



Willow Tree PlusBus Consultation

December 2009

Summary

On-bus surveys were conducted over 2 days. The response was extremely positive with a resounding message that the Service is a lifeline for passengers, enabling them to access important shopping, healthcare and social activities.

Passengers feel a sense of ownership and pride in the Service and see it very much as part of their community. However, a very real sense of anxiety exists about the future funding of the service. Passengers view the Service as a solution to the isolation experienced on the Islip Manor estate; an improvement of quality of life and increased independence through the access and opportunity it provides.

This consultation also provided a useful opportunity to elicit feedback and suggestions in order to ensure the Service continues to meet the needs of passengers. These suggestions will be discussed within the Operational team and any changes/improvements will be reported back to the passengers through a bulletin displayed on the bus.

1. Headline results

- ◆ 56% have been using the service since it started 5 years ago with a further 22% using it for 4 years
- ◆ 44% have a regular booking with an additional 50% having a mixture of both regular and casual bookings
- ◆ 100% contact us by phone with only 5% wishing to use email booking facility if it was available
- ◆ 61% would like a regular newsletter and/or update for information
- ◆ 44% use the service on a weekly basis, with an additional 33% using it twice a week
- ◆ 78% use the Service for shopping, 67% for health trips, 33% for social activities and 28% for visiting friends & family
- ◆ 50% would like to be able to go to Harrow Shopping Centre
- ◆ 61% do not have alternate means of transport and would not be able to go out if the Service was not available
- ◆ 100% thought the driver is kind, caring and helpful
- ◆ 100% find the minibus is comfortable, reliable and clean
- ◆ 100% find it easy to make bookings and find the bookings staff are helpful and flexible
- ◆ 61% would be interested in going on an organised day trip

2. Comments about the driver

- ◆ Brilliant driver who is very helpful
- ◆ Alan is the service – absolute lifeline, we can't praise him enough
- ◆ The driver is marvellous
- ◆ He is so helpful and caring – he is the service!
- ◆ All the drivers are very kind and helpful
- ◆ The driver's helpfulness is vital to this service, it makes a big difference
- ◆ He always carries the shopping to my door – couldn't do without him

3. General comments

- ◆ The bus is a lifeline
- ◆ This service gave me my life back. Before it was available, I hadn't left my house for 3 ½ years
- ◆ A flexible and caring service
- ◆ The service is a necessity for day to day living, without it we would be completely isolated from everything
- ◆ The service is part of our community – I love meeting everyone else on the week as we are so isolated around here
- ◆ The service gives me the independence I want – I do not want to depend on my family or neighbours

4. Suggestions

- ◆ Bookings Officer to go out on the bus regularly to meet passengers and further understand needs
- ◆ Schedule of weekly regular bookings with number of spare seats to be given to Driver/display on the bus
- ◆ Allow travel to Harrow shopping centre
- ◆ Adjust loading/unloading times for specific passengers
- ◆ Updates/newsletters to be displayed on the bus
- ◆ Feedback forms to be kept on bus to encourage feedback from passengers and driver

- ◆ If a regular passenger cancels, then ECT to phone before next regular booking to double check they are travelling – this will avoid taking up slots/driver time.