



***fflecsi* – the experience of Demand Responsive Transport in Wales**

Updated report – findings from
passenger research in Newport
August 2022

Background and introduction

Transport Focus Wales worked with Transport for Wales to assess the experience of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) following the introduction of a number of pilot schemes under the *fflecsi* brand in Wales in 2020¹. We also looked at two schemes in England for comparison – Tees Flex in parts of Tees Valley and go2 around Sevenoaks.

Our assessment included interviews with passengers and potential passengers as well as conversations with operators and local authorities (some participating in the *fflecsi* pilot and some not). The research was conducted in two phases. The initial phase covered *fflecsi* schemes in the Denbigh, Pembrokeshire (but not including *Bwcbus*

which has since joined the *fflecsi* family) and Conwy Valley areas. A second phase has looked at Newport where an expanded *fflecsi* operation was launched in autumn 2021. We carried out the Newport phase in early 2022 to allow time for this operation to settle down and for passengers to become used to the experience of a flexible bus service. It provides a useful contrast between an urban operation and the more rural ones covered previously.

This update focuses on users and potential users in Newport and any differences observed between the city and the rural areas covered in our interim report. It should be read in conjunction with the interim report, which is available on our website². The interim report also contains the findings from interviews with operators and local authorities.

¹ More details regarding *fflecsi* can be found on the scheme's website, <https://www.fflecsi.wales/>; please note that some schemes are referred to as IRT - Integrated Responsive Transport – and seek to integrate flexible bus services with existing, scheduled, bus, train and coach services.

² Please see: <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/fflecsi-the-experience-of-demand-responsive-transport-in-wales/>

Forewords



TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
TRANSPORT FOR WALES

The Welsh Government is keen to explore Demand and Integrated Responsive Transport (DRT/IRT) as part of the public transport mix. It is looking at how DRT/IRT can provide services in rural communities as well as open up new opportunities and connections with existing bus and rail services across the country.

Working with partners in local authorities and bus operators and with the technology platform supplier, this method of delivering public transport has been a fast-learning curve for all involved in the project. The implementation of the services during a pandemic was a challenge, but as we increased our understanding of the capabilities of the technology, listened to feedback from passengers and began to communicate the benefits of this new type of service to potential customers, we began to see an increase in uptake across all the pilot services.

Fflecsi services provided a lifeline during the pandemic to many passengers needing to make essential journeys. The services remained popular as we began to move out of the pandemic, with usage still continuing to grow in most cases. The pilots are ongoing and still evolving, and we welcome the addition of the findings from the more recent Newport operation to complement our assessment of *fflecsi*.

We are encouraged by the observations in this report. It adds to our understanding of what has worked well despite the difficult circumstances of the pandemic, what did not go quite so well, and where we can look to make improvements in the future.

Lee Robinson

Development Director for Mid, North and Rural Wales



Transport Focus Wales represents the interests of Welsh transport users. We are pleased to have worked with Transport for Wales (TfW) as it launched a number of pilot schemes under the *fflecsi* brand. Our research assesses the passenger experience of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and highlights lessons of value not only to TfW but also to other operators and authorities considering DRT as part of the public transport mix for the future.

Nationally, DRT has been a part of the transport mix for years, mainly in the shape of 'Dial-a-Ride' services in various forms but aimed primarily at elderly and disabled members of the community. More recently technology has enabled the development of flexible services, with online

booking made easier by apps and computer algorithms that calculate a driver's route and schedule.

The challenge facing public transport is to address key barriers of cost, convenience and complexity, in order to widen the appeal of public transport services, encourage behaviour change and provide communities with good transport options, in both urban and rural communities. The findings from this later stage of research in Newport provide valuable insight into how *fflecsi* services can play a part in meeting this challenge.

Councillor William Powell

Board member for Wales

Key findings from Newport – users and potential users

Attitudes towards public transport

As in the areas covered previously, the people we spoke to were all existing users of public transport or open to the idea of potentially using a flexible bus service. Again, for those with access to a car, that is generally the obvious and preferred means of making a journey unless driving and parking are an issue.

Buses are the most obvious alternative for local journeys, but some areas of the city do not have a scheduled bus service. This led to a slight sense of injustice in those areas of Newport without scheduled buses when the pilot area was expanded to cover areas with an existing scheduled service. Some passengers in the original pilot area suggest that their needs are greater and should be prioritised when *flecsi* buses are in great demand.

"I use the car for most things because it's there and I can just jump in it and go all over the city."

Female, 59, potential user, Newport

"Half the time now you can't get one, not since they expanded the area that it covers."

Male, user, 70, Newport

Taxis are seen as expensive unless travelling as a group for something like a night out, but then capacity can be an issue with two vehicles sometimes needed.

