Transport and Ageing:
Extending Quality of Life for Older People Via Public and Private Transport

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END OF AWARD REPORT

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Summary of Aims, Objectives and Significant Achievements

The aim of this project was to examine public and private transport needs in relation to quality of life in old age.

Specific Objectives

1) To examine the attitudes and perceptions of older adults (baby boomers and older people) to continued driving in old age, the barriers to the use of public transport, and the role of private and public transport in quality of life in old age.
2) To determine the extent to which the transport needs of elderly people are taken into consideration by age-based interest groups, pro-automobile lobby groups, health and social care organisations, car, train and bus manufacturers, local authorities and government.
3) To produce guidelines for local authorities, government organisations and manufacturers of trains, buses and automobiles, on the transport needs of older adults.

The findings indicated that car ownership and driving were linked to quality of life, with the effect being stronger for men than for women. Although giving up driving was perceived by current drivers as entirely negative, the responses of those who had stopped driving suggested that being without a car was less problematic than expected. Older people were more satisfied with public transport than were 'baby boomers' (aged 45-58) or younger people, although ratings of local services indicated only moderate levels of satisfaction. A number of barriers to the use of public transport were identified, including concerns about personal safety at night (endorsed by 65% of those interviewed), difficulties carrying heavy loads, public transport running late, the behaviour of some passengers, poor cleanliness, and a lack of toilets. It was generally felt that transport operators did not take the needs of older people into consideration. Interviews with transport operators indicated some support for this perception, in that meeting the needs of elderly people was not viewed as a high priority.

This study generated a new dataset and new findings. The findings address issues of social exclusion and ageism in an ageing society, and will be of interest to policy makers, transport operators, older people and advocates for the rights of older people.

SUMMARY

Background

   While accessible public transport and the independence that comes with car driving are generally thought to be linked to quality of life in old age, age-related disabilities and health problems can make both car driving and the use of public transport problematic. Government policy emphasises social inclusion, but the decline in public transport in some areas, associated with deregulation and privatisation of buses and trains, means that many older people are more dependent than ever on access to a car for activities of daily living, maintaining links with family and friends, access to health care, and other areas of life that impact on quality of life. Also, the 'baby boomers', a cohort used to car driving, may be reluctant to give up driving if public transport is not greatly improved, raising questions about the kinds of policies that can be developed which could encourage the use of public transport. The relationship between access to transport and quality of life has been little examined by research.

Aims and Objectives

   The aim of this exploratory project was to examine public and private transport needs in relation to quality of life in old age. The specific objectives were as follows:

   1) To examine the attitudes and perceptions of older adults (baby boomers and older people) to continued driving in old age, the barriers to the use of public transport, and the role of private and public transport in quality of life in old age.
   2) To determine the extent to which the transport needs of elderly people are taken into consideration by age-based interest groups, pro-automobile lobby groups, health and social care organisations, car, train and bus manufacturers, local authorities and government.
   3) To produce guidelines for local authorities, government organisations and manufacturers of trains, buses and automobiles, on the transport needs of older adults.

Methods

   A multi-method approach was used in this project. The study was conducted in Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, and inner and outer London. The developmental studies consisted of focus groups (17) and street surveys (239 - 178 in Scotland and 61 in London). A postal survey (5000 questionnaires mailed, with 1128 returned), and interviews utilizing a quota sample (194 in Scotland and 109 in London) formed the main data source. Interviews were also conducted with a range of policy makers, implementers of transport policy, and manufacturers of transport. The data were primarily analysed quantitatively, though a basic qualitative analysis of the focus groups and open-ended questions in the main interviews provided some limited but rich information to conceptualise the data and provide explanations. The interviews with transport policy makers, implementers, and manufacturers were analysed qualitatively.

Main Findings

- ❖ Car ownership and access to transport were associated with higher perceived quality of life. The effects of car ownership and access were independent of wealth. There was some evidence that the relationship between driving and quality of life was stronger for men than for women.
- ❖ Respondents who had given up driving were more positive about the benefits and advantages of not driving than were those who were currently driving.
- ❖ However, older people were found to be most reluctant to ask family members, especially children, for lifts, even to hospital or GP appointments. The unwillingness to ask friends for lifts was also marked, unless some kind of reciprocal relationship was involved.
- ❖ Approximately half of those interviewed thought that there should be more restrictions placed on drivers over the age of 70 years. Baby boomers were more likely than older people to agree that there should be more restrictions on driving past the age of 70 years.
- ❖ Older people reported being more satisfied with public transport than baby boomers, and baby boomers were more satisfied than those under 45 years old. However, the ratings indicated generally low levels of satisfaction.
- ❖ A number of barriers to the use of public transport by older people were noted. Concern about personal security in the evening or at night was the most frequently endorsed barrier (65%), and fear of a crash the least.
- ❖ Only about half of respondents felt that their needs were considered by operators of underground, bus or rail services; proportions varied between 59% (trains) and 38% (buses).
- ❖ Car manufacturers were found to be thinking seriously about the ageing of the population and how to make car driving easier and safer for old people.
- ❖ Train and bus operators, on the other hand, were found to think of older and disabled people as a 'nuisance' and as potentially causing overcrowding because of demands for access.
- ❖ Disability, and not ageing, was found to be of concern to public transport operators. Disability was conceived of largely in terms of wheelchair accessibility. Sensory impairments such as difficulties in seeing or in hearing announcements were rarely mentioned as a concern by the operators of public transport.
- ❖ These findings, which indicate that driving and travel by private car may be a source of improved quality of life in old age, do not fit with government policy to get people off the roads and on to public transport.

Conclusions

This exploratory project has provided useful insights. Although it is frequently argued that access to transport impacts independently on quality of life, to date this has been largely a matter of opinion, rather than a research finding. Thus, this study makes an important contribution to the debate on the role of transport on quality of life in old age. The fact that most of the baby boomers in the study were drivers, who expressed a wish to continue driving in old age, indicates that there is a mismatch between the wants and needs of future cohorts of older people in relation to driving and policies aimed at reducing the use of cars. Unless the barriers to the use of public transport can be removed it will be difficult to persuade older people to travel by public transport during their retirement years.

FULL REPORT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

BACKGROUND

Although it is frequently argued that transport is important in maintaining a good quality of life in old age,[1] and although a recent doctoral dissertation has highlighted the importance of both public and private transport to elderly people's participation in activities,[2] there is remarkably little research showing that transport predicts quality of life in old age *independent* of wealth. Whether or not older women are particularly negatively affected by poor public transport, given that they are less likely to drive or, if they do drive, to be able to afford a car in later life,[3] is also under-researched.[4][5][6]

The Carnegie Inquiry into the Third Age has noted that the rise in car ownership in the next generation of older people (the cohort known as the 'baby boomers') in Britain could lead to further decline in the use of public transport, making life even more problematic for older people who do not drive.[7][8] The baby boomers (those who will turn 60 in around 2010), being a cohort used to private transport, may be very unwilling to give up driving if public transport is not dramatically improved, as shown in past research.[9] This raises the question, "What is the government doing to encourage the use of public, rather than private, transport by elderly people?" One of the problems with this question is that the relatively recent privatisation of public transport and current emphasis on environmental sustainability (i.e. decreased reliance on cars) are awkward bed partners. Privatised companies prefer to run on profitable routes and offering discounts to elderly people (many of whom also live in deprived areas) is not perceived as being compatible with profit maximisation. What kinds of policies can be developed in an increasingly privatised society that could encourage the use of public transport?

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this project was to examine public and private transport needs in relation to quality of life in old age.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the attitudes and perceptions of older adults (baby boomers and older people) to continued driving in old age, the barriers to the use of public transport, and the role of private and public transport in quality of life in old age.
2. To determine the extent to which the transport needs of elderly people are taken into consideration by age-based interest groups, pro-automobile lobby groups, health and social care organisations, car, train and bus manufacturers, local authorities and government.
3. To produce guidelines for local authorities, government organisations and manufacturers of trains, buses and automobiles, on the transport needs of older adults

Note: Most of the research effort went into meeting Objective 1, as can be seen from the detailed outline of the methods. We conducted 17 focus groups, interviewed 239 older people via a street survey, conducted a large postal survey, and conducted 303 in-depth, face-to-face interviews. Staffing difficulties in London meant that we were unable to conduct a detailed examination of government policy documents. However, a number of in-depth interviews were conducted in London and Scotland with transport operators and local authority representatives to enable us to meet Objective 2. The study generated rich and complex data that are still being analysed. Thus, the guidelines noted in Objective 3 are still being drafted.

METHODS

Procedure

It was intended that information be gathered at three levels, from a variety of sources, using a variety of methods. Apart from difficulties in collecting data at the macro level, and problems in relation to a planned telephone interview, the procedures originally planned were implemented.

