



South Gloucestershire LINK

Survey for People who use Mobility Scooters

Report April 2012

Background to the project

South Gloucestershire Local Involvement Network's (LINK) adult social care working group had received some issues from people using mobility scooters and felt that the development of extra care housing might also impact on mobility scooter use. Therefore, the group decided that they wished to access the views of people who use mobility scooters in South Gloucestershire. In doing so find out about the challenges and barriers, both physical and otherwise, they encounter in using them.

Project method

The survey was designed by the LINK Development worker and 2 of the group's participants and is included here in Appendix 1. In the first instance the survey was distributed during October and November 2011 to people using mobility scooters via the following platforms: extra care housing organisations; mobility shops; town and parish councils; people using the home library service; community transport organisations; Merlin and Kings Barton housing associations; Age UK; Paul's Place, the 'Pop-in' cafe in Yate; Cerebral Palsy Plus. Very few responses were received as a result.

In January and February 2012 two of the LINK host team went to shopping centres in Yate, Emersons green, Kingswood and Thornbury and gave out surveys to people they saw using mobility scooters. They also gave out freepost envelopes. Following this the responses the LINK received increased by 300% and 17 completed surveys were received. A further 7 surveys were then received from extra care housing residents.

Analysis and results

The quantitative information included in the surveys was logged in an excel spreadsheet and the qualitative commentary recorded and grouped by question and submitted to a simple thematic analysis. This data is contained in Appendix 2. The analyses of both types of data are presented below.

The brands of mobility scooter cited were heterogeneous, but 3 people cited the brand 'Rascal' and 2 people the brand 'Shoprider'.

The table below illustrates the range of scooter capacity that was cited.

Measurement	Range
Vehicle length	37cm – 152cm (data missing for 11 surveys)
Vehicle weight	16kg – 135kg (data missing for 16 surveys)
Charging time	2 hours - overnight

Storage arrangements also varied and included: garage; buggy room; landing; scooter room; bedroom. It seemed from the associated commentary that ease of access and security are the most important factors in all storage locations.

'If I didn't keep my scooter on the landing, I would not leave the house'

Primary themes

The things that were important to people about storing their mobility scooter were accessibility, convenience, security and it being under cover.

People used their mobility scooter for a variety of purposes with most people using it for generally getting around, going outdoors and travelling short distances. People used them for shopping; visiting friends and relatives; socialising, getting to appointments. It followed that the places most people went on their mobility scooters included shopping centres and shops, homes of friends and relatives, parks and open spaces, restaurants and cinemas.

The places that people would like to go but are unable to included shops that are inaccessible, pubs, Alton Towers and a crematorium. The places that people could go are also affected by the distance range of their scooter.

A number of issues impact negatively on whether people using mobility scooters can cross roads. These included: poor condition of pavements; lack of dropped kerbs; presence of pedestrian controlled crossings; speed of traffic (and

associated perception of personal safety); obstructions on pavements that block access and view, such as bins and parked cars.

Many people said that they do not go out alone and have support to go out from carers, family and friends. Only 11 people said they had insurance for their scooter and only one said they had breakdown cover. Others cited various ways in which they would organise repairs on their scooters and/or manage in the event of a breakdown.

Other commentary included a request for more mobility centres in the main shopping centres in South Gloucestershire and bespoke areas to store, charge and service scooters. Several people said that they would be 'lost' without their scooter.

'My scooter gives me freedom of movement.'

'I would be lost without mine as I have no one to take me places so I do rely on it a lot.'

'I'd like to see a mobility centre shop in all our local shopping areas where people could get advice, hire scooters for a few hours or buy useful equipment.'

Recommendations

1. That people purchasing mobility scooters of all types/sizes/capacities should have associated access to appropriate information and support regarding scooter usage, storage, insurance and breakdown cover. This information could be passed on by the organisations who have contact with potential mobility scooter users; e.g. South Gloucestershire Council, South Gloucestershire Community Health Services, care providers, voluntary organisations.
2. That all scooter providers should be linked with a mobility training facility such as Living dlc. who can provide training and support to the scooter user. That this is facilitated by South Gloucestershire Council, South Gloucestershire Community Health Services, care providers, voluntary organisations.
3. That South Gloucestershire Council and care providers (who could be in contact with mobility scooter users) make contact with the mobility allowance scheme to assess if it is possible to facilitate affordable insurance or breakdown cover.
4. That South Gloucestershire Council takes responsibility for reviewing pavements and dropped kerbs in relation to accessibility for mobility scooter users.

5. That the local public and community transport providers are encouraged to identify capacity for renewing/refurbishing their fleet to enable access for mobility scooter users.
6. That partnership working between local authorities, health authorities, housing associations, mobility shops, charities, parish councils, British Legion, occupational therapists, Police and LINKs takes place to pool expertise and work on a guidance booklet of good practice.

Good Practice Suggestions

- Production of a guidance pack to include information and advice on scooter usage, costs, safety, insurance and breakdown cover.
- Guidance from community transport and public transport organisations on scooter sizes that can be accommodated on their transport.
- General consistent advice from retailers to customers.
- Planners to ensure pavements are wide enough, in good order and have ramps
- That mobility scooter suppliers provide initial buyer assessments before purchase.
- Where scooters are purchased privately (new or used) buyers should aim to be certain of the documentation that accompanies the scooter and of securing insurance cover.

For more information and/or this report in another format please contact:

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