 (24%) | 10.4 miles | 21 minutes | £3.40 |
| All | 112 | 37 (33%) | 7 miles | 16 minutes | £3.15 |

Additionally, in some accessible rural areas despite distances to the nearest town with a bank branch not being very far, journey times can be a barrier. For example in the Scottish Borders village of Chirnside, we found that journeys took around an hour to the nearest bank branch despite Eyemouth only being 8 miles away. Similarly in the East Dunbartonshire village of Lennoxton a 5.5 miles journey to the nearest branch in Kirkintilloch had a journey time of over half an hour.

We also uncovered well connected but quite expensive journeys to the nearest banking services, such as in Fife where a 17 minute, two and a half mile journey from Springfield to Cupar costs £3.40 (63p per mile). Services in Caithness linking up the rural village of Latheronwheel to a bank branch in Wick cost just under £7, a considerable sum to access banking facilities.

One alternative facility that is promoted as somewhere to carry out basic banking transactions is the local Post Office network. Post Offices also offer a number of other services including letter and parcel delivery, tax and licensing applications, travel money and some utilities payment services. However a recent transformation program of the Post Office network has seen a reduction in the number of branches from 18,000 in 2000 to 11,500 in 2012.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Bank Branch Closures, 2015, House of Commons Library



Post Office Key Travel Facts

Surveyed areas in walking distance: 64%
Median bus travel time: 15 minutes
Average distance requiring a bus journey: 4 miles
Median cost for return journey: £2.90

We found that of all the ‘essential services’ we surveyed, Post Offices were the best connected for the areas we looked at. Around two thirds of home locations were in walking distance to a local Post Office, this rises to 88% for those living in small towns. Journey distances for those travelling by bus were also on average less than five miles away, with the furthest distance being 9.1 miles to Oldmeldrum from Fyvie in rural Aberdeenshire. While there are closer Post Offices to Fyvie the bus connection is easier to Oldmeldrum.

Table 9 breaks down the journey details by Urban/Rural analysis area. Due to most of the bus journeys covering short distances, prices were uniformly low across most of our locations however in one rural village of Fife, Luthrie, the distance to Cupar for the nearest Post Office is five miles but it costs £7.60 for a return tickets, the most expensive journey we identified.

Table 9: Journey Details for Trips to Post Offices

| Urban/Rural Class | Journeys in Class | Walking distance | Average distance | Median bus travel time | Median return price |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Large Urban/Other Urban | 25 | 17 (68%) | 1.8 miles | 12 minutes | £2.00 |
| Accessible/Remote small towns | 26 | 23 (88%) | 1.3 miles | 15 minutes | £2.30 |
| Accessible rural | 32 | 15 (47%) | 4.1 miles | 15 minutes | £3.00 |
| Remote rural | 29 | 17 (59%) | 4.8 miles | 21 minutes | £3.00 |
| All | 112 | 72 (64%) | 4 miles | 15 minutes | £2.90 |

Chapter 9: Council Spend on Subsidised Routes

Bus routes are run on a commercial basis unless a local authority or other funder provides a subsidy on a route it feels is a necessary or lifeline service to the local community and it cannot be provided on a purely commercial basis.⁵⁶ Local Authorities are free to make local decisions on the level of subsidies and which routes to subsidise for services in their area. For some areas the Regional Transport Partnerships may co-ordinate this subsidy activity for which local authorities provide funding to a central pool.

Citizens Advice Scotland collated the information from Scotland's 32 local authorities on how much they spent on subsidised bus services in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 alongside a similar figure for the SPT region⁵⁷. Table 10 details the total amounts spent by local authorities in 2015/2016, the 2014/2015 spend and the change in the past year. Table 11 presents how much was spent in each area by adult population.

This reveals that Scotland's islands spent the most per adult in bus subsidies with Western Isles highest at £108 per adult. This is most likely due to the lower populations but also large distances being covered in the areas. The average spend on bus subsidies across Scotland was £10.67 per adult. Scotland's cities tended to provide lower subsidies per head but this is likely due to the fact that most services in these areas are more commercially viable with higher passenger numbers. Aberdeen City Council spent the least at £0.55 per adult.

The largest amount spent was by the regional area of SPT where over £11m was paid to bus providers for services run in the region. Fife Council spent the most of any individual Local Authority at almost £5.5m, an increase of 9% on the previous year. This £470,000 extra investment was the largest reported.

The biggest proportional increase last year was seen in the Orkney Isles where the subsidy increased by 41% to £608,000. Orkney Isles council explained that they had just established "a new 5 year contract" as the reason for the "significant increase". Moray council also increased the budget for their subsidised bus services by over 30% and East Lothian by 18% in the same period.

