



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01424

Name of petitioner

Joyce Harkness on behalf of the "Road to Health" CPP3 team

Petition title

Improving transport provision for older people in remote and rural areas

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to (a) work with local authorities, NHS boards, Regional Transport Partnerships and the ambulance service to improve provision of transport for older people in remote and rural areas in order to improve their access to health, social care and wellbeing facilities, and (b) to take forward the key recommendations of the Transport for health and social care report by Audit Scotland.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Representations were made to three local MSPs to engage their interest in the project and to inform them of the results of a survey involving over 1000 older people in Dumfries and Galloway. This led to the CPP3 team adopting a four point process for raising the awareness at Holyrood of the rural transport issues for older people:

1. Delivered a "Time for Reflection" talk on the topic in the Scottish Parliament building. This was done on 14 December 2011.
2. Encourage a Members Debate to bring the issue before the Scottish Parliament. This is being led by Alex Fergusson MSP with the support of Elaine Murray MSP and Aileen McLeod MSP - Motion S4M-01763: Alex Fergusson, Galloway and West Dumfries, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Date Lodged: 19/01/2012.
3. Submit a petition to follow up the Members Debate and to raise the profile of the issues, leading to action being taken. This is the subject of this submission.
4. Seek the support of the Equal Opportunities Committee to progress the issue. This had strong support from Claudia Beamish before her role changed and is ongoing. Follow up activities are being arranged.

Action is also being taken to raise awareness in local bodies in Dumfries and Galloway, namely the Local Authority, Health Board and SWestrans. This has included a presentation to SWestrans Board on our project, with a follow up presentation to be confirmed demonstrating our findings; a summary research report which has been circulated to key personnel in the Local Authority and Health Board; participation in a Rural Transport Solutions networking event including presentation of our summary report and a follow up meeting arranged with officers from the Local Authority's transport division to consider future joint working; participation in a local consultation event on Improving Access to the Patient Transport Service delivered by the Scottish Ambulance Service.

We have identified further actions at local level, but would still aim to submit this petition as the issues affect older people across Scotland.

Local research showed that the Rural Transport Solutions pilot project in Wigtownshire is an example of good practice and web based research also indicated good practice in Buchan. Both initiatives demonstrated significant improvement in efficiency savings and customer satisfaction over current standard practice.

Petition background information

The following is the Executive Summary of the report produced following the survey of over 1000 older people in Dumfries and Galloway.

For older people, travel to and from hospital or clinic appointments is often difficult, time consuming and stressful.

- It is almost impossible to attend these appointments using public transport outside the main centres in Dumfries and Galloway.
- Older people are forced to rely on their own transport or the goodwill of others.
- Journeys arranged by NHS patient transport are often stressful, at inconvenient times or arranged in an inflexible manner.
- It can take a whole day to attend a half hour appointment.
- More than a third of appointments before 10am involve more than one hour's travel.
- Families and carers are often excluded from travel arranged by NHS patient transport. Escorts were excluded from over a fifth of such journeys.
- Anecdotal evidence exists of gaps in organisation and coordination of NHS patient transport.

There are many and diverse approaches to this problem, including the Scottish Ambulance Service Patient Transport Service and local community transport schemes. Our research indicates that this provision is currently uncoordinated, inefficient and not effective. There is also lack of sustainability for voluntary group activities due to uncertain future funding.

Transport is vital for the wellbeing of older people.

- Over a third of our sample are unable to do their own shopping
- Two thirds of those that can do their own shopping live more than a mile from shops and nearly 10% live more than 10 miles from shops.
- Over 40% of older people have difficulty in getting out and nearly half of these find it almost impossible to get out.
- A quarter of older people don't get out every month.

Extrapolating these figures across the whole of Dumfries and Galloway, where there are approximately 45,000 people over the age of 60, implies:

- 15,000 older people are unable to do their own shopping,
- 3,000 older people live more than 10 miles from shops,
- 18,000 older people have difficulty getting out and,
- More than 10,000 older people get out less frequently than once per month.

We are aware of the recommendations of the Audit Scotland report on Transport for Health and Social Care. We understand that there is no direct focus in the report on transport provision in remote and rural areas and its effect on older peoples' health and wellbeing. The report was tabled at Dumfries & Galloway Community Health Partnership (CHP) meeting of 9th September 2011. The CHP noted the contents of the report, and we are unaware of any further action being taken.

Information on our project can be found at:
<http://www.thebridge-dg.org.uk/id13.html>

A copy of our Summary Report January 2012 can be downloaded from this link, and the report is attached as an appendix to this petition.

Other reports which may be of interest include:

- Rural Transport Solutions in Northern Periphery–

<http://www.northernperiphery.eu/en/projects/show/&tid=70>

- SCVO A Life Worth Living–

http://www.scvo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/A_Life_Worth_Living_Oct11_final.pdf

- Ageing Well in the Scottish Borders, Scottish Borders Council, October 2009–

http://onlineborders.org.uk/sites/default/files/ageingwell/files/Ageing%20Well%20Handbook%20Oct%2009_2.pdf

- Transforming older people's services in the Scottish Borders. Scottish Borders, June 2009–

http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/431/transforming_older_peoples_services

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01424>

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NO

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12

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