

Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion

SUMMARY



Social
Exclusion
Unit

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Background

1. In spring 2001, the Prime Minister asked the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) to explore, and make recommendations to overcome, the problems experienced by people facing social exclusion in reaching work and key services.
2. This report is the outcome of a wide-ranging study that has drawn on many sources, including a public consultation launched in July 2001.
3. The SEU project team has also worked closely with other government departments and a range of organisations beyond government, including local authorities, voluntary sector bodies, transport operators and local and national service providers. The team has carried out a number of visits to schemes that are already tackling the problems highlighted in the report.
4. An interim report was published in May 2002. The SEU's remit covers England only.

Introduction

5. The report examines the links between social exclusion, transport and the location of services. It is particularly focused on access to those opportunities that have the most impact on life-chances, such as work, learning and healthcare.
6. Recent years have seen a growing recognition that transport problems can be a significant barrier to social inclusion. This barrier was highlighted in the Government's *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* as one of a number of factors contributing to disadvantage in deprived areas.
7. The Government's 10 Year Plan for Transport has already set out the overall investment framework for public transport. This document explains specifically how the Government will address transport and accessibility problems that affect social exclusion. It will form a vital part of the Government's programme to build successful and sustainable communities.
8. People may not be able to access services as a **result** of social exclusion. For example, they may be restricted in their use of transport by low incomes, or because bus routes do not run to the right places. Age and disability can also stop people driving and using public transport.
9. Problems with transport provision and the location of services can **reinforce** social exclusion. They prevent people from accessing key local services or activities, such as jobs, learning, healthcare, food shopping or leisure. Problems can vary by type of area (for example urban or rural) and for different groups of people, such as disabled people, older people or families with children.
10. The effects of road traffic also **disproportionately impact on socially excluded areas and individuals** through pedestrian accidents, air pollution, noise and the effect on local communities of busy roads cutting through residential areas.
11. The report is mainly concerned with the **accessibility of local services and activities**. It has been prepared by the SEU working closely with the Government departments responsible for other key areas, including transport, land-use planning, health, education, work, crime and rural affairs.

What we mean by *accessibility*

The key idea at the centre of this report is accessibility: can people get to key services at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease? Accessibility depends on several things: does transport exist between the people and the service? Do people know about the transport, trust its reliability and feel safe using it? Are people physically and financially able to access transport? Are the services and activities within a reasonable distance? Solving accessibility problems may be about transport but also about locating and delivering key activities in ways that help people reach them.

The problem

12. **Access to work:** Two out of five jobseekers say lack of transport is a barrier to getting a job. One in four jobseekers say that the cost of transport is a problem getting to interviews. One in four young people have not applied for a particular job in the last 12 months because of transport problems.
13. **Access to learning:** 16–18-year-old students spend on average £370 a year on education-related transport, and nearly half of them experience difficulty with this cost. Six per cent of all 16–24-year-olds turn down training or further education opportunities because of problems with transport.
14. **Access to healthcare:** 31 per cent of people without a car have difficulties travelling to their local hospital, compared to 17 per cent of people with a car. Over 1.4 million people say they have missed, turned down, or chosen not to seek medical help over the last 12 months because of transport problems.
15. **Access to food shops:** 16 per cent of people without cars find access to supermarkets difficult, compared to 6 per cent of the population as a whole.
16. **Access to social, cultural, and sporting activities:** 18 per cent of people without a car find seeing friends and family difficult because of transport problems, compared with 8 per cent for car owners. People without cars are also twice as likely to find it difficult getting to leisure centres (9 per cent) and libraries (7 per cent).
17. **Impact of traffic on deprived communities:** Children from the lowest social class are five times more likely to die in road accidents than those from the highest social class. More than a quarter of child pedestrian casualties happen in the most deprived 10 per cent of wards.
18. These problems have an **impact on the individuals concerned**, for example by cutting them off from jobs, education and training. This in turn prevents them from breaking out of the cycle of social exclusion. The problems have **costs for communities**, which may be left isolated or unable to attract investment. They also **undermine Government objectives** that are essential to combat poverty and social exclusion like welfare to work, raising educational participation and attainment, narrowing health inequalities, and reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

Why does it happen?