The largest proportional cut in bus subsidies was in Midlothian who cut subsidies by 43% from £248,000 to £141,000. They noted in their response that one service had been withdrawn completely from operation – the 328, run by Edinburgh Coach Lines. This service was the only bus routes that connected the villages of Millerhill, Newton Village, Hilltown and Cousland in Midlothian and Craighall in East Lothian with the towns of Musselburgh and Dalkeith⁵⁸. Midlothian Council announced they would support those living in the area with a "Ring and Go" service which offered pre-booked door-to-door journeys at a £1.50 single rate.⁵⁹

The largest financial cut was seen in Edinburgh where £200,000 was lost from the budget, a 15% reduction. Edinburgh City Council noted two services that had been cut or changed.

⁵⁶ [Transport in Scotland](#), 2011, SPICe

⁵⁷ A number of Local Authorities in the SPT area informed us that figures are available at an SPT level only.

⁵⁸ [Villagers face missing the bus in council funding cut](#), 2014, Edinburgh Evening News

⁵⁹ [New 'ring and go' service to replace 328 bus](#), 2014, Midlothian Council

Table 10: Local Authority spend on subsidised bus services in Scotland⁶⁰

| | 2014/2015 | 2015/2016 | Change | % change |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Aberdeen City Council | £110,000 | £109,000 | -£1,000 | -0.9% |
| Aberdeenshire Council | £3,319,742 | £3,422,000 | £102,258 | 3.1% |
| Angus Council | £1,694,642 | £1,865,631 | £170,989 | 10.1% |
| Argyll and Bute Council | £1,425,643 | £1,491,642 | £65,999 | 4.6% |
| City of Edinburgh Council | £1,370,000 | £1,170,000 | -£200,000 | -14.6% |
| Clackmannanshire Council | £275,880 | £215,880 | -£60,000 | -21.7% |
| Comhairle nan Eilean Siar | £2,612,000 | £2,496,000 | -£116,000 | -4.4% |
| Dumfries and Galloway Council | £3,514,204 | £3,527,364 | £13,160 | 0.4% |
| Dundee City Council | £404,000 | £404,000 | £0 | 0.0% |
| East Lothian | £875,000 | £1,033,000 | £158,000 | 18.1% |
| Falkirk Council | £1,718,610 | £1,584,710 | -£133,900 | -7.8% |
| Fife Council | £4,982,504 | £5,453,323 | £470,819 | 9.4% |
| Highland Council | £2,642,000 | £2,588,917 | -£53,083 | -2.0% |
| Midlothian Council | £247,703 | £140,692 | -£107,011 | -43.2% |
| Moray Council | £191,271 | £251,631 | £60,360 | 31.6% |
| Orkney Islands Council | £430,500 | £608,700 | £178,200 | 41.4% |
| Perth and Kinross Council | £2,173,000 | £2,110,000 | -£63,000 | -2.9% |
| Scottish Borders Council | £1,713,293 | £1,768,208 | £54,915 | 3.2% |
| Shetland Islands Council | £1,590,000 | £1,650,000 | £60,000 | 3.8% |
| South Ayrshire Council | £2,098,952 | £2,088,952 | -£10,000 | -0.5% |
| Stirling Council | £674,190 | £672,900 | -£1,290 | -0.2% |
| West Lothian | £1,967,000 | £2,124,000 | £157,000 | 8.0% |
| SPT | £11,187,900 | £11,187,900 | £0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | £47,218,034 | £47,964,450 | £746,416 | 1.6% |

⁶⁰ Data provided by Local Authorities in response to FOI requests from CAS in February 2016

Table 11: Money spent in each local authority area on bus subsidies by adult population

