

GRAMPIAN HEALTH & TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN

2019

2020



2022

Quote from the Chair of the HTAP Steering Group



The COVID-19 pandemic has tested humanity the world over both in a personal and professional capacity in ways few of us could have ever imagined. The vaccination programme gives us all hope for the future, but we cannot afford to ease up on the disciplines now engrained into us such as physical distancing, the use of face masks and adhering to government direction. Whilst the pandemic has brought a great deal of anguish, concern, and heartache to many, it has created the need for substantial change in the way that healthcare is delivered and that pace of change across the healthcare sector has been transformational in the last year. As Chair of the Health & Transport Action Plan (HTAP), I have witnessed first-hand partnership working like never before by using the strength of relationships already created by HTAP. The spirit of partnership across the public and voluntary sectors has helped protect NHS Grampian and supported Grampian’s communities immeasurably through the past year. I would personally like to thank each and everyone of you for the part you played in protecting the NHS and transforming how we work together to benefit the communities we serve. I hope the annual report reflects these successes and gives you a real sense of what has been achieved in the last year.

*Gerry Donald,
HTAP Steering Group Chair,
NHS Grampian*



Quote from the Vice Chair of the HTAP Steering Group

The health and transport sectors have both faced unique and unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am pleased with how colleagues have adapted and engaged to address the shifting challenges of delivering health and transport services and the co-operation shown to work together where relevant. Whether this was in relation to supporting the work around keeping the travelling public as safe as possible, protecting the vulnerable, the movement of patients and NHS staff and advising transport operators. In these difficult times, we have seen much to be proud of. Public, commercial and third sector partners have demonstrated the vital role that working in partnership plays and the importance of it to our communities.

*Rab Dickson,
HTAP Steering Group Vice Chair,
Nestrans*

Introduction

This is an annual report updating the many partner organisations and stakeholders who are engaged in delivering the Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP) across Grampian region, as well as the national partners and supporters who are interested in the progress of this partnership.

During 2020 the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been huge. There is no glossing over the many human tragedies and traumas of the past year. However, there is a good news story to be told about the collaborative efforts of HTAP partner organisations to support the NHS, protect the vulnerable and to adapt to the most challenging of years.

*Andrew Stewart,
HTAP Programme Manager
(Post jointly funded by NHS
Grampian and Nestrans)*

Andrew.Stewart@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Governance Structure

The current governance structure oversees the delivery of the HTAP.

The Steering Group provides strategic oversight of the progress made towards the aims of the HTAP. The membership includes senior representatives of NHS Grampian, Nestrans, Scottish Ambulance Service, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council along with agreed representation from the third sector, Health & Social Care Partnerships, a member of the Mobility & Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) and, importantly, a Public Representative.

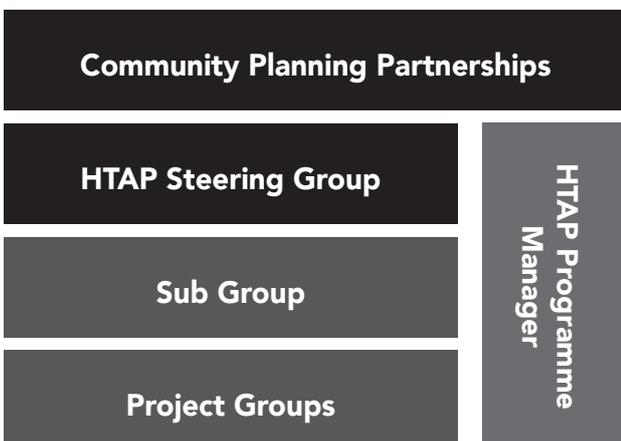
The Steering Group oversees two themed sub-groups.

1. Transport and Public Health Sub-Group
2. Access to Health & Social Care Sub-Group

Both sub-groups report to the Steering Group quarterly providing updates on the work plan produced by each sub-group. Membership is drawn from a variety of appropriate partner organisations.

The programme is supported by the Programme Manager. The post of Programme Manager is jointly funded by NHSG and Nestrans and hosted by Aberdeenshire Council.

Each year the HTAP Annual Report is submitted to the three Grampian Community Planning Partnerships and made available to all partner organisations wishing to submit to Committee or Board level, depending on the nature of organisation. A copy is also submitted to MACS.



Alignment with Community Planning Partnerships

The two visions set out by partners within the Health & Transport Action Plan can be linked to the priorities set by the three Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) within Grampian. The following shows the priorities of the CPPs with the priorities most aligned with the HTAP highlighted in bold.