19. Over the past 50 years, the need to travel has become greater and more complex as society became organised around the car and facilities became concentrated in larger units. The average length of a journey has increased by 42 per cent since the early 1970s while the average number of journeys per person has risen by just 8 per cent.
20. Rising car use has provided greater opportunity for travel. But nearly one in three households do not have access to a car, for reasons that include cost, disability and choice. People in low-income households depend primarily on walking to get around, but also on buses, lifts from family and friends, and taxis. Cycling and rail make up a small proportion of their journeys.
21. Some people, in both urban and rural areas, cannot reliably get to key places in a reasonable time. Five key barriers to accessing services are:
 - **The availability and physical accessibility of transport:** For some people there is no public transport, or it does not go to the right places or at the right times, or it does not go often enough or reliably enough, or vehicles are not accessible to disabled people. People living in rural areas without access to a car can face particularly acute problems. To date, only 29 per cent of buses meet the accessibility regulations applying to new vehicles under the Disability Discrimination Act.
 - **Cost of transport:** Some people find the costs of personal or public transport are very high or unaffordable. Bus fares have risen by nearly a third since 1985. Motoring costs account for 24 per cent of the weekly expenditure of households in the lowest income quintile who have cars.
 - **Services and activities located in inaccessible places:** Developments including housing, hospitals, business and retail are often located in areas not easily accessible to people without a car. Between 1986 and 1997, the number of out-of-town shopping centres increased four-fold.
 - **Safety and security:** Some people are unwilling to use public transport or walk to key services because of fear of crime or antisocial behaviour, or fear of road accidents. For example, 53 per cent of women and 23 per cent of men feel unsafe waiting on a train platform after dark.
 - **Travel horizons:** Some people are unwilling to travel long journey times or distances, or may not know about or trust transport services. The average distance to work for people on low incomes is three miles compared with eight for the general population.

What are the underlying causes?

22. Historically, nobody has been **responsible** for ensuring that people can get to key services and employment sites. As a result, services have been developed with insufficient attention to accessibility. And too often accessibility has been seen as a problem for transport planners to solve, rather than one that concerns and can be influenced by other organisations, for example by locating, designing and delivering services so that they are easily and conveniently available.
23. Before the Government introduced a new approach in 2000, the **social costs** of poor transport were not given any real weight in transport project appraisal. So the distribution of transport funding has tended to benefit those on higher incomes. Spending has not been tied sufficiently to outcomes such as improved journey times, accessible vehicles, punctuality or customer satisfaction.

24. Also, public spending on transport has been too **fragmented**. £1 billion of public money is spent each year on revenue support for buses, and a further £900 million is spent on school, patient and social services transport. These resources have not been sufficiently joined-up to improve accessibility.
25. In 1985 bus services were deregulated. This led to substantial decreases in operating costs and local authorities could therefore reduce the spending on subsidising unprofitable routes. However, authorities could not subsidise fares for commercial services to keep them low. **Bus fares** rose by a third between 1985 and 2000, while motoring costs remained stable. This made buses less attractive to those who had a choice of using their cars, and less affordable to those who did not.
26. **Land-use planning policies** in the 1980s and early 1990s allowed more dispersed patterns of development. They encouraged out-of-town shopping, leisure and office developments and low-density housing. They also allowed the concentration of activities in larger units and the closure of local facilities. People with access to a car did not find this difficult. But people's travel needs became increasingly complex, and public transport did not adapt.
27. Some **potential solutions** have been held back. Innovative ways of providing transport solutions – like bus services that run door-to-door or respond to demand rather than operating fixed routes, and tickets that are valid across several routes and operators – have been limited by specific regulations.

Progress so far

28. In recent years, the Government has made progress in tackling these problems. The 10 Year Plan for Transport set out a long-term increase in transport spending to improve public transport and address social exclusion. The introduction of 5-year Local Transport Plans has contributed to long-term funding stability at a local level.
29. Other key measures include:
 - offering half fares on buses for all pensioners and disabled people;
 - enabling innovative bus services through the Urban and Rural Bus Challenges, supporting rural buses, and extending the Bus Services Operators' Grant to community transport;
 - making vehicles and transport more accessible to disabled people following the Disability Discrimination Act;
 - providing better travel information, for example by initiating 'traveline', a telephone service run with partner organisations providing transport routes and times;
 - publishing new planning guidance under which all major new developments should be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport;
 - Department for Transport policy guidance for local authorities placing increased emphasis on measures to improve accessibility and promote social inclusion; and
 - a number of local authorities taking steps to assess and improve accessibility. There are many examples of good practice.
30. However, the Government recognises that more needs to be done. This report sets out a strategy, building on the steps already taken, to deliver better access to services and activities and reduce the impact of traffic on communities.