Micro Level- Older Adults

The views of the baby boomers and older adults towards current and future transport needs, and the relationship between these views and the availability of public and private transport, were examined in four ways:

1. Stage One Developmental Studies – Focus Groups

- In Paisley members of the local elderly forums were invited to participate in focus groups and face-to-face interviews. In London older people were recruited via advertising to local groups. A total of 17 focus groups were run with 131 older people participating. The focus groups generated themes and the main concerns of elderly people with regard to their transport needs and preferences, and the relationship of these concerns to quality of life, which provided the information needed to develop an interview schedule for the street surveys and face-to-face, individual interviews. Individual open-ended interviews further refined the schedules for the main study.

2. Stage Two Developmental Studies - Street Surveys

- Street surveys of middle-aged and elderly people (total n=239) were conducted in Paisley (n=178) and London (n=61) to examine attitudes to using public and private transport and to refine certain questions for the interview schedule to be used in the interview survey.

<u>Main Studies</u>[1]

3. Main study – Postal Survey

- A postal survey was sent to 5000 people drawn from the electoral register, 1250 in each of the four study areas, Paisley, Rural Renfrewshire, Newham and Richmond. The overall response rate was 23.21%. There were marked differences in response rates between localities, with the lowest rate (11.75%) being in Newham. The response rates for the other areas were as follows: Richmond, 28.11%; Paisley, 22.59%; Rural Renfrewshire, 30.31%.

Note: It had originally been intended that a sub-sample be drawn from the postal survey for a telephone survey, but the low response rate, combined with an even lower percentage agreeing to take part in a telephone survey, led to a decision (in consultation with the Director of the GO programme) to discontinue the telephone survey.

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[1] Further details of sample characteristics can be found in Annex 1

4. Main study – Interview Survey

- Samples of middle-aged and older adults were interviewed in depth using semi-structured interview schedules; 194 people were interviewed in Scotland, and 109 in London. A quota-sampling design was used, with stratification by age, gender, car ownership, and location. The aim was to use a snow-ball technique to generate the sample, but this proved very difficult in practice, and other methods were also used, e.g. contacting local groups, advertising. Some of the people who had returned their postal questionnaires and agreed to take part in the telephone survey were recruited to the interview study. The interviews generated information on the perceived role of transport (private and public) in quality of life, on barriers to the use of public transport, and views about stopping driving.

Meso Level – Organisations that Impact on Transport Policy and Provision

- Informal meetings and unstructured interviews were conducted with a number of people representing transport manufacturers and operators, officials at local authority level, officials from the DETR and the Older Person's Unit, Scottish Executive. The UEL team conducted most of these interviews.

Macro Level – Government Policies

- UK Government and European Union documents were examined to determine government policies in relation to the transport needs of older people.

Measures

Structured schedules were developed for both the postal survey and the interview survey. For the interview survey, questions about attitudes to giving up driving were adapted from a study conducted by Rabbitt and colleagues[10], with additional questions based on findings from the focus groups and street surveys.

'Quality of life' was measured using the 'Delighted-Terrible' faces scale [11] (rather than the LEIPAD assessment of quality of life, which is aimed at very old people). The scale was scored 1-7, with 1 indicating unhappiness or dissatisfaction with quality of life and 7 indicating high satisfaction. The Faces Scales was also used for ratings of satisfaction with aspects of transport, as well as with aspects of quality of life, such as family life, health and the environment. In previous studies at the Centre of Gerontology and Health Studies, University of Paisley, the Delighted-Terrible Faces Scale has been found to be significantly correlated with other measures of quality of life.

Analyses

The data were analysed primarily quantitatively using a variety of statistical techniques ranging from Chi Square to regression analyses. The focus groups, street surveys, and interviews with policy makers and transport providers generated qualitative data which was analysed accordingly.

RESULTS

The results to be presented have been grouped into five main categories: (1) Age differences in the use and importance of transport, (2) Cars and quality of life in old age, (3) Giving up Driving, (4) Public transport and quality of life in old age, and (5) Meeting the transport needs of older people.

Note: This project generated a large amount of data and, hence, only a small proportion of the findings from the study can be presented within the word limits of this report. As a consequence, interesting differences between the study areas - Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, inner and outer London – have not been included. It has also not been possible to present the results from analyses examining interactions between area, gender, age and social deprivation. The findings presented are drawn from all the various sources, namely the focus groups, street surveys, postal survey and interview survey, though the main focus is on the findings from the main studies, i.e. the postal survey and interview survey. Where the findings were the same, only one set of results is presented. This report represents preliminary analyses of the data. In many instances details of the statistical analyses have been deliberately omitted due to word limits and the need to facilitate clarity.

Age Differences in the Use and Importance of Transport

The presence of a car in the household, driving, and the 'main mode' of transport used was found to vary with age. As can be seen in Figure 1, over the age of 45 years, increasing age was associated with increased use of public transport.

As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, the baby boomers were the age group with the highest levels of car driving, and their ratings of the importance of private transport closely matches this. Older people, however, used public transport more than those aged 18-44, as well as more than the baby boomers (Figure 4). Older people and the youngest group rated public transport as more important than the baby boomers did(Figure 5).
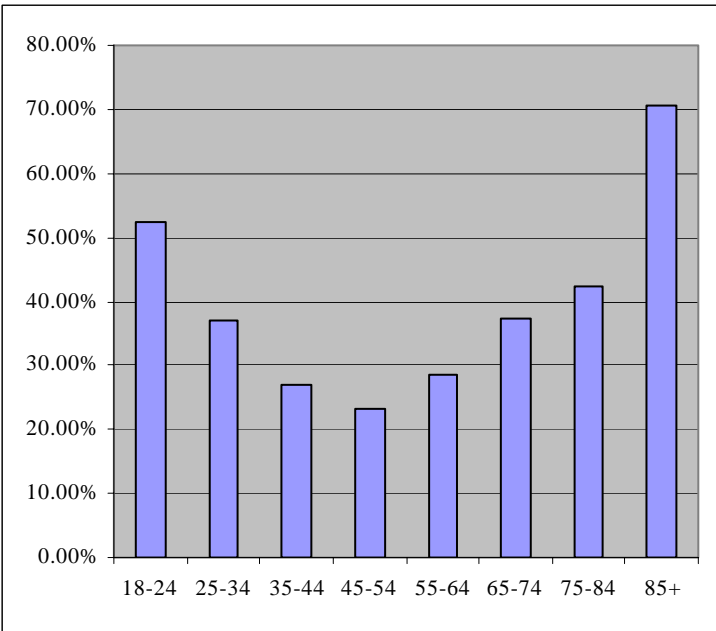

Figure 1 – Percent of postal survey respondents who mainly use public transport by age group.
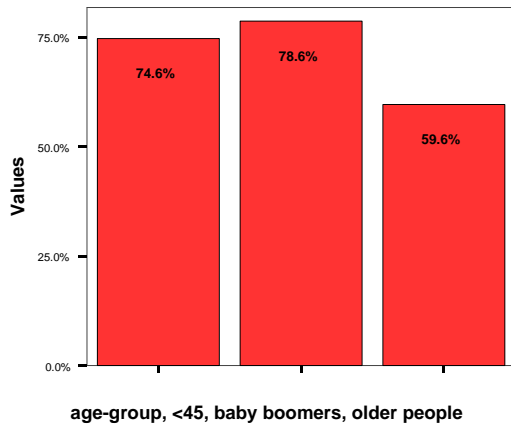
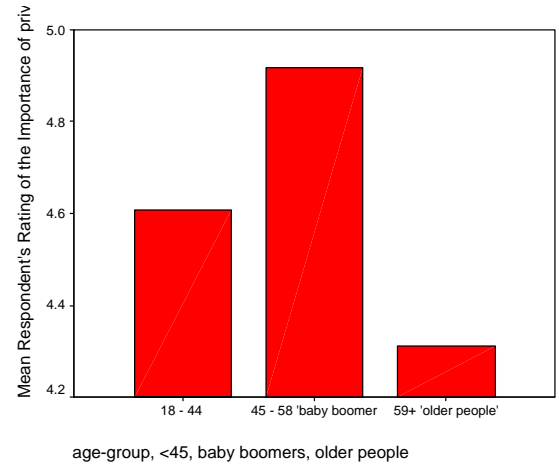Figure 2 – Proportion of drivers in each age group. Postal survey.

Figure 3 –Mean ratings of importance of private transport by age group (5=very important). Postal survey.