Aberdeen City Community Planning Partnership Priorities

- Aberdeen prospers
- Children are our future
- **People are resilient, included and supported when in need**
- **Empowered, resilient and sustainable communities**

Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Priorities

- Changing Aberdeenshire's Relationship with Alcohol
- Reducing Child Poverty in Aberdeenshire
- **Connected and Cohesive Communities**

Moray Community Planning Partnership Priorities

The corporate vision of Community Planning in Moray is: "to increase the quality of life and develop the well-being of everyone in Moray."

The strategic priorities, which have been identified to deliver the vision, have been sub-divided under the following seven themes:

- **Achieving a healthy and caring community**
- **Achieving a safer community**
- **Building stronger communities**
- **Improving travel facilities, choices and safety**
- **Investing in children and young people**
- **Protecting and enhancing the environment**
- Working for increased prosperity

What We Said We Would Do

This section summarises the work of the two HTAP Sub-Groups. Each sub-group is chaired by a member of the HTAP Steering Group.

As would be expected given the urgency of the COVID-19 response, some areas of work have been put on hold, while other areas have been escalated to the top of the agenda.

What the following sections will hopefully convey is the adaptability of the HTAP network despite many key figures being redeployed and priorities shifting across departments as circumstances developed.

The Chair of the HTAP Transport & Public Health Sub-Group was redeployed to COVID work during 2020. The group did have remote meetings and collaborated on relevant tasks. The Sub-Group Chair has highlighted to partners that the HTAP route maps have now come to an end, and this allows the Sub-Group a period of reflection over the last five years and the opportunity to revisit our priorities and refresh our approach. Given the impacts of the pandemic on the population's mental and physical health, the Sub-Group Chair believes that "In 2021 we must ensure that HTAP continues to be high on all our agendas, to continue to promote equality in transport, sustainability and active travel, to improve health and wellbeing".

Transport & Public Health Sub-Group Update

The vision for transport and public health is:

- For people in Grampian to choose to travel by active modes such as walking and cycling whenever appropriate and to have the ability to do so conveniently and safely, in order to improve activity levels and public health;
- For everyone in the region to live without unacceptable risk to their health caused by the transport network or its use.

Objective TPH1

For partners to use their collective influence and resources within and between their own organisations and at a national level to further increase provision of high quality infrastructure for active travel, and to promote, inspire and enable more people to walk and cycle as part of their everyday lives.

Objective TPH2

For health professionals to ensure planners and decision-makers are informed of the adverse public health impacts of the transport system and to support those partners already working to resolve them, most notably in order to:

- Reduce air pollution, especially within Air Quality Management Areas;
- Reduce the number of people exposed to high transport noise levels;
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the transport network;
- Reduce the number of people isolated from their communities and key services by lack of appropriate transport;
- Ensure that transport policies support sustainable and healthy communities.

HTAP partners have...

Supported physical distancing across transportation

Spaces for People

All three local authorities and NHS Grampian made successful bids for Spaces for People funding as part of the Scottish Government programme for managing physical distancing during the pandemic.

NHS Grampian seconded a member of staff to be Project Manager for the Spaces for People Project. The project provides an interesting opportunity to create spaces in support of sustainable transport within the NHS Grampian estate. The HTAP community have been supportive in sharing experience and connecting relevant colleagues in local authorities. An HTAP Knowledge Exchange was convened involving all three local authorities, Nestrans and NHS Grampian colleagues to share lessons and explore opportunities and links between Spaces for People projects.

Thanks to Sustrans, NHS Grampian will deliver e-cargo bikes to NHS Grampian staff in Speyside. This will facilitate NHS Grampian staff travel to visit local patients in their homes. In Aberdeen design work has been completed for a path between Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Woodhill House.

NHS Grampian Public Health Directorate colleagues provided support and guidance to local authority partners making these unplanned changes to the public realm.

Involving Public Health in Transport Issues

Deputy Director of Public Health (NHS Grampian), Chris Littlejohn, has said "Staff across all the HTAP partner organisations have been stretched in many ways. This has impacted the work of HTAP, but the HTAP Programme Manager is commended on his continued push to keep HTAP's profile high, highlighting relevant information to the network, and using the network to assist in the Covid-19 response where possible."

The emergence of COVID-19 and physical

distancing and other measures to reduce virus transmission has had a significant impact on our communities. The pandemic has affected how we use transport. Research shows that fewer people are now using public transport and there has been an increase in active travel. The HTAP have provided a much needed collaborate partnership approach across sectors in adapting to these changes and addressing some of the transport issues that have arisen across the Grampian region during this time.

The pandemic has highlighted and amplified existing health inequalities, with Public Health colleagues highlighting to transport professionals how being in good health is determined by social, economic factors and the physical environment. Given the limitations of public transport in many rural areas, having access to a car can be vital. However, the dependency on cars can place an extra burden on low-income groups and the environment. Limited personal mobility can bring challenges, particularly to older people, young people, and disabled groups.