The Government's strategy

31. There are practical examples, both here and abroad, which demonstrate that progress is possible. These solutions require a range of public services and other organisations to work together over the long-term, including those involved in land-use planning, crime, education, healthcare, and social services. There needs to be a way of assessing needs and priorities at a local level and tailoring solutions to local circumstances. And it is important that this is a job for the whole of central and local government, not just agencies primarily concerned with transport.
32. The strategy has two main pillars:
- A new framework of 'accessibility planning'. This will ensure that there is clear responsibility and accountability for identifying accessibility problems and deciding how to tackle them.
 - National policy changes to enable improved public transport, better land-use planning, safer streets, and improved specialist support to help people get to work, learning, healthcare and food shops.

A new approach

33. The new framework of accessibility planning will be built into the next round of Local Transport Plans and led by local transport authorities. It will enable local authorities and other agencies to **assess more systematically** whether people can get to key activities, and to work more effectively together on solving accessibility problems. Local transport authorities will carry out an audit to identify disadvantaged groups or areas with poor access to key services, and develop action plans to tackle these problems.
34. As well as local transport authorities, accessibility planning will involve other relevant agencies. For example it may include land-use planners, Jobcentre Plus, Primary Care Trusts, local social services, local education authorities, the Learning and Skills Councils, and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Each will be responsible for ensuring their policies and programmes incorporate and take forward the actions identified for them in the action plan. Local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships, where they exist, will be expected to work together in developing accessibility planning.
35. The Government has established a working group with local transport authorities to support, develop guidance and spread good practice on accessibility planning.