The relationship between age, use of public transport and importance of public transport to carrying out activities, was closely related to that above for car owners (Figures 4-5).
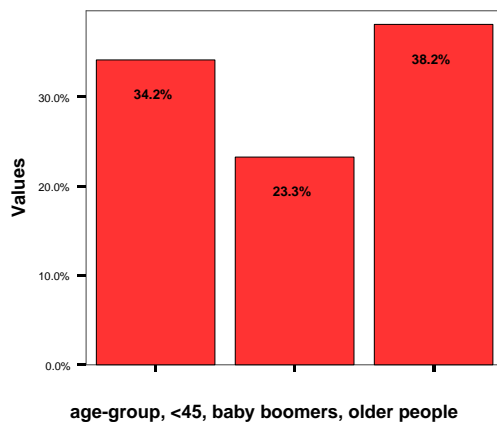

Figure 4 – Percent who travel mainly by public transport by age group. Postal survey
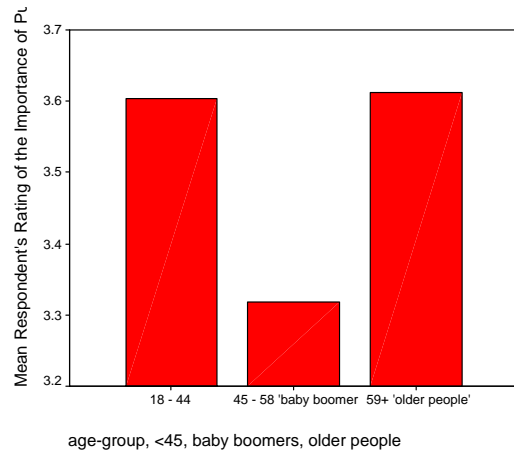

Figure 5 – Mean ratings of importance of public transport by age group (5=very important). Postal survey

Cars and Quality of Life in Old Age

Both the postal survey and the interview survey found that those who drive, who own cars, who have ease of access to a car, and who report that they can easily get a lift if they do not themselves drive report higher quality of life than those who do not (Figures 6-9).
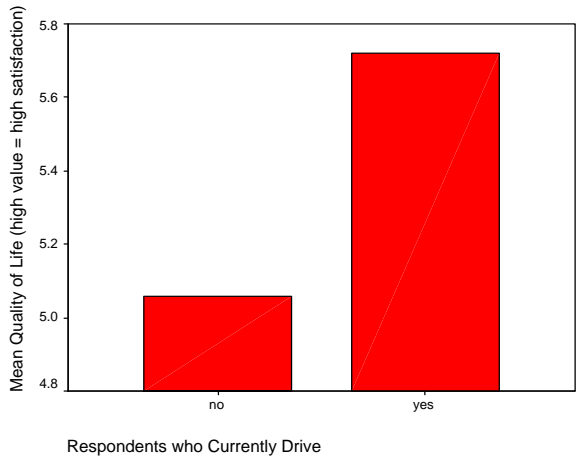
Figure 6 – Mean ratings of quality of life for drivers and non-drivers (7=delighted face, high quality of life).
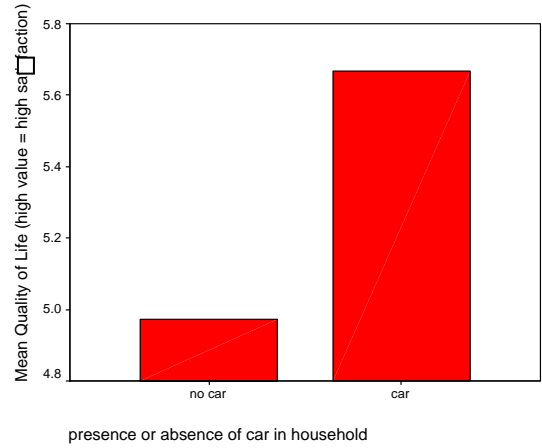

Figure 7 – Mean ratings of quality of life for respondents with and without car in the household (7=delighted face, high quality of life).
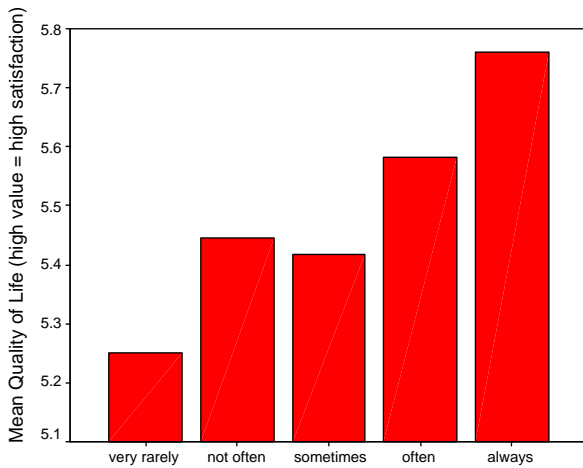

Figure 8 – Mean ratings of quality of life for each level of car access as a driver (7=delighted face, high quality of life)
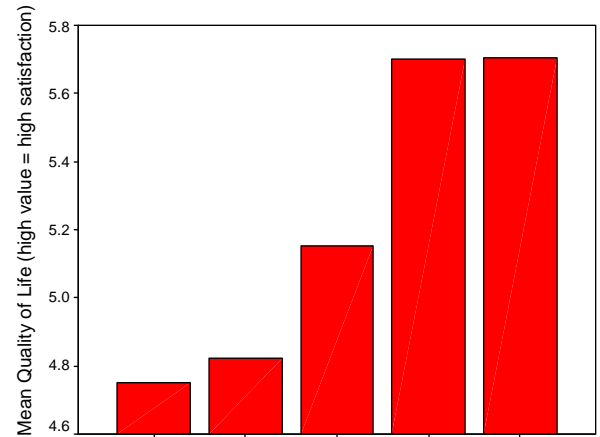

Figure 9 – Mean ratings of quality of life for each level of car access as a passenger. (7=delighted face, high quality of life)

Gender, car driving and quality of life

Data from the postal survey also revealed interesting differences between men and women in car driving and its relationship to perceived quality of life (Figure 10). For males driving was significantly associated with quality of life (male drivers M=5.65, male non-drivers, M=4.79, t=-5.67, df=122.10, p=<.001). The difference between female drivers and non-drivers was not significant. The gender by driver interaction, however, failed to reach an acceptable level of statistical significance, though it was close (F=3.256, p = .071).[2] The relationship between gender, car ownership, and quality of life was not found in the interview survey where all participants were over the age of 45 and where the sample size was smaller.

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[2] A similar relationship between driving, gender and quality of life was found in a collaborative study in Melbourne, Australia, between the Centre of Gerontology and Health Studies and Dr J McCormack, La Trobe University.
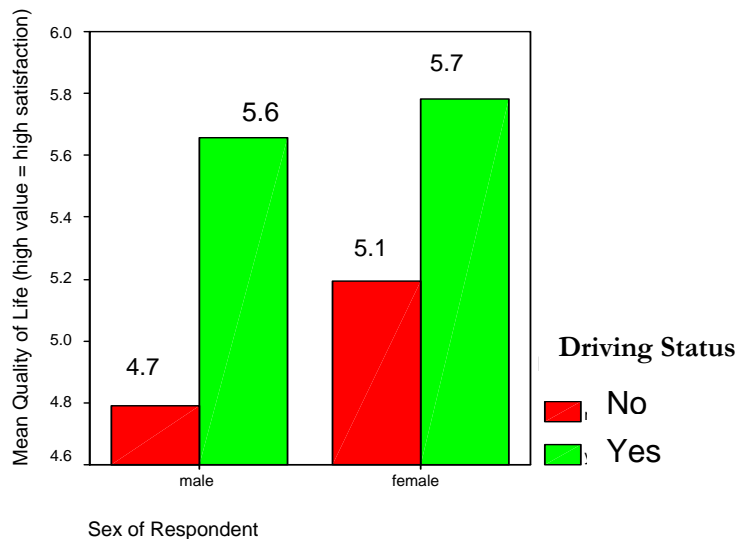
Figure 10 – Relationship between sex, driving status and mean rated quality of life (7=delighted face, high quality of life). Study participants age 18+ years. Postal survey.

Cars, wealth and quality of life

It is, of course, possible that the relationship between car ownership, car driving, car access etc. can be explained in terms of the greater wealth of those with cars. There were, unsurprisingly, significant associations between 'deprivation' and car ownership, driving and access as well as with quality of life.

As can be seen in Figure 11 below, Scottish drivers in deprivation categories 1-6 reported fairly uniform levels of quality of life; for non-drivers, however, quality of life declined as deprivation increased. Stepwise regressions using the Scottish data from the postal survey indicated that both car ownership/driving and deprivation category were predictors of quality of life (Adjusted R^2= .104). Adding in the data from respondents in London, however, caused this effect to disappear. This is perhaps not surprising in light of the fact that respondents in rural Renfrewshire were highly dependent on their cars for all activities. In addition, Scottish car owners/drivers were also more likely to report that driving was pleasurable and non-problematic. Respondents from Scotland reported higher quality of life than those from London (t=3.38, p < .001, postal survey). Logistic regressions of the interview survey data indicated that car driving and deprivation were both predictors of quality of life.