Transport systems will continue to adapt to COVID-19 measures over the coming months. The HTAP are well placed to draw on the wide range of assets, resources, and networks that partners offer to ensure transport solutions are accessible, affordable, sustainable and enable safe active travel for everyone in Grampian.

*Susan Forbes,
Health Improvement Officer,
Aberdeenshire H&SCP Public Health*

Promoted safer travel

Connecting NHS Grampian, H&SCP and the transport operators

During 2020, HTAP has facilitated opportunities for cross sector discussion between NHS Grampian and local bus operators. Through the network of HTAP partners, best practice on safe use of public transport was disseminated to NHS Grampian staff. Information on the Getabout website was shared with colleagues in health and social care.

Guidance for the public and transport



operators was promoted through the various channels of HTAP partner organisations, the Aberdeenshire Community Transport Forum, Getabout and commercial operators' own websites etc.

Work towards Road Safety as public health

The good work of Road Safety North East Scotland has been praised nationally for its multi-agency approach in Grampian. However, typical of the complexities of the past year there have been positive shifts in some aspects of the work around this important issue, while areas of work that were planned could not progress due to the crisis response required across the whole system.

As our population will see increasing numbers of older drivers and users of public spaces there is an aspiration that Road Safety work gains greater emphasis as a public health issue and is mainstreamed within the thinking of all transport professionals.

The approach taken by Road Safety North East Scotland is seen as a good example of multi-agency working on an issue which has seen significant numbers of casualties over many years. Looking ahead, one of the key actions will be to strength the relationship between health and road safety with the aim of reducing the burden of public health services and achieving the public health priority of a Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities, as well as Scotland's National Performance Health Outcome: We are healthy and active.

Promoting Awareness of Inclusion and Equalities Issues

Raising the visibility of hidden disability

Reducing inequalities in relation to transport is of great importance to the delivery of the vision of the Transport & Public Health Sub-Group. All partners involved with HTAP have duties and responsibilities in relation to equalities legislation, but also wider commitments to work towards a safe, inclusive, sustainable and accessible Scotland.

As a result of previous engagement work, a member of the Mobility & Access

Committee for Scotland (MACS) has joined the HTAP Steering Group. The Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) was established in 2002 and is an advisory non-departmental public body. The Convener and Members are appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity. MACS have cited HTAP as good practice.

An online Q&A event was organised at which the Chief Officer of Deaf Scotland presented to an audience of sixty health and transport professionals from Grampian and further afield. Feedback from attendees indicated a number of points of learning, including how prevalent hearing impairment is across Scotland and how it impacts those travelling and using services.

Deaf Scotland praised the partnership approach of HTAP and its impact to date. It welcomed the team commitment to the cross-cutting issues of accessible information and inclusive communication which work on an improvement basis to involve those affected by deafness and others with communication barriers. Going forward the involvement and participation of key local members, for example North East Sensory Services, will help promote the connectedness and the joint ownership of issues needed to deliver on key actions.

Listening to people with disabilities

Maintaining and diversifying dialogue and channels of communication between stakeholders is an important part of the work around HTAP.

Dialogue with stakeholders has continued throughout the pandemic. This has resulted in reports by Disability Equality Scotland (DES) highlighting findings from surveys of its membership being distributed to HTAP partners. DES Chief Officer, Morven Brooks spoke to the HTAP Steering Group. In her talk many issues about difficulties attending appointments, public transport driver training, perceptions of safety in shared use spaces and accessible information were highlighted.

The engagement conveyed how transport to health is an emotive subject for DES members. The research findings shared with HTAP partners found that overwhelmingly

DES members had experienced problems with Patient Transport Services (PTS) and with transport to appointments in general (98%). Common issues included disabled people advised they could not travel with a carer, wheelchair users expected to be transported without their wheelchair and inconsistent application of eligibility criteria for use of the PTS. In line with the ongoing work of the HTAP and its vision, people with disabilities called for a more joined up approach between the Scottish Ambulance Service, hospitals and public transport providers to ensure services are available.

Disability Equality Scotland is currently funded by Transport Scotland to consult and engage with disabled people on various aspects of transport accessibility through regular webinars and weekly polls. “We will continue to liaise with HTAP on points of interest from these discussions.

*Morven Brooks,
Chief Executive Officer,
Disability Equality Scotland*

Involving the public

Through the excellent work of the HTAP Public Representative (PR) the public have a champion for the end user of health and transport service delivery. Our Public Representative has attended Steering Group meetings for five years and continues to highlight issues around equality, rurality and to challenge the work of the group.