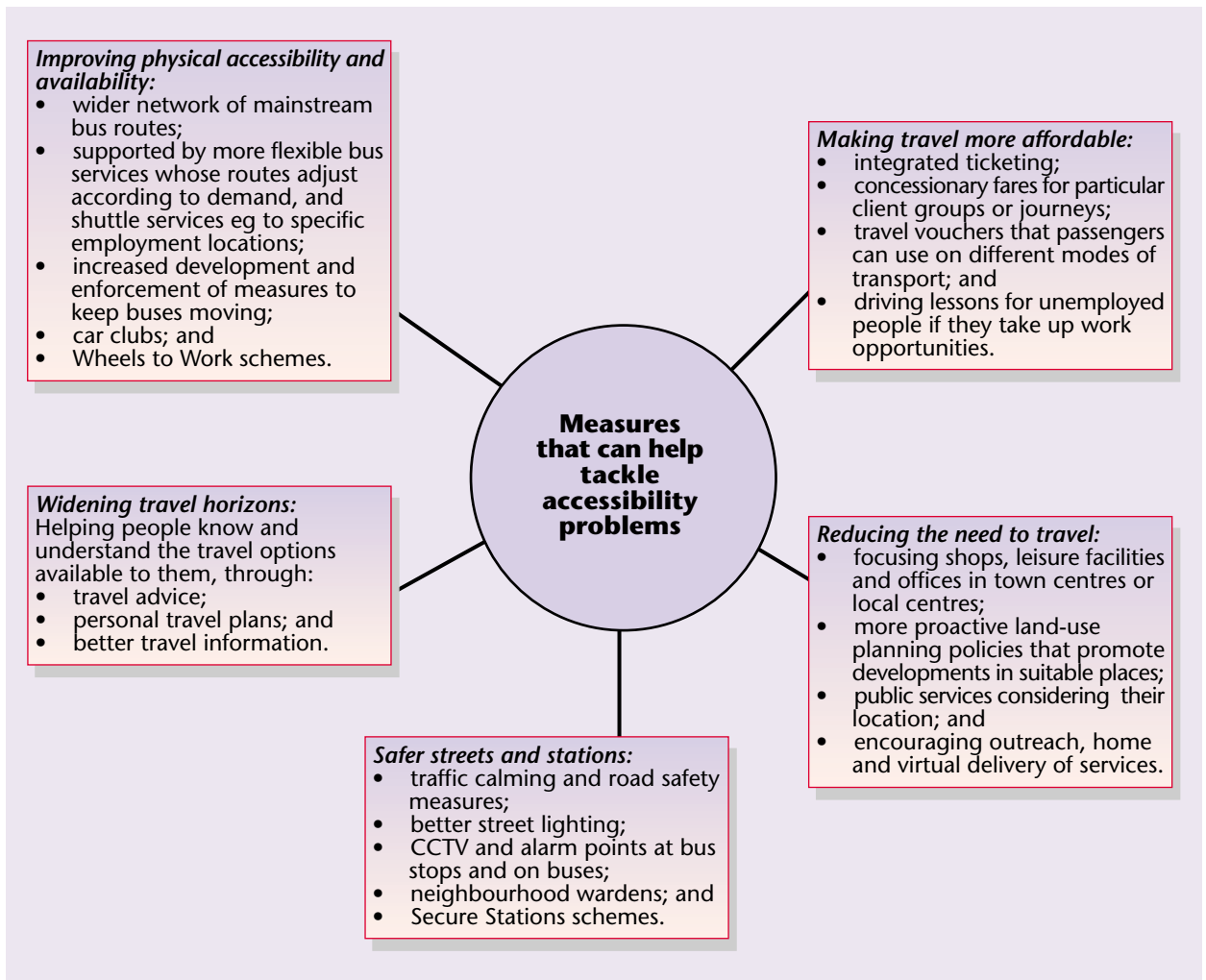
National policy changes

36. The report sets out a range of other policies across government designed to address barriers to accessibility and the unequal impacts of traffic.

Availability and accessibility of transport and services

37. The Government is working with local authorities, transport operators and other partners to **improve mainstream public transport**. For example, the Government will amend regulations on flexibly-routed buses, to make it easier to run services that respond to people's needs. The Government is also undertaking a review of bus subsidies, which will report to ministers before the Budget in 2003.

- 38. **Accessibility will be given greater weight in land-use planning decisions.** New Local Development Frameworks will identify gaps in local service provision and suitable sites for the development of services to fill these shortfalls. Also, revised Planning Policy Guidance will encourage the development of workplaces and key services that are accessible to people who live in deprived communities. For example, the ability of patients to get to new hospitals and healthcare will receive greater priority in decisions about where these services are located.
- 39. The Department for Transport has an objective from 2002 of **tackling the concentrations of road casualties in disadvantaged neighbourhoods**, backed by a £17 million fund directed at local highway authorities in deprived areas with the highest child pedestrian casualty rates.
- 40. The Government is also working to create safer streets through measures to reduce crime and the fear of crime when walking to, waiting for and travelling on public transport. The Home Office will **encourage those developing local crime reduction strategies to tackle crime and fear of crime around transport routes and hubs**. A 'transport toolkit' will suggest methods of tackling the problem with evaluated good practice examples, and transport issues will be built into other crime reduction toolkits.



Access to particular services/activities

- 41. **Work:** The Department for Work and Pensions is **increasing the help it offers to jobless people to enable them to get to work opportunities**. In return, individuals will be expected to review their travel horizons and be prepared to look for and take up work within a reasonable travelling distance. There will be a range of specific new measures for individuals and for local

areas. For example, Action Teams for Jobs, which operate in low employment areas, have £5 million of new funding for transport solutions, jobseekers will benefit from a £3 million fund to improve travel information in Jobcentre Plus offices, and more benefit claimants are eligible to reclaim the cost of travel to job interviews.

- 42. Learning:** From January 2003, local education authorities are required to form partnerships with colleges, the Learning and Skills Councils and transport authorities **to assess the accessibility of all further education institutions**. £9 million was shared between 70 transport pathfinders with high deprivation and low rates of participation in further education to kick-start the process. A further £14 million will be allocated to all the partnerships to fund transport solutions to the problems highlighted in their assessments.
- 43. Healthcare: Changes will be made to specialist travel to healthcare services so that it is organised around the patient.** The Department of Health will widen the criteria for eligibility to Patient Transport Services and increase the advice and information given on accessing healthcare. Accessibility will be given greater priority in making decisions on the location of new hospital and primary healthcare facilities.
- 44. Food shops: The new Directors of Public Health within each Primary Care Trust will be asked to play a leading role in improving access to food and nutrition** at a local level. The Small Firms Loan Guarantee will be extended to the retail sector, providing extra finance opportunities for small retailers.