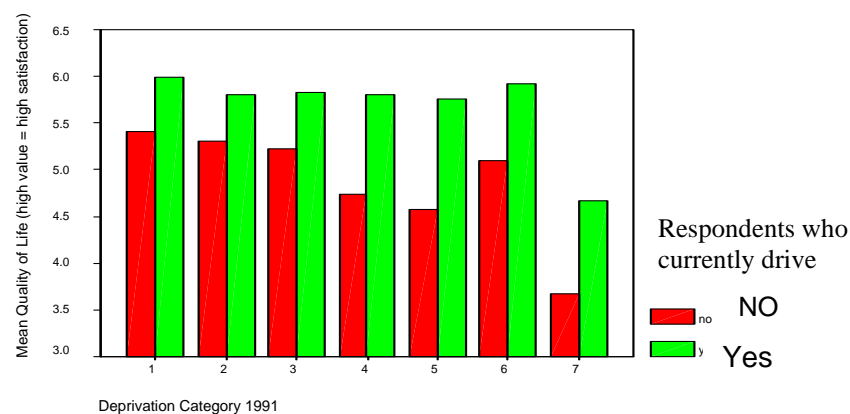Figure 11 – Mean Quality of Life ratings by car driving and deprivation category in Scotland (7=delighted/high quality of life). Postal Survey. Drivers (n=423) report significantly higher Quality of Life than non-drivers (n=122) and those in more deprived areas report lower quality of life than those in less deprived areas. The interaction between 'driver' and 'depcat' was not statistically significant.

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Perceptions of the relationship between car ownership and driving

In the street surveys and interview survey, respondents with a car were asked if they thought that having a car in the household had improved their quality of life, and - if so - why. Those without a car were asked if they thought that having a car would have improved their quality of life. Those without a car expressed mixed views about whether or not having a car might have affected their quality of life. However, almost all those with a car in the household thought that having a car had improved their quality of life. The main reasons given were convenience, extra pleasurable activities (days out, contact with extended family and friends), a sense of freedom, and work opportunities.

Giving up driving

Given that car ownership and driving are associated with higher perceived quality of life, giving up driving could lead to a lowering of quality of life. We were interested in the views of older people in relation to continued driving in old age, the circumstances under which people might consider giving up driving, and what impact giving up driving might have. To help us to understand the impact of giving up driving, we compared the views in a number of domains of those who had given up driving with the views of those who were still driving.

Drivers in the main interview study were asked to rate their level of agreement with several statements relating to reactions to giving up driving. Older people who had given up driving were also asked to rate their level of agreement about the same issue (with slightly altered wording). Giving up driving in old age is often perceived as traumatic. However, as can be seen in Table 1 below, our study revealed that ex-drivers reported more positive views about having given up driving than drivers anticipated having (although not in relation to saving money).

Table 1

Mean levels of agreement of ex-drivers and current drivers to statements concerned with the advantages and disadvantages of no longer driving. (5 = strongly agree) Interview survey, study participants age 45+ years.

	Mean Ex-drivers	Mean Drivers	t	Sig (2 tailed)
I felt/would feel relieved of the responsibility of driving	3.22	2.50	4.09	.000
I felt/would feel relieved of the responsibility of owning a car	3.20	2.61	3.26	.001
I missed/would miss the freedom of driving	3.50	4.21	-4.67	.000
I disliked/would dislike relying on other people	2.38	4.05	-10.29	.000
I saved/would save money	2.36	3.71	-7.77	.000
It simplified/would simplify my life	2.98	2.21	4.84	.000
I had/would have to give up certain activities	2.66	3.75	-6.56	.000
It was/would be an unwanted reminder of old age	2.50	3.38	-4.71	.000
It caused/would cause difficulties for friends and family	2.56	3.51	-5.45	.000
I experienced/would experience some difficulty because of poor public transport	2.98	3.61	-3.61	.000
I missed/would miss seeing myself as a driver	2.89	3.42	-2.91	.004

Public views of driving in old age

In the interview survey, participants were asked if older people should be encouraged to continue driving in order to stay mobile and if there should be fewer or more restrictions on drivers who are over the age of 70 years (Table 2). There were no significant differences between age groupings and agreement with the idea that older people should drive to stay mobile, though there was a trend towards greater agreement with age. Over half the sample felt that there should be more restrictions placed on drivers over the age of 70; there were no significant age differences, although younger respondents were more in favour of restrictions.

Table 2

Proportion of each age-group who agreed with statements concerned with driving in old age.

	Age Group				
	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
	n=60	n=75	n=90	n=71	296
% Who agree with the idea that older people should be encouraged to drive to stay mobile	32.2%	36.0%	45.6%	37.9%	37.8%
	n=61	n=77	n=91	n=73	302
% Who think that there should be more restrictions placed on drivers over the age of 70 years	70.0%	57.1%	46.2%	44.1%	53.6%

Public Transport and Quality of Life in Old Age

Age and satisfaction with public transport

Comparisons between young people, baby boomers and older adults revealed significant differences in rated satisfaction with public transport; interestingly, those in older age groups were more satisfied than younger groups with all services, and with public transport as a whole. However, mean ratings of satisfaction with public transport were not higher than around 4.8, indicating relatively low levels of satisfaction on the 7 point faces scale (a score of 7 would indicate complete satisfaction) (Figures 12-14).
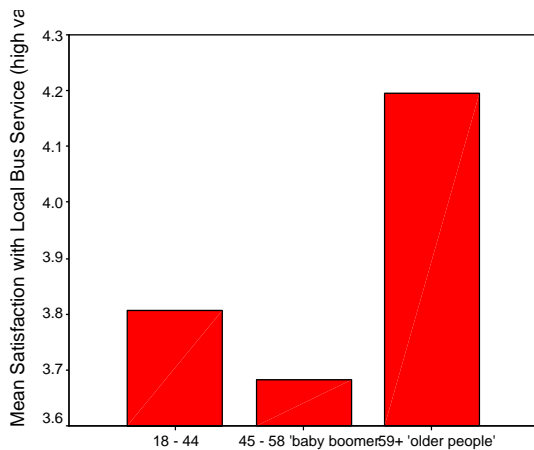
Figure 12 – Mean ratings of satisfaction with local bus services by age group (7=delighted).
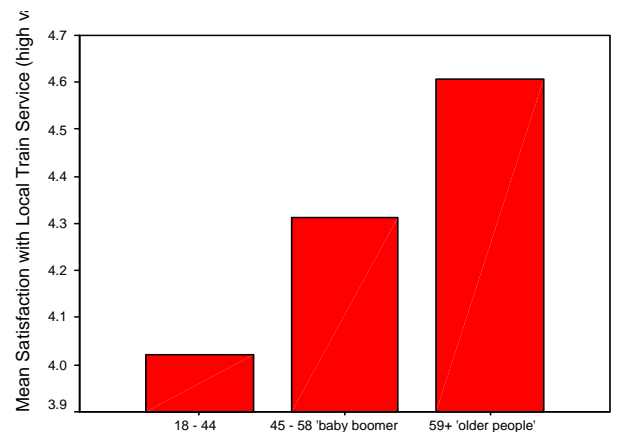
Figure 13 – Mean ratings of satisfaction with local train services by age group (7=delighted).
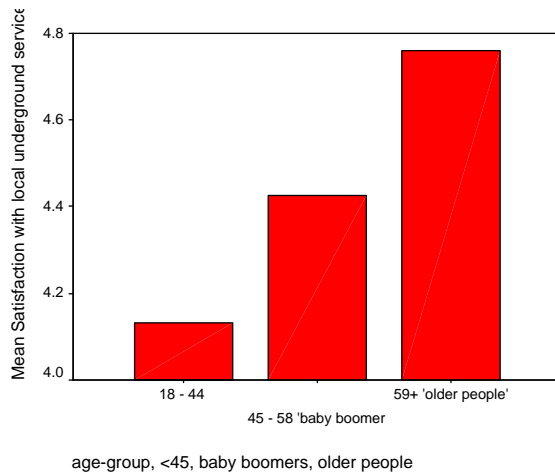
Figure 14 - Mean ratings of satisfaction with the underground service by age group (7=delighted).

Quality of life and satisfaction with public transport

As can be seen in Table 3 below, there were significant positive correlations between satisfaction with public transport and reported quality of life. It is important to note that the correlations are small and, hence, only a small proportion of the variance in quality of life can be seen as linked to satisfaction with public transport. All of the studies (focus groups, street surveys, postal survey and interview survey) revealed that study respondents were of the view that improvements in public transport would improve their quality of life.

Table 3

Correlations between satisfaction with local bus, train, and underground services, and public transport generally and ratings of quality of life on the Delighted-Terrible Faces scale. Postal survey. Study participants age 18+ years

Ratings of public transport – Postal survey	N	Spearman's rho	Sig 2-tailed
Satisfaction with local bus services	838	.071*	.040
Satisfaction with local train services	772	.217**	.000
Satisfaction with underground services	450	.262**	.000
Satisfaction with local public transport	902	.131**	.000

Barriers to the use of public transport by older people

One of the main objectives of the study was to examine respondents' views about 'barriers to the use of public transport'; barriers were defined as "things that put you off or stop you using public transport". Table 4 below shows the percentage of interviewees who agreed that particular aspects of travel were barriers to the use of public transport. The table also indicates where there were statistically significant differences between households containing a car, between men and women and between baby boomers and older people. Where differences are noted, the noted category was more likely to agree that the feature was a barrier, e.g. women were more likely than men to say that concerns about personal safety during the evening were a barrier to the use of public transport.