Covid meant that scheduled bus services did not run after 6pm or on Sundays in Newport. As elsewhere, this led to taxis having to be used, despite the cost, where a lift was not an option. The lack of scheduled services at evenings and on Sundays was seen as an embarrassment by some and something that *flecsi* had addressed.

"The problem with taxis in Newport is the price of them has become absurd, doubled in four or five years. A taxi to go out from home would cost about €8."

Male, user, 47, Newport

"Evenings you have to use it so it's better than nothing. We're the third largest city in Wales and no buses in the evening!"

Male, user, 56, Newport

"It looks like a taxi, but bigger and easier if you're in a group of more than four, when it's difficult to get a taxi and you have to get two. So this would be cheaper and would fit everyone in."

Male pair, potential users, 16 and 17, Newport

There was more criticism of the scheduled bus services in Newport than elsewhere. It should be remembered that in the rural Welsh locations, *flecsi* had often replaced the scheduled service. The scheduled services were often seen as unreliable and not turning up on time. The fact that the *flecsi* app allows user to track their bus's progress contributes to a sense that *flecsi* is more reliable. The buses used for *flecsi* are seen as more modern, more attractive and cleaner, and the drivers as friendlier and more helpful.

"There are service buses but the timing on them is a bit iffy at times. It's better to book fflecsi because then you know what time to go to the stop and being able to track it, instead of having to guess if the 8C is on its way."

Male, user, 22, Newport

A significant benefit of *fflecsi* to Newport passengers is that it can avoid the need to take two buses to reach your destination and can avoid the need to travel into the city centre. It also cuts out the wait for the second bus, and associated uncertainty as to whether it will turn up on time.

"It's less time consuming than getting two buses which can take an hour."

Male pair, potential users, 16 and 17, Newport

Overall experiences of, and attitudes towards, *fflecsi* are remarkably consistent across the Welsh areas (Denbigh, Pembrokeshire, Conwy Valley, Newport) although the urban nature of Newport does lead to a few additional considerations as noted above. The findings from the two English operations (Tees Valley and Sevenoaks) reflect those from Wales with some of the more urban considerations also being relevant.

Awareness and understanding

There was greater awareness of the *fflecsi* service in Newport as the relaxation of Covid restrictions had made it possible to publicise the service once Government advice to make only essential journeys was lifted. As in the other areas studied, many potential users were aware of the flexible bus services in Newport from seeing the buses driving around. The larger fleet in Newport, and the greater number of people wanting to travel, both contributed to higher levels of awareness. That said, many did not know much about the service or how it operates.

"Yeah I needed to know about it, yeah I'd seen them but that's not enough for me to want to Google it."

Female pair, potential users, 51, Newport

There is a degree of consternation at the Welsh branding in Newport that was not mentioned elsewhere.

"I saw the little buses out and about. I thought that's something new. The signage is bright on the front of the bus and it's in Welsh. There are not that many Welsh speakers in Newport, people wouldn't know what it meant - they can get a bit frustrated by things being bi-lingual."

Female, potential user, 59, Newport

"I'd Google flexi bus. It's fine so long as both spellings come up as I wouldn't know how to spell it the Welsh way. Not many people speak Welsh here."

Female, potential user, 60+, Newport

Across all areas, 'flexibility' is appealing, but people are often unsure just what this means. Sometimes they cannot believe that it can be that flexible and fear that the proposition sounds too good to be true - 'a taxi service at a bus price'.

"I did a hundred and three journeys in 2021 – I want it to work."

Male, user, 57, Newport

"I really want to trust it, I really want it to work because if it works it will be brilliant and it will be better than the irregular scheduled service we had before the pandemic."

Female, user, 60+, Newport

For certain journeys, using *flecsi* can be simpler than trying to make the trip on several service buses. The ability of *flecsi* to connect to other scheduled bus routes or with trains is appreciated but accounts for only a small proportion of total journeys.

"I could use it to feed into another train or bus. It would be useful if *flecsi* were allowed in the Friars Walk bus station. Where it is at the moment I like because it's the first bus stop and I don't need to get help to find it."

Female, user, 60+, Newport

The introduction of *flecsi* in Newport appeals to some passengers who are reluctant to use scheduled services. Indeed, such is their preference for *flecsi* that some Newport users would like to see the service made available for trips to the coast, or even to Cardiff or across the Severn to Bristol.

"In my lifetime I don't want to catch a Newport Borough bus. I'd rather have the executive travel. If the *flecsi* wasn't available, I wouldn't go, or I would wait a bit longer and get a later *flecsi*."