Implementation

- 45.** The strategy will require long-term commitment from a range of organisations. Priorities will be determined locally, but the focus should be on improving access to activities that have the most impact on life-chances such as access to work, learning and healthcare. The 88 local authorities that benefit from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund should give particular attention to helping areas where transport problems create a barrier to regeneration and lack of local facilities perpetuates social exclusion.
- 46.** Local transport authorities will lead the work on accessibility planning at a local level, working in partnership with other local agencies, including local planning authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local education authorities, social services, the Learning and Skills Councils, and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Where appropriate, Local Strategic Partnerships should provide a way of ensuring effective joining up. The partners from each sector will be responsible for taking forward the actions identified for them in the action plan.
- 47.** At a national level, the Department for Transport will have overall responsibility for monitoring the progress of the strategy, and long-term policy development. The Department will work closely with other departments and report to a ministerial steering group on social exclusion and transport, and the Cabinet Committee on social exclusion and regeneration.
- 48.** The specific actions identified in this report are summarised below. Some of them are already in place, others have been agreed but have yet to take effect, and others will need further consultation and consideration on how they will be implemented.
- 49.** The box on page 11 shows some practical examples of improvements that people should be able to see in their everyday lives.

Key policies for improving access to jobs and services

Accessibility planning: a new approach

1. All local transport authorities will carry out accessibility planning. This will be incorporated into the second round of Local Transport Plans, which are due in 2005, and which will take effect from 2006.
2. The Government has established a working group with local transport authorities to develop and pilot approaches to accessibility auditing and planning, share good practice, and produce guidance for all authorities.
3. The relevant government departments will issue guidance on how local organisations, including those delivering transport, welfare to work, learning, healthcare, land-use planning and leisure services should be involved in accessibility planning.

Improved transport services

4. The Department for Transport (DfT) will amend the regulations to facilitate flexibly-routed services in the first half of 2003.
5. DfT will assess other barriers to flexible transport, and what might be done to address them, in 2003.
6. The Office of Fair Trading will produce a template for integrated ticketing, building on the guidance they issued in 2002.
7. The bus subsidy review is considering greater freedom for local authorities to introduce concessionary fares for other client groups.
8. The Bus Partnership Forum will encourage new forms of partnership, including Quality Networks, and agreements to reduce network instability.
9. A Government review of bus subsidies, which will report to Ministers before the Budget in 2003, is assessing options for changing subsidy mechanisms so that they contribute to social inclusion aims as well as increasing passenger numbers and encouraging modal shift.
10. From January 2003, the Treasury's guidance to other public sector bodies on how funding proposals should be appraised or evaluated, including major transport projects, factors in the *social* benefits of proposed schemes.

Land-use planning

11. The proposed Local Development Frameworks should highlight whether there are gaps in local service provision and if so identify suitable sites for the development of services to fill these shortfalls. In preparing them, planners will need to work closely with key providers and funders of services across the public and private sectors.
12. Land-use planners will work with local transport planners and other partners to make sure land-use matters are included in accessibility planning.
13. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) will revise national planning policy guidance to ensure that social exclusion and accessibility considerations are integrated into future planning policy.

Safer streets

14. The Home Office will raise the profile of crime and fear of crime around transport routes and hubs for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and the police; and encourage data collection and participation in accessibility planning.
15. A 'transport toolkit' of practical and evaluated suggestions for tackling crime around transport will be added to the other crime reduction toolkits in spring 2003.
16. DfT has an objective from 2002 of tackling concentrations of road accidents in disadvantaged communities, backed by a new fund of £17.6 million over three years from 2003 for local highway authorities with high rates of child pedestrian casualties.

Access to work

17. The Department for Work and Pensions has extended the Travel to Interview Scheme to cover claimants of more benefits, including Incapacity Benefit, and local journeys over £4 on a discretionary basis.
18. Jobcentre Plus, the Association of Train Operating Companies and Transport for London will provide New Deal participants in England and Wales with a 50 per cent reduction on the cost of rail travel.
19. Jobcentre Plus will increase awareness of travel and mobility, and how to overcome transport barriers, through staff training.
20. Jobcentre Plus will extend eligibility for the Adviser Discretion Fund to all benefit claimants from the sixth month of their claim, and to anyone joining the New Deal for Lone Parents.
21. A £5 million per year fund supports employment-related transport projects run by Action Teams for Jobs from 2002.
22. A £3 million fund will improve travel information and journey planning in Jobcentre Plus offices.