Although it appears that a rather low proportion of the sample agree that certain factors would be a barrier to the use of public transport, it is worth noting that roughly two thirds of the sample were under the age of 70 and hence likely to have been relatively fit. It is also worth noting that while a feature of travelling by public transport might not be a barrier (i.e. something that actually stops an individual using public transport), it might nevertheless be a fairly major, more general 'problem'. Table 5 shows the ten most frequently reported 'barriers' with the proportion of people over the age of 70 years who regarded the feature as a problem. As can be seen, the percentages are considerably higher.

Table 4

Percentage of respondents who agree that each factor would be a barrier to the use of public transport. Statistically significant differences between those in households with and without a car, men and women and baby boomers versus older people are noted. Where significant differences are noted there is greater agreement with the statement.

Barrier	% Agree	Car	Gender	Age
Concerns about personal security during evening or at night	65.1		women	
Difficulties carrying heavy loads	59.0	car		boomers
Alternatives to public transport are available	54.5	car		boomers
Possibility of cancellations	51.2	car		boomers
Having to wait	51.2			boomers
Public transport running late	49.3	car		boomers
Behaviour of some passengers	48.1			boomers
Difficulties of travelling where I want to go	43.3	car		boomers
Having to be out in bad weather	41.1			
Difficulty of travelling when I want to	40.8			boomers
Having to change transport	40.6			boomers
Difficulties in getting information about journey	39.8	car	men	
Concerns about being on time	39.1	car		boomers
Difficulties accompanying other who cannot travel alone	36.4			
Lack of cleanliness	36.3	car		
Length of journey time compared with car	35.8	car		boomers
Lack of public transport in my area	35.8	car		boomers
Inaudible announcements	30.1			
Lack of toilet facilities	28.9			
High cost of public transport	27.0	car		boomers
Discomfort of the ride	22.2			
Large amount of planning	21.5	car		boomers
Amount of walking involved	20.1			
Lack of grab rails	19.1			
Difficulties in getting on and off	17.0			
Hassle of buying tickets	13.5			boomers
Concerns about personal security in the daytime	9.3			
Risk of being in a crash on public transport	7.6			

Table 5

Ten most frequent barriers for respondents aged over 70 years, with the proportion of that age-group who reported each as a 'problem'.

Problems	% aged over 70 who agree
Personal security in evening and at night	79.8
Public transport running late	68.3
Having to wait	68.0
Difficulties carrying heavy loads	66.3
The possibility of cancellations	66.0
Behaviour of some passengers	63.5
Lack of cleanliness	53.8
Having to be out in bad weather	53.8
Having to change transport	53.3
Difficulties travelling where I want to	50.0
Difficulties travelling when I want to	48.1

Meeting the Transport Needs of Older People

Extent to which needs are perceived as being met by transport operators

The interview survey included questions about the extent to which respondents felt that their needs were considered by those providing public transport services. Responses varied between modes of transport, as can be seen in Figures 15-17 below.
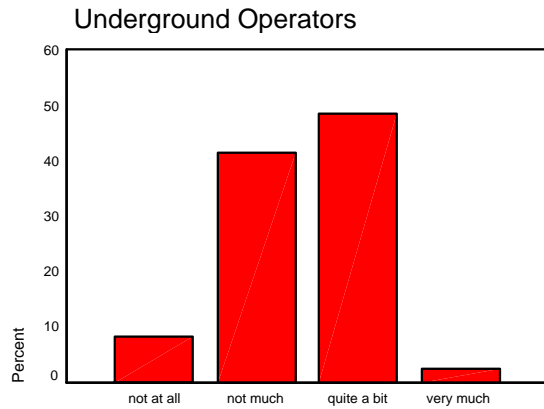
Underground Operators

Figure 15 – Percentage agreeing that their needs are considered by underground operators.

Bus Operators

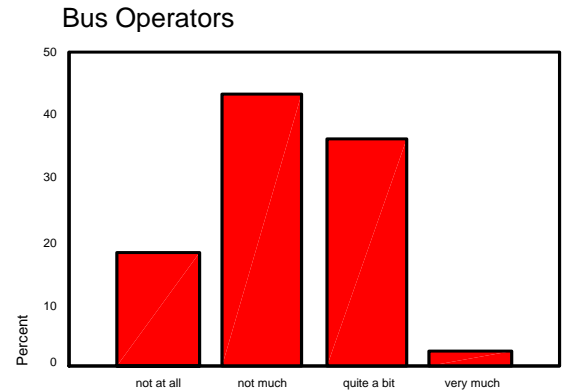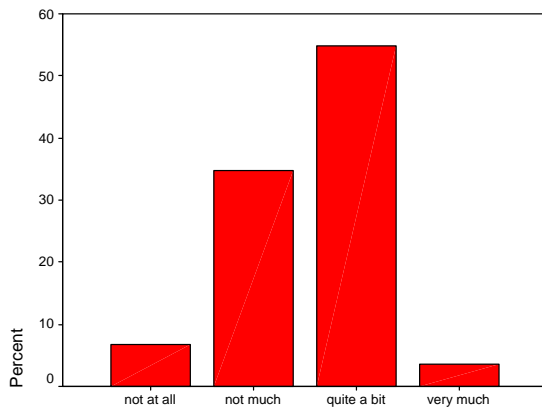Figure 16 – Percentage agreeing that their needs are considered by bus operators

Train Operators

Figure 17 – Percentage agreeing that their needs are considered by train operators

The views of transport professionals

In-depth and confidential interviews revealed that older people were not highly regarded by many of the transport professionals that we spoke to. On the contrary, older people were seen as "gumming up the works", indicating that transport provision is still seen as providing transport for rush hour passengers who need to get to paid work. Retired people, and especially people with concessionary cards, were seen as peripheral to their concerns. There was widespread understanding that demographic changes might result in greater numbers of older people, many of whom will enjoy good health and fitness, and engage in considerable amounts of local and long distance travel. Nevertheless, it was overwhelmingly obvious that the older generation was viewed as requiring special attention for which there simply was no time. *(Further details can be found in Annex III)*

The views of community groups

Interviews with representatives of community groups in the outlying areas of Paisley revealed that transport was often particularly problematic for older people. In these areas bus services have largely been withdrawn after six in the evening. It was hoped that partnerships between local authorities and bus companies might encourage more socially responsible

arrangements. Access to hospitals was often more difficult from these areas, something which was seen to affect older people disproportionately. Finally, in Renfrewshire, cost was highlighted as an important issue, even for those with concessionary fares when changing buses on the same journey.

Role of the Family in Meeting Transport Needs

There is a perception that families have always cared for their frail elderly members, and today is no exception. Community care was declared some time ago by the government to mean care *by* the community, not just care *in* the community. Thus, it might be expected that as family members become old and frail, their children, grandchildren, or other members of the family will pool together to meet their transport needs. Although many participants in the study suggested that it would be easy to ask for a lift from a friend, their comments suggested that they would only do so when in dire straits. Comments made in the face-to-face interviews, illustrated below, indicated considerable reluctance to ask adult children for a lift; in addition, many interviewees expressed a reluctance to ask a spouse.

> It's easy to ask my daughter. I wouldn't get a lift during the day! I don't ask unless it's really necessary.

> Yes, he (son) is pretty good. If I wanted a lift I would get one – on his day off. I don't abuse it, I don't want to be a nuisance.

> It's not so much that it's difficult, but you would rather not ask. I realise that children have their own lives. I don't want to ask them unless it's necessary.

> I don't really ever ask for a lift. I don't like to be obliged to anybody.

> I would never ask for a life. If it's offered, I take it.

> It depends on what it is, when and where. Sometimes it's easy, sometimes it's difficult. It all depends on the mood the person is in. You have to gauge their mood once they're on the phone.

> I feel I'm putting on people. It's much easier to pay £10 – although that's heartbreaking. My sister-in-law is a mother, and Stevie does split shifts so is always working. As a result I stay close to home.

This reluctance to ask for a lift, even for important things like doctor and hospital appointments, is certainly an important finding in relation to quality of life in old age.

DISCUSSION

Objective 1

Preliminary analyses of this exploratory project have generated some interesting, though complex, findings in relation to the role of transport, public and private, in relation to quality of life. It was, however, clear from the different methods of data collection (focus groups, street surveys, postal survey and in-depth interviews) that car ownership and driving was viewed by older people as important to quality of life. Given that most respondents with a car found it difficult to imagine being without one, it was interesting to find that older people who had given up driving reported this as less problematic than was anticipated by older people who were still driving. Nevertheless, as we age the probability of having to give up driving because of sensory impairments, age-related disability or other health problems increases. Given the likelihood of lower car access in old age, and given the enormous reluctance that older people have in asking relatives and friends for lifts, it is important that the barriers to using public transport by older people are identified.