The PR has said, “I share the concerns regarding rurality and transport poverty in relation to the ever-complex challenge around achieving equality of patient access to healthcare services.”

The needs of the region mean that the HTAP agencies are interdependent, and their partnership working and collaboration continues to be the way forward.

*Virginia Irvine-Fortescue,
HTAP Public Representative*

Strategic Influence

Cross sector influence

Influence is one of the difficult to measure and yet important roles of the HTAP partnership approach. While not always related to the funding of projects directly, the bringing together of partners provides a point of discussion and challenge around overlapping policy areas, the exchange of expert knowledge, connecting relevant stakeholders and efforts to align strategic priorities and delivery plans.

The benefits of such cross-sector partnership approach can be perceived differently depending on the nature of organisation and/or perception of value. Certainly, multiple partners have given feedback that during the rapidly evolving months of 2020, the HTAP structure and its connections have helped adapt and respond in multiple ways.

For example, Cycling UK (Scotland) have valued their participation in the Transport & Public Health Sub-Group because of the opportunity to link up with organisations, build relationships and keep in touch with current initiatives across Grampian. Feedback from Cycling UK (Scotland) has highlighted how this forum has provided an opportunity to share and contribute to initiatives and projects and that this was particularly important during 2020 when opportunities and challenges continually changed and the necessity of responding to people’s needs was more important than ever. .

Informing priorities

Through the regular dialogue of HTAP, partners via the Steering Group and Sub-Group structures and network partners were able to inform each other as the pandemic developed. Local authority, NHS, Health & Social Care, Third Sector and commercial partners have recognised that the pandemic has impacted everyone and changed a lot in terms of priorities. Public Health colleagues from Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care highlighted that partnership working has played a huge role in protecting communities, but the changing situation requires engagement from all HTAP partners in assessing the issues and identifying the

solutions going forward. The Public Health perspective being the effects of the past year have impacted mental and physical wellbeing, access to transport and travel patterns. Also, noting that the results will be felt across the whole system for a considerable time to come.

“ It’s important to progress the role of the HTAP framework of meetings to add strategic value to the work already being done around active travel, air quality, road safety and health inequalities.

*Martin Hall,
Transport Strategy Manager,
Aberdeenshire Council*

Promoting the role of the NHS in Active Travel

The NHSG Head of Projects (Estates), Derek Morgan, has given feedback that “From the perspective of NHS Grampian, there have been excellent examples of co-ordinated working across a number of different organisations such as Sustrans, Nestrans, Cycling Scotland and Nature Scotland along with a number of others. These have particularly allowed us to benefit from improved cross sector working as well as being able to access grant funding towards improving active and sustainable travel; safe access and egress to our healthcare facilities through the Spaces for People initiative; improved access to e-bikes and other cycle facilities as well as improved access to greenspace amongst other elements”.

Access to Health & Social Care Sub-Group Update

The vision for access to health and social care is:

- For everyone in the region to be able to access the health and social care they need and if transport is required, for this to be appropriate, convenient and affordable;
- For the environmental impacts of journeys to be minimised.

Objective AHSC1

For partners to gain a detailed understanding of the gaps or inequalities in access to or from health and social care services, and to resolve identified problems.

Objective TPH2

For partners to more fully coordinate the planning and delivery of health/social care and transport in order to improve the efficiency and financial sustainability of services.

Objective TPH3

For partners to work together to ensure that Transport to Health & Social Care is undertaken by sustainable modes wherever possible, or that care is provided without travel if appropriate.

HTAP Partners have...

Maintaining Cross Sector Dialogue

The Access to Health & Social Care Sub-Group continued to meet quarterly during 2020. The Chair was taken by Paul Finch, Strategy Manager from Nestrans. It is hoped that arrangements can be made to facilitate NHS and/or Health & Social Care Partnership leadership of the Sub-Group.

The focus during the meetings of 2020 were concerned with ensuring the necessary dialogue between health and transport providers was maintained to allow a whole system perspective as the pandemic developed.

The value of partnership working between the Health and Transport sectors has clearly been demonstrated during 2020, due to the requirements of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are numerous examples of where opportunities have been embraced,

such as the increased roll out of Near Me internet and telephone appointments service, and the joint working in relation to the design and implementation of changes to our public spaces. We've also had to jointly face up to significant challenges, including safe patient access to and from healthcare facilities, and addressing wider public health impacts associated with safe travel, and issues of not being able to travel due to lockdown restrictions.

What we've learnt is that the partnership working needs to be increasingly agile and focused on the areas where value can be added by joint working, supporting each other and sharing insights and information. We can see that trends that were apparent prior to the pandemic have frequently been accelerated, but also be very mindful of the consequences of some these rapid changes. This will require engagement at national, regional and local level. As the roll out of the vaccinations continues, a focus on effective and consistent communication across a variety of platforms is also apparent.