| | 2015/2016 | Adult Population ⁶¹ | £'s spent per adult |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Comhairle nan Eilean Siar | £2,496,000 | 23,000 | £108.52 |
| Shetland Islands Council | £1,650,000 | 19,238 | £85.77 |
| Orkney Islands Council | £608,700 | 18,393 | £33.09 |
| Clackmannanshire Council | £215,880 | 42,940 | £27.66 |
| Dumfries and Galloway Council | £3,527,364 | 127,506 | £27.66 |
| South Ayrshire Council | £2,088,952 | 95,798 | £21.81 |
| Argyll and Bute Council | £1,491,642 | 74,482 | £20.03 |
| Angus Council | £1,865,631 | 98,550 | £18.93 |
| Scottish Borders Council | £1,768,208 | 96,313 | £18.36 |
| Fife Council | £5,453,323 | 307,769 | £17.72 |
| Perth and Kinross Council | £2,110,000 | 127,080 | £16.60 |
| Aberdeenshire Council | £3,422,000 | 216,114 | £15.85 |
| West Lothian | £2,124,000 | 145,499 | £14.60 |
| Highland Council | £2,588,917 | 196,698 | £13.16 |
| East Lothian | £1,033,000 | 85,317 | £12.11 |
| Falkirk Council | £1,584,710 | 131,854 | £12.02 |
| SCOTLAND | £47,964,450 | 4,495,123 | £10.67 |
| Stirling Council | £672,900 | 78,443 | £8.58 |
| SPT | £11,187,900 | 1,899,560 ⁶² | £5.89 |
| City of Edinburgh Council | £1,170,000 | 426,936 | £5.03 |
| Dundee City Council | £404,000 | 125,826 | £3.21 |
| Moray Council | £251,631 | 80,103 | £3.14 |
| Midlothian Council | £140,692 | 71,799 | £1.96 |
| Aberdeen City Council | £109,000 | 198,390 | £0.55 |

⁶¹ [Adult Populations](#) 15years+ Corrected Mid-2015 Population Estimates Scotland, National Records Of Scotland

⁶² SPT Population is based on the adult population of the 12 local authority SPT members, only part of Argyll and Bute is in the SPT travel area however it is not possible to extrapolate this population

Chapter 10: Conclusions

Scotland's bus network plays a vital role in keeping its citizens moving and accessing essential services every day. However, throughout this report we have highlighted specific examples of where access to services can be difficult due to long distances, sparse timetables and expensive ticket prices.

For many in Scotland's cities and large towns connections can be frequent and relatively affordable, while in more rural parts of Scotland we have found communities that contend with twice daily services that can cost a substantial proportion of weekly income to make necessary journeys. For example, those in remote rural areas we surveyed paid a median price of over £9 for a return journey to the nearest job centre. While some jobseekers and others can receive a discount on tickets it still represents a significant cost for those already struggling to make ends meet on a low income. We welcome the help that bus companies in Scotland currently give in discounts to those eligible for travel cards but more could be done to support those in low paid work or on low incomes who face, what is for them, considerable expense. For consumers, price information not being available upfront, which we found in a number of areas, makes it impossible to budget for routes they are not familiar with as they cannot find price information prior to travelling. This could be particularly difficult for consumers of operators who run an exact change only system.

We found that Scotland's college students from non-urban areas often face long distances and journey times, with specific examples being provided of poor connections making it impossible to get from A to B in time for morning lectures. There are some key local issues that we will identify with college providers and bus companies in those areas to improve connections for students.

While Scotland's bank branch network has seen major reductions in recent years, many consumers still prefer this method of banking. While we found a mixed picture across Scotland with ease of access to bank branches, Post Offices still remain a very local service with over 64% of those locations surveyed having a Post Office in walking distance and those relying on public transport on average only having to make journeys of fifteen minutes. This vital local service should be seen as an important asset given the remote banking facilities that are currently offered by Post Offices.

While our research identified relatively good local connections to GP surgeries, we identified some rural areas where the catchment area of a GP did not match up with local bus provision. This means for some people who rely on public transport, they are not able to easily access GP services. A move to ensuring that all areas in a catchment of a GP can be accessed easily by bus, or allowing a more flexible attitude to which GP a rural patient can be registered with, would be a sensible approach for these patients.

Poor, or non-existent, Sunday services may be having an impact on the aim for the NHS to deliver diagnostic and elective treatment services seven days a week. Four in ten of the remote rural locations we surveyed could not get to their local hospital on a Sunday using bus services. We welcome the commitment by Scotland's Regional Transport Partnerships to ensure that access to healthcare services is a priority for them and recommend that Sunday services are seen as a key part of this.

Acknowledgements

CAS would like to thank the volunteers and staff at the following Citizens Advice Bureaux without whom the large data set of information analysed for this research could not have been gathered. We are also indebted to their local knowledge of their area which provided excellent insight into the routes, operators, pricing and location of public services.

- Airdrie Citizens Advice Bureau
- Caithness Citizens Advice Bureau
- Central Borders Citizens Advice Bureau
- Clackmannanshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- Clydesdale Citizens Advice Bureau
- Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service
- East Ayrshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- East Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- Citizens Advice and Rights Fife
- Inverness Citizens Advice Bureau
- Kincardine and Mearns Citizens Advice Bureau
- Nairn Citizens Advice Bureau
- Parkhead Citizens Advice Bureau
- Roxburgh and Berwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- Skye and Lochalsh Citizens Advice Bureau
- Turriff Citizens Advice Bureau

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