Examining the barriers to the use of public transport proved to be somewhat problematic. Respondents often noted that some aspects of travelling by bus, train or underground would be problematic for 'older people', but not for themselves, and the developmental studies indicated that it was necessary to distinguish between 'barriers' and 'problems'. For example, lack of cleanliness

might be seen as a problem, but might not necessarily be a complete barrier that stops people using public transport. In addition, some aspects of public transport were barriers for spouses, which made them barriers for respondents also. However, what emerges from this study is a rank ordered list of barriers to the use of public transport, none of which require huge costs to address.

It was interesting to find that satisfaction with public transport was higher amongst older people (defined as age 59+) compared with baby-boomers (age 44–58) and younger people. There are a number of possible explanations for this finding. Firstly, older people are able to travel for free (in London) or with a concessionary fare (Scotland). It could be that free or reduced rate travel means that people are more inclined to view the service as satisfactory. Secondly, retired people often have more time to get to where they want to go. Delays and cancellations may be less problematic than they are for people trying to get to work or meetings at particular times. Thirdly, old people may be making comparisons between travel on public transport now, compared with the past. It could be that travel by public transport is now perceived as better than it was. Finally, for many older people there is no other choice than travel by public transport. Older people may, therefore, adapt their perceptions to fit the reality of their situation, a phenomenon referred to as the 'satisfaction paradox' in the gerontological literature.

Objective 2

Although the older people taking part in the project were relatively satisfied with public transport, a high proportion reported that they did not feel that the operators of buses, trains and the underground services took their needs into consideration. This was matched by findings from qualitative interviews with transport policy makers, implementers and operators. Off the record remarks indicated that transport operators regarded older people as a 'nuisance'. This form of ageism may stem from the need to make a profit. Concessionary fares are subsidised, but if older people are perceived as travelling for free or at reduced rates, or as being the cause of moves to improve accessibility, transport operators may be unlikely to be enthusiastic about trying to meet their needs.

Car manufacturers, on the other hand, (also keen to maximise the market) were found to be targeting older people with innovations in car design, indicating not only an awareness of the ageing of the population, but a willingness to provide cars that can be more safely driven by people with benign, but real declines in cognitive functioning and reduced levels of perceptual and sensory capacities.

Objective 3

An aim, or what would perhaps better be described as an 'outcome' of this project, was to produce guidelines on the transport needs of older adults. Although we have started the drafting process (see Annex IV), the data on which the guidelines will be based are still being analysed. It is, however, worth noting that European Union guidelines on the operation of buses, due to come into force in 2003, will take into account the needs of older people. These should enhance the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility regulations (2000) already in force.

CONCLUSION

Government policy is to reduce car driving and increase the use of public transport. However, for older people, using public transport is often problematic and the more frail and impaired one becomes with age the more dependent one may become on car travel for activities of daily living. For older people in good health, the freedom to travel where and when one wants, in relative comfort, is important to quality of life. The findings from this exploratory project indicate that it may be very difficult to persuade older people to give up their cars.

FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The Social Meaning of Transport: A Comparison Across Age Groups
Access to transport appears to meet a variety of social needs in the lives of older people. While transport enables people to maintain social and family networks and take part in 'ordinary' activities as they get older, participants in this study discussed the journey as well as destinations. The social experience of travelling by public transport was seen very differently from that of car travel (with associated issues of status, dependence and reciprocity). We should like to compare the views of different age-groups about social meanings of transport.

Barriers to the Use of Taxis by Older Adults
It appears that taxis are still, for many older people, associated with wealth or special occasions, leading to a marked reluctance to use them. Given that it costs approximately £60 per week to run a car, it is interesting that spending an equivalent amount on trips by taxis is regarded as too expensive to justify giving up driving. We should like to investigate this aspect of transport use in future studies.

*Asking for Lifts: A Comparison of the Views of Adult Children and Older People*
One of the most interesting findings to emerge was the unwillingness of large numbers of older people to ask for lifts from their adult children, even for visits to a doctor or hospital. We hope to be able to investigate this issue more systematically.

Annex I

Sample Details

Postal Survey

The sample consisted of 1128 people aged 18-95. As can be seen in the pie chart below, the response rate was highest in rural Renfrewshire and lowest in Newham. As can be seen in Table 1 there were slightly more females than males, but the difference was not statistically significant. Although a few respondents did not give their ages, Table 2 shows that the respondents in Paisley and Richmond were significantly older than the respondents in Newham. There were also significant differences between the four study areas in deprivation levels. All comparisons were statistically significant. As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 below, the respondents from Newham were from the most deprived areas, followed by Paisley, Richmond and rural Renfrewshire.
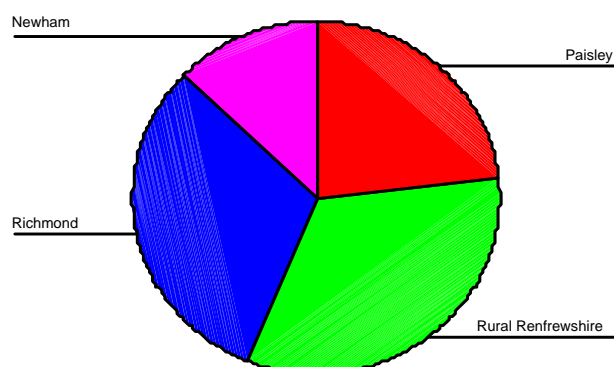
Figure 1 – Proportion of postal survey respondents in each of the study areas, Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, Richmond and Newham.

Table 1

Distribution by gender of study respondents in the postal survey by the four study areas, Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, Richmond and Newham

| Sex		Paisley	Rural Renfrewshire	Richmond	Newham	Total
				AREA		
male	Count	115	165	139	65	484
	%	43.7%	44.5%	39.7%	45.1%	42.9%
female	Count	148	206	211	79	644
	%	56.3%	55.5%	60.3%	54.9%	57.1%
Total	Count	263	371	350	144	1128
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2

Age differences between respondents in the postal survey by the four study areas,
Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, Richmond and Newham

AREA	Mean Age	Std. Deviation	N
Paisley	51.38	17.069	255
Rural Renfrewshire	48.89	15.211	368
Richmond	50.22	15.980	337
Newham	45.43	17.874	137
Total	49.44	16.312	1097
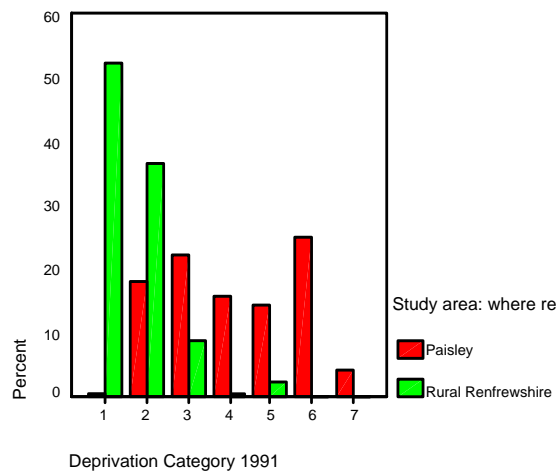
Figure 2 – Deprivation category (Carstairs) distribution in the postal survey for the Scottish sample
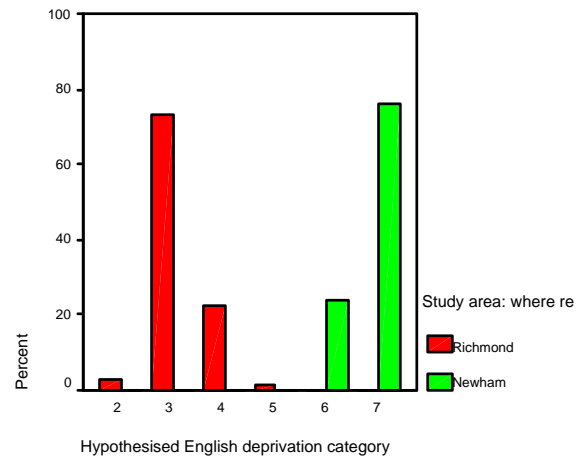
**Figure 3** – Hypothesized deprivation category distribution in the postal survey for the London sample.

Interview Survey

As can be seen in Figure 4 below, there were more people from Scotland in the interview survey than from England. This was due largely to the fact that there were two research workers in Scotland (a research assistant and research student), and only one in England. There were also more participants from inner than from outer London.