Mixed pair, potential users, 27 and 57, Newport

"I just found with the Newport Bus, I just won't go on them, essentially because although there's a timetable very seldom do they run to it. Which would be fine if they were early but it tends to be the other way round."

Male, user, 47, Newport

"I can imagine using it for Bristol or Cardiff. I think it's a good idea. To park in Cardiff is extortionate."

Female, potential user, 60+, Newport

Using the app to book a ride

Attitudes to booking via an **app** can be polarised. It holds few fears for smartphone users who see it as modern and convenient. Users welcome and even expect the functionality of the app in terms of the interactive map, booking confirmations, alerts as the bus is approaching, and so on. Users in the Newport area seem less concerned about using the app, perhaps reflecting a different demographic to that in the rural areas.

"It would be good if I had all the time in the world but I'm on a tight rope, it's more for leisure - popping into town. My impression is that this is more for people going for a coffee or the cinema."

Female, potential user, 33, Newport

"I downloaded the app. But I thought it looked too good to be true and I couldn't be bothered to look into it. If I knew someone who used it and I knew it was reliable then I probably would too. It does go to places like the Celtic Manor - that's good and you can't get a bus there."

Female pair, potential users, 33 and 44, Newport

The fact that in Newport the app offers a scheduled bus if there is one within 30 minutes can be a cause of confusion or concern. Some are pragmatic so long as they can make their journey when they want; others have a clear preference for a *fflecsi* service.

"If it's about the 30-minute thing - that will drop me into Newport and then I've got a fifteen minute walk from where it drops me off, female, in the dark, walking alone. It should flag the service route but also give you the option to use *fflecsi*. I'm fully aware about the 35 and 36, I've worked in Duffryn for thirteen years, and I don't want to use them, I want to use *fflecsi*. The route's not right for me."

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

"I have been offered a service bus instead of *fflecsi*. It doesn't really bother me because my aim is to get where I want to go. It's offered me the X74. I didn't take it because it was in fourteen minutes and I thought that was a bit of a rush on that occasion. It was an acceptable thing to offer though."

Male, user, 47, Newport

"I get this message saying 'there's a perfectly good Newport Bus route instead' - well there is, but I've got a longer walk, I'd have to walk through a really scary area up a hill at the end of it all, I'm trying to use *fflecsi* for a reason, it's frustrating."

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

Some regular *fflecsi* users in Newport report difficulties in booking their requirements for a week's travel in advance.

"Because I am restricted to certain times, considering I try and book it daily for five days a week for going and coming back from work, I never get that ever. And that's the frustration, that I can't rely on it 100%. If I choose the recurring option for five days, I might only get three of them."

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

"When I book a week in advance I can usually get what I want but the last two weeks they haven't been able to get me on the Monday morning bus – but then I've passed the buses on my way in which I would have caught so I don't know what's going on."

Male, user, 22, Newport

"My friend says that the problem is that now you can book up to a week ahead. What is the point of that? It just means that when you want to travel they are already taken."

Male, user, 70, Newport

One issue with the app in Newport was the way in which arrival times were reported as often changing 'at the last minute'. Although users were informed, the change sometimes left them with too little time to get the bus. If the departure was rescheduled to a later time it meant they could be late arriving.

This has contributed to the problem of 'no-shows' in Newport which was barely an issue in the other areas. No-shows are annoying for passengers already on the bus as it will generally wait five minutes, so a no-show is seen as making other passengers late. Other users admit to having been no-shows themselves on occasions; the revised time didn't work for them, and they have been too busy making alternative travel arrangements (such as calling a taxi or arranging a lift) to feel they had the time to cancel their booking.

"Every now and then you're sitting on the bus and it will stop for five minutes and no one turns up."

Male, user, 22, Newport

"If they come earlier than it has been booked for then they need to wait. For people that rely on it for specific times. I can't leave my desk early, especially as a manager. I'm contracted until 17.00."

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

There were calls for persistent no-shows to be barred from the service – although those who felt they had a justifiable reason for being a no-show (such as when the bus time is brought forward and they can't leave work before the time they had booked for) were not so keen.

"Personally I quite like the idea of bans, but if you start using punishment it could influence the brand, bring some negativity to it. You'd have to do some research to see who is going to object."

Male, user, 47, Newport

There was in any case a desire to be able to pay the flecsi fare through the app at the time of booking, and some felt this would discourage no-shows if the fare were forfeit.

"I think the app's good – the only issue is I'd like a pre-pay option because it would be nice to pay and then not have to worry about it again."

Female Pair, users, 18 and 20, Newport

Other users still prefer to book via the **website** or the **call centre**. The call centre is highly regarded and seen as an essential part of the offer by many – both for making bookings and also for sorting out any issues with the service or with a booking. There was also the suggestion that the call centre (or potentially the drivers if 'hands-free') should call ahead to let passengers know of any changes if the passenger was not receiving updates via the app.