It is anticipated that throughout 2021 society and organisations will continue to focus on how best to adapt and to successfully recover from Covid-19, alongside other challenges such as climate change and a requirement to focus inclusive growth. The relationship between health and transport is key to successfully addressing these challenges.

Enabled Integrated Co-ordination of Transport for Health

THInC (Transport to Health & Social Care Information Centre)

THInC, the Travel to Health & Social Care Information Centre, has continued to be funded by NHS Grampian, Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council.

The existence of a single point of contact with the support of the three local authority Passenger Transport Units and the wider community transport sector demonstrated the value of partnership working to supporting the transport challenges facing the NHS.

From the end of March 2020, and for much



of the year, bus services operated at reduced frequencies and with reduced seating due to the need for people to physically distance. The Scottish Ambulance Service Patient Transport Service (PTS) also operated at reduced vehicle capacity due to physical distancing.

Patient transport requests for hospital appointments, hospital discharge and COVID-19 tests were directed to THInC from NHSG, the PTS, the Grampian Coronavirus Assistance Hub and direct from members of the public.

THInC staff liaised with transport operators including private operators contracted by NHSG, community/voluntary transport organisations and Councils to arrange transport. With people unable to physically attend health appointments, reduced public transport, social distancing impacts on vehicle capacity, pressures on the Scottish Ambulance Service and a need for NHS staff to get to work there was a significant shift in partnership working between sectors, the roll out of online appointments and awareness of the importance of community transport.

Funded by NHSG, Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council, the THInC project has acted as a recognisable and trusted single point of contact for health-related transport during the pandemic.

Operationally, Aberdeenshire Council's Passenger Transport Unit continues to staff THInC (Transport to Health & Social Care Information Centre) on behalf of the HTAP funding partners.

Offering transport advice to individuals attending health or social care appointments, particularly those attending hospital appointments. Health and social care professionals are encouraged to contact THInC for advice, on 01467 536111 or travel@thinc-hub.org, either on behalf of service users or to raise general transport issues.

During 2020, the Transport Units of Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Moray Councils worked more closely than ever, under the THInC banner, to assist NHS Grampian with the coordination and operation of patient and staff transport in response to the challenges faced by COVID-19.

Supporting Patient Flow

Consultation with partners has captured the benefit of having cross sector meetings. One NHSG manager acknowledged that Covid-19 saw the organisation face unprecedented challenges in supporting people to get to appointments and facilitate discharge from hospital. Because of the HTAP partners and the support from THInC, utilising the support available through community and third sector transport providers NHSG have managed to support people to attend essential appointments and supported patient flow through the hospital.

Supporting the Scottish Ambulance Service

In preparation of this annual report, consultation with the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) captured the organisation's recognition that through HTAP the Scottish Ambulance Service in Grampian had been able to work collaboratively with THInC and partners from the 3rd Sector and Local Authorities to co-ordinate the most suitable transport solution to meet the needs of patients in our communities. This work had supported the Service in being able to provide ambulance care for those who require support to travel to and from healthcare services for scheduled and unscheduled care. SAS acknowledge that the HTAP provides benefits for creating whole system changes and supports their ability to direct resources to those who are in greatest need of ambulance care.

Connecting Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray

Colleagues at Aberdeen City Council felt that the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have strengthened the HTAP partnership and demonstrated in practice its purpose and ongoing role in the North East. The view was that because connections were already established and in place between partners from across health and transport, it was possible to quickly work together in a time of emergency to ensure that transport supported the NHS response to the pandemic. Colleagues at ACC felt that there was no doubt that if the HTAP had not been in place this would not have been so seamless.

Demonstrating the value of cross boundary working and reflecting the Grampian-wide remit of HTAP, THInC and the needs of NHS Grampian colleagues in Moray Council were engaged in the HTAP wide response to the pandemic.

Colleagues at Moray Council feedback that access to healthcare from Moray still creates issues for some clients, particularly where travel is out of Moray to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary or other city clinics. Moray Council offers demand responsive transport to connect with the trunk coach service to Aberdeen which serves ARI and through the Moray Growth Deal, the council hopes to expand this across a much wider spread of day in the future. Moray Council also feedback what they see as a vital need for residents in Moray to be able to influence the time of their appointments given the travel distance.

In Moray when the vaccination programme commenced additional Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) was put in place to provide an enhanced DRT service for customers unable to access commercial bus services. In addition, Stagecoach Bluebird have commenced a shuttle bus service linking central Elgin with the primary mass vaccination centre in Moray, this being operated commercially. In addition, there were local volunteers organised through Elgin Rotarians who assisted Moray residents accessing the vaccination centres.