There were no significant differences in age between the four study areas in the interview survey (Table 3). However, as can be seen in Table 4, there were more women in the sample than men, with the sex difference being greatest in London. The sex differences in the sample were statistically significant (Chi Square 13.67, df = 3, p=004).
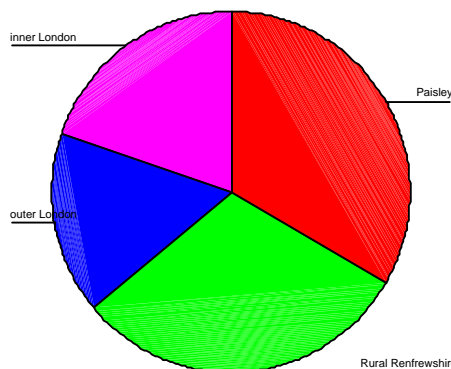
Figure 4 – Proportion of total sample in the interview survey in each of the study areas, Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, inner London and outer London.

Table 3

Age differences between respondents in the interview survey by the four study areas,
Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, outer London and inner London

| AREA	Mean Age	Std. Deviation	N
Paisley	64.73	10.131	101
Rural Renfrewshire	64.23	10.946	93
outer London	66.65	11.077	49
inner London	65.83	11.671	60
Total	65.11	10.834	303

Table 4

Distribution by gender of study respondents in the interview survey by the four study
areas, Paisley, rural Renfrewshire, outer London and inner London

Sex		Paisley	Rural Renfrewshire	outer London	inner London	Total
male	Count	48	39	14	13	114
	%	47.5%	41.9%	28.6%	21.7%	37.6%
female	Count	53	54	35	47	189
	%	52.5%	58.1%	71.4%	78.3%	62.4%
	Count	101	93	49	60	303
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
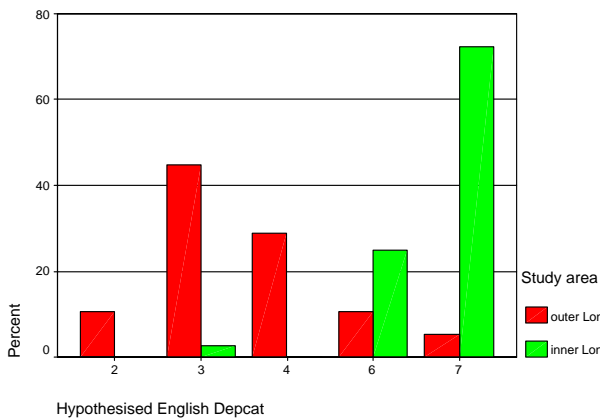
Figure 5 – Hypothesized deprivation category distribution in the interview survey for the London sample.
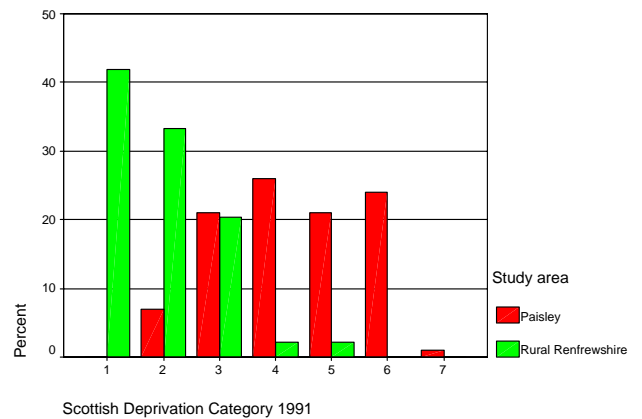
Figure 6 – Deprivation category (Carstairs) distribution in the interview survey for the Scottish sample

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Annex II

Dissemination at Conferences

Abstracts published

2002

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton, K, O'Neill, M and Edgerton, E (2002) Transport barriers to activity in old age. Paper presented at the annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology, Birmingham.

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton, K, O'Neill, M and Edgerton, E (2002) The perceived barriers to public transport use. Paper presented at the 55th Annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America.

*Gow, J, Webster, N, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton, K, O'Neill, M and Mowat, H (2002) The social meaning of transport in the lives of older people. Paper presented at the annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology, Birmingham.

*Gow, J, Webster, N, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton, K, O'Neill, M and Mowat, H (2002) The social meaning of transport. Poster presented at the 55th Annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America.

2001

Gilhooly, M (2001) Presentation in a symposium titled, "Transportation and Aging: rural and urban comparisons". 54th annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. Chicago, November 15–18. Symposium abstract published in *The Gerontologist*, Volume 41, Special issue 1, page 220. ISSN 0016-9013 (refereed conference presentation)

Gilhooly, M (2001) Transport and Ageing: Extending quality of life for older people via public and private transport. Presentation in a symposium titled, "Extending quality life: The UK's Growing Older Programme." 54th annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. Chicago, November 15–18. Symposium abstract published in *The Gerontologist* 41, Volume 41, Special issue 1, October, page 341. ISSN 0016-9013. (refereed conference presentation)

*Gow, J, Webster, N, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton, K, O'Neill, M, Edgerton, E and Pike, F (2001) Transport, aging and quality of life: Findings from qualitative aspects of a comparative study. Poster presented at the 54th annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Chicago November 15-18. Abstract published in *The Gerontologist,* Volume 41, Special issue 1, October, page 231. ISSN 0016-9013. (refereed conference presentation)

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Edgerton, E, Pike, F, Hamilton, K and O'Neill, M (2001) Transport and environmental fit in the West of Scotland. Paper presented at the 54th annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Chicago, November 15-18. Abstract published in *The Gerontologist*, Volume 41, Special issue 1, October, page 325. ISSN 0016-9013. (refereed conference presentation)

*Gow, J, Webster, N, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton, K, O'Neill, M, Edgerton, E and Pike, F (2001) The role of transport in quality of later life: Findings from qualitative aspects of a comparative study. Paper presented at the 30th annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology, Stirling, Scotland, Aug/Sept. Abstract published in S Tester, C Archibald, C Rowlings and S Turner (eds) *Quality in Later Life: Rights, Rhetoric and Reality: Conference Proceedings.* University of Stirling. Page 120. ISBN 1-85769-146-6. (refereed conference presentation)

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Edgerton, E, Pike, F, Hamilton, K and O'Neill, M (2001) Transport, older people and environmental fit. Paper presented at the 30th annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology, Stirling, Scotland, Aug/Sept. Abstract published in S Tester, C Archibald, C Rowlings and S Turner (eds) *Quality in Later Life: Rights, Rhetoric and Reality: Conference Proceedings.* University of Stirling. Page 120. ISBN 1-85769-146-6. (refereed conference presentation)

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Edgerton, E, Bainbridge, K and Hamilton, K (2001) New world, old expectations: How older people's perceptions of Scotland's transport system are affected by comparisons with the past. Paper presented at the 32nd Annual Conference of the Environmental Design Research Association, Edinburgh, July 3-6. Abstract published in Edge, M. (ed.), (2001) *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Conference of the Environmental Design Research Association.* Edinburgh, Scotland, pp. 167 – 168.

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Edgerton, E, Pike, F, Hamilton, K and O'Neill, M (2001). Transport and ageing: Extending quality of life for older adults via public and private transport. Poster presented at the Centenary annual conference of the British Psychological Society, Glasgow, March. Abstract published in *Proceedings of the British Psychological Society*, Volume 9, No 2, August 2001, page 272. ISSN 1350-472X. (refereed conference presentation)

*McCormack, J and Gilhooly, M (2001) Transport and Ageing in Australia. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Australian Association of Gerontology. Canberra. Abstract published in the Australasian Journal on Ageing. Vol 20.3 Supplement 1, September 2001, p 41.

2000

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Bainbridge K, Hamilton K and O'Neill, M (2000) Older people's perceptions of security when travelling. Paper presented at the 29th annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology, Oxford, September 8-10. Abstract published in A Dickinson, H Bartlett and S Wade (eds) *Old Age in a New Age: Proceedings of the British Society of Gerontology,* Oxford Brookes University, page 257. (refereed conference presentation)

*Gow, J, Webster, N, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton, K and O'Neill, M (2000) Travel by bus: the mode of lack of choice for the elderly. Poster presented at the 29th annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology, Oxford, September 8-10. Abstract published in A Dickinson, H Bartlett and S Wade (eds) *Old Age in a New Age: Proceedings of the British Society of Gerontology,* Oxford Brookes University, page 360. (refereed conference presentation).

*Webster, N, Gow, J, Gilhooly, M, Bainbridge K, Hamilton K and O'Neill, M (2000) Perceived threats to personal security when travelling. Poster presented at the 53rd annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Washington DC, November 17-21. Abstract published in *The Gerontologist*, Volume 40, Special Issue 1, October, page 297-298. ISSN 0016-9013 (refereed conference presentation)

*Gow, J, Webster, N, Gilhooly, M, Hamilton K and O'Neill, M (2000) Transport and ageing: the views and perceptions of older people in the West of Scotland towards bus travel. Poster presented at the 53rd annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Washington DC, November 17-21. Abstract published in *The Gerontologist*, Volume 40, Special Issue 1, October, page 54. ISSN 0016-9013 (refereed conference presentation)

*McCormack, J and Gilhooly M (2000) Transport and Ageing in Australia. Poster presented at the 53rd annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Washington DC, November. Abstract published in *The Gerontologist,* Volume 40, Special Issue 1, page 168. ISSN 0016-9013 (refereed conference presentation)

Gilhooly, M, Webster, N, Gow, J, Bainbridge, K, Hamilton, K and O'Neill, M (2000) Transport and ageing in the United Kingdom: Older adults' perception of security when travelling. Poster presented at the 2000 National conference, 'The Changing Face of Ageing', Australian Association of Gerontology, 25-27 October, Adelaide, Australia.