Access to learning

23. There will be increased childcare provision in the 20 per cent most deprived wards, and a new power to provide childcare in schools.
24. The Government encourages local education authorities to consider piloting changes to home-to-school transport entitlements.
25. Learner Support Funds can now be used to provide free or subsidised transport services (rather than just subsidising individuals), as long as they benefit all students.
26. The Department for Education and Skills will introduce Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) across the country from September 2004. These will provide up to £30 a week to students whose parents are on low incomes and may be used to help meet the cost of travelling to education.
27. From January 2003, local education authorities will be required to form partnerships with colleges, the Learning and Skills Councils and transport authorities to assess the accessibility of all further education institutions. £9 million was shared between 70 transport pathfinders with high deprivation and low rates of participation in further education to kick-start the process. A further £14 million will be allocated to all the partnerships to fund transport solutions to the problems highlighted in their assessments.

28. The transport problems and needs of adult learners will be fully considered within the current review of adult learning, informing the Skills Strategy to be published in June 2003.

Access to healthcare

29. The criteria for eligibility for Patient Transport Services will be amended to include medical, mobility, public transport and financial grounds, through a working group led by Department of Health (DH).
30. DH will provide guidance to Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), strategic health authorities and local authorities on the role of PCTs in relation to commissioning transport in 2003.
31. DH will develop options to deliver a one-stop-shop approach to provide information and advice on getting to healthcare facilities and book transport where appropriate.
32. 'Accessibility' will be factored into DH decisions about the location and delivery of healthcare, and into the performance framework for the NHS.
33. DH will issue guidance in spring 2003 to support a new statutory duty on all NHS bodies to involve and consult patients and the public. NHS bodies will need to demonstrate that they are involving disadvantaged groups in key areas such as the planning, development and provision of services; accessibility will be a core area.

Access to food shops

34. From April 2003, the Small Firms Loan Guarantee will be extended to the retail sector enabling retailers with viable business plans but without adequate security to receive credit.
35. The Phoenix Fund is making retail one of the priority sectors in their strategy to encourage small- and medium-sized business development in disadvantaged areas.
36. ODPM will strengthen and clarify national planning policy guidance in 2003 on the location of shops, especially food stores, to strengthen local shopping provisions.
37. The Home Office is providing funding of £15 million over three years to improve security for small retailers in the most deprived areas throughout England and Wales.

What changes will people see?

The following case studies illustrate the kind of changes that people could see in their lives as a result of the policies described in this report.

Julia, 75

Julia lives alone in a small village in a rural area. Previously the only opportunity she had to see people came on Wednesday afternoon when social services provided a bus to the community day centre. Now she can phone for door-to-door transport to take her to visit her friend on the other side of town. The County Council supplies the vehicle using an accessible school minibus previously redundant for the bulk of the day.

Ravi, 18

Ravi lives in an isolated estate, and attends the Technology College in the centre of town. In the past the only bus service linking the estate to the college finished too early so he often had to miss classes. The college referred him to a nearby 'Wheels to Work centre'. The centre provided him with his own moped and trained him in how to maintain it, so he can now get to his classes and stay later if he needs to.

Tracey, 40

Tracey works shifts at an out-of-town industrial development. Previously, she didn't feel safe getting the bus home. There is now a CCTV-monitored well-lit waiting area at the plant's bus stop, as it was shown to be an area of particular concern. She now feels safe while waiting for the bus rather than spending her wages on getting a taxi home.

Stella, 25 and Karen, 3

Stella lives in a market town and teaches at the local primary school. She had to spend several hours a day travelling between her home, work and her daughter Karen's nursery. The school was identified as a convenient local facility and so now houses childcare facilities and a small shop. Bringing the facilities together in the same place allows Stella to spend more time at home with Karen.

Stuart, 10

Stuart lives in an inner city area near a busy main road. He used to spend all his free time indoors because he couldn't safely get to anywhere nearby to play. Now, Stuart can meet his friends to play football, as there is a new safe crossing to the local park.

Alun, 57

Alun has a long-standing respiratory illness. In the past he missed a number of hospital appointments due to problems with the journey, which involved catching two infrequent buses. This led him to put off seeking further treatment and his condition worsened. Now when he chooses the date and time of his hospital appointment, a journey planner arranges for him to be picked up at his house by a free community transport minibus.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This summary is available in the following languages: Bengali, Gujarati, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi, from the address below. Copies of the summary in these languages can also be downloaded from the SEU website: www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk

Braille and audio tape versions of the summary are also available from the address below.

The full report and further copies of this document are available from the website, or from the address below.

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