Moray's SLA with NHSG continues to provide a bus with driver and escort for discharge patients from Dr. Grays Hospital. During the first Lockdown, a second bus with driver and escort was provided to relieve pressure on the PTS (Patient Transport Service) plus several arrangements put in place for patients attending clinics in Moray and Aberdeen.

Working with and Supporting the Third Sector

Representation

HTAP provides a forum for the third sector to raise issues and be represented in discussions with senior management from the Health and Transport Sectors. The Third Sector Interface Chief Executives are invited to attend the Steering Group, along with the Chief Executive

of the Community Transport Association (Scotland).

The CTA is represented on the Access to Health & Social Care Sub-Group. The Programme Manager also attends the Aberdeenshire Community Transport Forum.

Clearly, where there is much praise for community transport and the transportation role of charities there is also a range of risks to the sector, which are raised through HTAP meetings.

Supporting community transport

To support the community transport organisations within Grampian and as part of the ongoing work in relation to transport for health and social care, the fourth Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards were held online. The prizes were sponsored by Colin Lawson Transport and the event was attended by over sixty guests.

Volunteer Driver/Escort of the Year was jointly awarded to Norman Kinnaird of Huntly Community Minibus and to Dave McLaughlin, Aberdeen Cyrenians. In his role with the Huntly Community Minibus, Norman had been a lifeline for many in the area. He has worked tirelessly during the pandemic to promote and operate the minibus. Those who rely on the service praised Norman for 'going out of his way' and for providing social interaction for many who were isolated.

As a volunteer driver for over six years with Aberdeen Cyrenians, Dave has been a vital part of their emergency food service during Covid-19. Dave's work to collect food donations meant that the Cyrenians could continue to replenish stocks to meet the high demand for the service.

The Community Contribution (Organisation) Award was presented to North East Rider Volunteers Scotland (NERVS). The group of over 250 volunteers provide an essential service transporting medical supplies, treatments and equipment. Their efforts during the pandemic expanded to include the coordination of emergency prescription deliveries, as well as transporting doctors and nurses who faced difficulties in getting to work.

Special mention was also given to Aberdeenshire Council officers Charles Mackintosh (Duty Officer) and Tracey Morris (Facilities Officer) who went the extra mile as part of their work helping those shielding, delivering food and prescriptions.

A special prize for notable mention has been donated by Live Life Aberdeenshire and was awarded to Rachel Milne of North East Transport Training.

ACVO, the third sector interface for Aberdeen is delighted to support the Health & Transport Action Plan. Transport is of vital importance and it is great the progress being made in taking forward the Health & Transport Action Plan. A particular highlight of the year was recognising the tremendous contribution volunteers are making as part of the Health & Transport Action Plan at the Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards - the dedication of volunteers and the community is incredibly inspiring and greatly appreciated more than ever.

*Mike Melvin,
Co-ordinator,
ACVO*

Collaboration through THInC in the City

For the past six years, HTAP partners have been proud of the work done through the branch of THInC which operates wheelchair accessible transport in Aberdeen City for those requiring assistance to health and social care appointments. The funding from Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership, the booking and organising by THInC and the buses operated by Buchan Dial A Community Bus illustrates the benefit of stakeholders large and small working together.

Buchan Dial A Community Bus provide drivers enabling a regular and reliable door to door service to help clients who have mobility problems on and off the bus and into their destination. They are all appropriately trained and greatly valued by the clients. Without this service many vulnerable individuals would be unable to access health and wellbeing appointments leaving them reliant on relatives, friends or neighbours if available.

Capturing the value of community transport

HTAP membership includes the Director of the Community Transport Association (CTA) (Scotland). HTAP partners are committed to supporting the community transport sector. In preparation of this report the feedback from the CTA (Scotland) sought to highlight that Community Transport has repeatedly demonstrated how crucial it is to users' wellbeing, but this has been particularly the case during the pandemic. Director, Rachael Murphy recognised that "HTAP has captured the ways in which CT is well placed to support the health service in crisis situations and more generally. It is essential as we enter vaccine rollout, that stakeholders in health continue to work with and to resource CT."

The commitment to partnership between all stakeholders has been recognised with Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action sitting on the HTAP Steering Group representing the three Third Sector Interface bodies. Many local third sector organisations were first responders when society went into lockdown. Critical support was provided, often by volunteers.

Collaborating with Royal Voluntary Service

In November 2020, the HTAP Programme Manager approached Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) to look at the possibility of providing a patient transport service from Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to support discharges. NHS Grampian had been paying for taxis to get people home and they wanted to look at reducing costs and providing a better service for patients.