Annex III

Meeting the Transport Needs of Older People

The Views of Transport Professionals

Aim

The main aim of the interviews was to gain information on attitudes and transport strategies that may impact on older people.

Sample

Thirteen transport professionals in London and six in Scotland were selected for in-depth interview. Names and organisations are not listed here, to preserve confidentiality.

Results

Public Transport

o The overall impression gained was that, in the mind of the transport providers and policy makers that we interviewed, there was no distinction made between people with disability and older people. During interviews, constant reference was made to the Disability Discrimination Act and the improvements that flow from that. This Act lays down what has to be done for people with disability, and it was felt that this could improve accessibility for a much broader section of transport users. Newly designed kneeling and low floor buses (especially with drop kerbs) and better placement of hand rails etc. have improved things for some older people, and indeed contributed to increased use of buses.

o There was also strong evidence that, for the professionals in London, Freedom Pass users were unattractive passengers; no attempt was made by some providers to appeal to older users as they were seen as non-cash paying customers who "can contribute to overcrowding." For example, although it is part of a 20 year improvement programme to make all stations on the Underground fully accessible and step-free, the underground professionals indicated that very few freedom pass holders used the underground and they saw no virtue in increasing the over 60s ridership. Also, people using freedom passes make around 20% of all bus journeys. Although bus usage in London is expected to increase by 40%, the view of bus professionals was that "the proportion of freedom pass users is unlikely to increase."

o In Renfrewshire, the attitude expressed by bus companies was similar. Although the figures have been independently reviewed, their view was that the calculations used to determine the amount of reimbursement paid to companies for concessionary passengers provides them with inadequate revenue.

o In Renfrewshire certain bus services have been withdrawn. Although bus companies acknowledged the consequences of their withdrawing services in terms of the possible social exclusion of older people, they felt that they could not be criticised for this.

o In Renfrewshire transport professionals felt that older people had benefited from schemes that were not specifically designed for them, e.g. accessibility and security improvements. A two-

way CCTV system had been installed in many stations in Renfrewshire. This allows passengers to communicate with staff in a central surveillance centre as well as allowing staff to monitor activity. However, in contrast to what older people reported, transport companies felt that this measure was preferable to an increased staff presence because it could operate 24 hours a day.

Private Transport

o In contrast to these attitudes, car manufacturers have already begun to specifically target older users with innovation in car design. This included, for instance, greater flexibility in the steering wheel, the introduction of hydraulic-powered driver seats to make access and egress simpler, route programming to allow for audible in-car announcements to inform the driver when to turn etc. And information on what lies ahead, e.g. traffic lights and roundabouts can be flashed on the windscreen. Care is being taken with the new design ideas not to overload the driver with information but to minimise the amount and rhythm of information that he/she has to process. These innovations are directed towards taking driving away from the driver. Systems to keep the car at a safe distance from the car in front (longitudinal control) and to keep the car in lane (lateral control) are all part of the car of the near future.

Local Authorities and Transport Authorities

o Local authorities in London and Renfrewshire are responsible for roads and pavements. In Renfrewshire, bus shelters have recently been supplied on some routes and in Newham the local authority is planning to widen pavements, which will benefit older pedestrians. The local authority in Newham is also running a pilot scheme with Transport for London and the government, merging Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard to provide improved door-to-door services which are used by older people.

o In Renfrewshire, it was acknowledged by several people that the Dial-a-Bus service did not meet the needs of many users especially those living in Dial-a-Bus administrative regions which cover a large geographical area. It was also felt that there was inadequate accommodation for wheelchair users of Dial-a-Bus (only two wheelchair spaces are provided) and that, if capacity were increased, the service could benefit a greater number of people. Local authorities also felt that the large amount of subsidy required by certain 'socially necessary' bus services might be better spent on a subsidised taxi service. In Bishopton, rural Renfrewshire, an experimental commercial taxi-bus service to meet the trains has been introduced and there was some discussion as to whether this might compete with Dial-a-Bus in the area.

Conclusion

Older people were not highly regarded by many of the transport professionals to whom we spoke. On the contrary, they were seen as "gumming up the works", indicating that transport provision is still seen as providing transport for rush hour passengers who need to get to paid work. Retired people, or those who travel free or paying concessionary fares, were peripheral to their concerns. There was widespread understanding that demographic changes might result in greater numbers of older people, many of whom might enjoy good health and fitness, and engage in considerable amounts of local and long distance travel. Nevertheless, it was overwhelmingly obvious that the older generation was perceived as requiring special attention, for which there was simply little time.

Annex IV

DRAFT GUIDELINES

Because the analysis of the data is still ongoing, the guidelines drafted to date can only be regarded as tentative. In addition, it needs to be noted that a recent European Union directive has introduced new standards for the operators of buses that will apply the UK. These will improve access for people with reduced mobility.

What kind of guidelines should be adopted?

- All policy departments within local and national government should have a unit specifically focused on older people and be able to engage in proactive strategies rather than adopting a reactive stance. Understanding that if you produce transport policies that meet the needs of older people, there will be greater use of the transport network by other people too.

- There should be much more training of front line transport staff and drivers of buses. This should include education on the age-related physical changes which make public transport use more problematic.
  Bus passengers complained of nervousness and losing their footing because the driver-only, conductor-less buses pull away before they are seated. Some older people felt strongly that they were treated as nuisances and indeed this was confirmed by some of the transport professionals interviewed. Discourtesy can be a deterrent to using the system and can pose a real barrier to remaining mobile. People with poor hearing, or capable of making only slow progress should not be made to feel in the way. Training in Customer Care should be a priority.

- Bus companies operating in Renfrewshire should launch a campaign to encourage older people to use the bells on buses to request the driver to stop at the next bus stop.
  In Renfrewshire few people use the bell in buses to indicate that they want to alight at the next stop. This culture leads to older people needlessly fighting their way to the door while the bus is moving. Using the bell could reduce the risk of falls.

- Attention should be given to providing information about services. Train timetable need to be in larger print and more older person friendly. Timetable changes and service withdrawals should be advertised further in advance than at present.
  There is a need to understand the problems that older people have with the information about the services they wish to use. Train timetables came in for criticism for being confusing and presented in print that is too small. Announcements were of little use to many older people as they were too difficult to interpret. Travel information was hard to come by, the lack of co-ordination between the different services and operators meant that journey planning was very difficult.

- The walking environment should be enhanced by lengthening phases at pedestrian crossings and also by widening pavements. Shared use of pavements by cyclists and pedestrians should not be tolerated. Local authorities should be introducing more drop kerbs at crossings in line with DETR (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) guidelines. The value of walking for both health and independence should be more widely recognised and the tradition of focusing on keeping motorised transport moving is detrimental to the pedestrian environment. The greater enforcement of parking restrictions and speed restrictions could contribute to greater feelings of safety and confidence for older pedestrians.

- Cycling should be an option for more older people.
  Currently traffic conditions in inner cities act as a very strong deterrent. Yet cycling can enhance independence and have a positive effect on health and well-being, and a number of older people, especially in London, expressed regret that they felt forced to relinquish their bicycle.

- Currently 90% of public space is given over to motorised traffic. The allocation of space needs to be addressed to reach a fairer distribution.

- Extending door-to-door services and integrating them with the public transport network should be given higher priority.
  This would greatly enhance access and mobility for many older people.

- The availability of taxi-share schemes should be widened.

- The organisation of the Dial-a-Bus service should be improved by making it easier to book, widening the choice of destinations and increasing wheelchair accommodation. New technology for demand-responsive transport could help to improve the efficiency of journey planning, for those with access to I.T.

- More visible front line staff are required with greater training in customer care.
  Security of the travelling environment is a major preoccupation for many older people. CCTV is not seen as adequate.

- Adequate seating on buses and trains for older people is very necessary. Seating in both waiting areas and on board transport is very important and the allocation of priority seating for older people should be more generous.
  Overcrowded transport acts as a strong deterrent to older people who may forego journeys because of fear of failing to secure a seat

- For car drivers, the clarity of road signs should be improved.
  Many older drivers find there is too much information to process on roadside signs.

- The planning process must involve paying strict attention to government Planning Policy Guideline 13.
  This will ensure that developments such as schools, shopping centres and hospitals are more easily accessible for older people and are not placed out of town or on the town edge.

- There should be improvements in the consultation process, particularly relating to transport, which older people are likely to want to use is urgently, needed. The voice of the older person should be heard.

- Introductory courses should be available for people who have little experience of using public transport.

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