Royal Voluntary Service works across the Grampian Area to provide community transport for people wanting to get to medical appointments or just to get out for social appointments. Due to the current COVID-19 situation, this had been curtailed to just medical appointments.

RVS did not hesitate to step forward to help and the new patient transport service started at the beginning of January 2021. The service began by providing one volunteer to cover 6 hours per day, five days per week but RVS hoped to have this up to 9am to 8pm cover

7 days per week before the end of February 2021.

The volunteer will not only drive patients home but will take them to the door and see them inside safely, making sure that they are comfortable before leaving them. Any potential issues are notified back to the office and staff will then work with NHS Grampian and the HSCPs to address the issue appropriately.

RVS are also providing transport for patients coming into ARI from as far away as Elgin.

The HTAP Volunteer Driver Recruitment drives

The HTAP Volunteer Driver Recruitment campaign was promoted twice (January and March) to help boost the pool of volunteer drivers. RVS have confirmed that they received 35 enquiries for assisting with Patient Transport. Twenty-four of these are mid-application progress and 4 are completed. One is now active and 3 are awaiting site induction. Following the second of the Recruitment Drives, a further 23 enquiries were received at time of writing in relation to assisting those requiring extra help to attend Vaccination Centres.

Be-Link'D

Prior to the pandemic the HTAP Programme Manager had been working with Community Planning partners in the Buchan Area of Aberdeenshire helping to set up a new community transport project aimed at assisting those in the Buchan area who it was felt fell between the gaps of the existing transport provision. The service would involve one wheel-chair accessible vehicle and driver assisting residents to access foodbanks, education, benefit agencies, health and other important appointments. HTAP partners have an interest in supporting and monitoring the project as it is based on a "free to the user" model.

However, the Be-Link'D project has not been able to deliver the benefits that Partners had hoped due to the lockdowns. During its short "relaunch" between lockdown periods, the service has been well supported. Positive feedback was received via a Community

Learning and Development worker – "the learner was full of praise for the service and had already been informed he could use the service for personal shopping, medical or dental appointments etc. He is so grateful for the service and couldn't speak highly enough of the driver." With the support of HTAP, the group hope to continue working to identify gaps in transport for the most vulnerable. The Programme Manager will continue to sit on the Be-Link'D Steering Group and offer advice and assistance to the involved partners.

Reducing the Need to Travel

Technology

In previous HTAP Annual Reports, the aspiration to reduce unnecessary travel for health appointments was highlighted. The past year saw a spectacular effort by health and social care colleagues to rapidly deploy such technology as to enable online consultations.

The pandemic response has driven the adoption of technologies that reduce the need to travel for healthcare. The most well-known example has been teleconsulting, with NHS Grampian continuing to be a leader in the adoption of video consulting using NHS Near Me. The national push towards emergency triage by phone/video rather than immediately attending Emergency Departments will also have a continuing impact on the requirement to travel.

Most Grampian General Practices, and some hospital departments, are now using messaging systems for patients to ask questions or report symptoms; often entirely avoiding the need for a consultation. This will become more common during 2021.

Many healthcare staff are now working from home whenever possible – including clinicians, who in some cases are able to run telemedicine clinics from their houses for at least part of the week. Meetings are now all carried out using Microsoft Teams and the need for senior clinicians and managers to attend meetings in Glasgow or Edinburgh has been almost entirely avoided.

There is more to be done though. Community investigation hubs are still at an early stage, so many people still need to travel to our

larger hospitals for blood tests and ECGs. Community investigation capacity will increase during 2021, reducing the need to travel to Aberdeen but increasing the need for people in a locality to travel to their nearest investigation hub – ideally by walking, cycling or public transport.

It is recognised and understood by HTAP partners that there will continue to be many valid reasons to travel for healthcare.

Looking Back, But Moving Forward

This report captures the feedback of multiple partners and, it is hoped, conveys the complex, inter-dependent nature of health and transport across various issues. Also, that the benefits of the HTAP network can be small, though important, localised benefits or region wide in scale.

The Programme Manager has proposed and agreed with the two HTAP Sub-Group chairs topics for their sub-groups to begin discussion around and exploration of whether there is agreement and value to be had in developing actions for the partnership to take forward.

In addition, following the approval of Nestrans' new Regional Transport Strategy 2040, partners have agreed to review and refresh the Health & Transport Action Plan.

NHS Grampian is now developing a business case around consolidating the additional support it has drawn on during 2020. An internal NHSG group chaired by the HTAP Chair will be focused on Patient Transport and examine where NHSG might fund transport external to that provided by Scottish Ambulance Service. Those who have followed the journey of HTAP will understand the significance of this progress.

Transport & Public Health

The pandemic has had a major impact on all aspects of life. We have seen how health issues and transport issues can impact those already disadvantaged more greatly. In coming years as the economic impacts of the pandemic, the changing travel patterns and social impacts unfold, it is important that both health and transport providers understand and proactively seek to understand where and how these issues contribute to multiple disadvantage and poor outcomes.

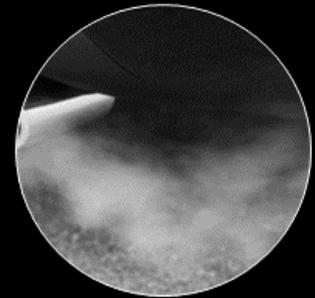
As new Transport Strategies emerge, there is more of an emphasis on such considerations that HTAP partners take steps collectively to inform and guide partnership working across road safety, equalities, accessibility, transport poverty and so on. As pressure on public finances increases, it will be important to maximise synergies between policy aims with a focus on outcomes.



Consider steps to formalise making Road Safety and Air Quality statistics as a Public Health matter in line with World Health Organisation guidelines.



Take steps to maximise the opportunity of NHS Grampian employing a full time Travel Planning Officer.



Hold a health focused public event or events on air pollution.

TRANSPORT & PUBLIC HEALTH



Take steps to understand the equalities issues within the missed appointments statistics.



Take steps to formalise a link between known health inequalities and the geographies in which transport partners develop active travel.



Consider embedding Public Health staff within Transport teams to influence the focus on inequalities and support wider understanding of Public Health roles and approaches.

TRANSPORT & PUBLIC HEALTH

Access to Health & Social Care Sub-Group

As a group, HTAP has generated the buy-in from partner organisations to sustain a well-regarded information service for people accessing health and social care (THInC). HTAP have seen this diversify into a booking service for health and social care transport in Aberdeen working across partners to deliver THInC in the City. A grant for 2021/22 has been confirmed by Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Service. NHS Grampian have recently formed an internal Patient Transport Group to review how they can work with THInC in light of the outstanding role it played in co-ordinating additional transport when SAS was at capacity and the pressure on Patient Flow critical.

The partnership has promoted the role of Community Transport through the Volunteer Driver Awards since 2014, along with its associated Volunteer Driver Recruitment Drive.

We have mapped the sector across the region, built relationships with groups and the Community Transport Association.

However, the sector has reported financial uncertainty, inability to fundraise during the pandemic and requirement for strategic support.

Technology has also changed travel patterns and the delivery of health care. Understanding these impacts and the lived experience of residents in this new landscape will help decision makers prioritise and plan for how service provision will evolve.

Awareness of how society has changed may require professionals to learn new skills, gain greater insight into issues, such as health inequality, transport poverty and social justice. These issues will be considered by HTAP partners going forward with a view to identifying how the partnership can contribute and add strategic value to the evolving situation we find ourselves in.



Strategically sustain and expand the capacity of community transport organisations.

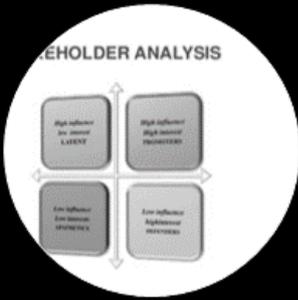


Health & Social Care delivery will change and links between these developments and transportation teams need to be managed strategically.



Review the governance and funding of THInC in light of its developing role across Grampian.

ACCESS TO HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



Develop more ongoing stakeholder involvement in transport to health and social care issues.



Drone technology is being investigated by health boards. Are there linkages to be made between health and transport? Where does "Logistics" expertise lie.

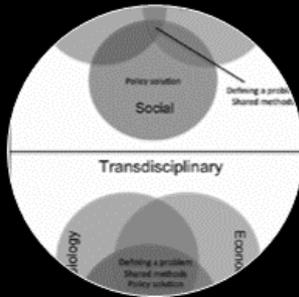


In a Grampian context can more be done to audit the levels of perceived transport poverty and its impacts?

ACCESS TO HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



Should H&SCPs be taking turns at holding the Chair of the Sub-Groups?



How much do group members know about how transport is delivered and how much vice versa?



Supporting volunteering strategically in relation to transport to health and social care.

ACCESS TO HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

These opportunities/issues have been identified as having linkages to the aims and wishes of all partners and build on past pieces of work done, consultation and discussion.

Refinement of the above ideas will take place within the meetings of the Sub-Groups and be overseen by the HTAP Steering Group.

Building on the work of the past years and the co-operation shown in 2020 will ultimately benefit Grampian residents as we work towards health and transport systems that maximise the opportunity of positive outcomes for all.

For further information please contact
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