"My go to would probably be to phone up - probably down to my age! I wouldn't want to be waiting on hold for hours. I'd probably be persuaded to use the app."

Female, potential user, 59, Newport

"The call centre are very good, they're polite, they talk you through everything."

Female, user, 74, Newport

"I now use the call centre to book and then the app to track where my bus is and get the notifications."

Female, user, 60+, Newport

Some passengers do have concerns about **mobile phone coverage** in the more rural areas – whether real or imagined – but much less so in Newport. They fear not being able to make the initial booking, not receiving updates or alerts and struggling to book their return journey once at their destination.

We asked people to go on the website for their local flexible bus service and to provide feedback. Most found the websites helpful and said that they give a good explanation of the service – although 'how to' guides for booking and using the service were suggested.

"I think the website looks brilliant but I do think it's a bit nuts that you can't just book via the website URL. It seems you have to download the app to see more which was a bit disappointing."

Female pair, potential users, 51, Newport

"The website was very clear. I actually downloaded the app to help me understand it and it works very well. I'm bad with technology but only have good things to say about it."

Male pair, potential users, 54 and 55, Newport

Using the service

Passengers in Newport, as in the other areas, use the service for shopping, getting to appointments (medical or business), leisure and business. The hours of operation in Newport mean there are higher levels of commuting, more use for school journeys and greater use for socialising in the evenings.

"I use it for going to church, shopping, to my allotment, just for riding around."

Male, user, 57, Newport

"The majority is to and from work. I live about three miles away and I don't drive."

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

flecsi – the experience of Demand Responsive Transport in Wales

– Updated report – findings from passenger research in Newport

The majority of users are **satisfied with the service** being provided, albeit some still hanker after a scheduled service. Generally, the flexibility is appreciated along with the proximity of pick-up points. But it can also lead to concerns about reliability and getting to the destination on time.

"I don't think I'd trust the bus service just yet to get me somewhere on time. The whole thing about it being flexible does play against it a bit."

Male pair, potential users, 21 and 23, Newport

"It is mostly about the deadlines, and having to be somewhere by a certain time. Fflecsi might come to the door, but I'd rely on the 151 to stick to a timetable – I know that I can guarantee it's every fifteen minutes."

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

"It doesn't have the option to say I need to be there by a certain time – it gives you a rough timing saying 'it will drop off between quarter past eight and twenty to nine' but for me that's the difference between being early and late for work."

Male, user, 22, Newport

During the pandemic passengers did not generally experience many problems in getting a seat on the bus once a booking has been made. However, some harbour concerns that, as traffic picks up post-pandemic, getting a seat or making a booking could become an issue. That said, users in the original pilot area within Newport do feel that it has become more difficult to book a *flecsi* since coverage was extended across the city.

"In the end I've started using Newport Bus a lot more again because at least you know when it will come, you can rely on it. Fflecsi has gone downhill since they made the pilot area bigger."

Male, user, 70, Newport

In Newport, as elsewhere, the buses themselves are well liked and seen as cleaner and 'friendlier' than the scheduled buses.

"The fflecsi buses look quite comfy, with padded leather seats and cool lights. I imagine there's music on them. It looks quite cool. I wouldn't get a normal bus. They're a bit gross and a last case scenario."

Male pair, potential users, 16 and 17, Newport

"It does feel different, better than a normal bus – they've got the radio on."

Female, user, 74, Newport

"Sometimes with Newport Buses they can be completely covered with rubbish and it's disgusting – fflecsi is always nice and clean."

Female pair, users, 18 and 20, Newport

As in all our previous bus research, the attitude of the **driver** is key in delivering a satisfactory (or better) experience. There were positive comments about them, including having the radio playing.

"The driver I had today, the stop was at the top of the hill and I didn't realise so I walked down the hill. My fault - I stayed at the bottom and the driver saw me. If that was Newport Bus they wouldn't have stopped but this one did. I do find the drivers slightly friendlier."

Male, user, 47, Newport

And, while **disabled passengers** find *fflecsi* valuable, some quote instances of poor driver behaviour.

"...The other day, I was coming back from town, I got the text saying 'your bus is two minutes away' and then a vehicle pulled up in front of me. I can't see well enough to see what it is but nothing happened. So I stood there for a couple of minutes and then I asked a passer-by and they said it was a *fflecsi* so I walked right up to it and the driver opened the door and I told him my name. I sat down and noted a text saying 'your bus is here and needs to get going so can you find it?' I thought really, it doesn't take a lot of common sense when you know you're looking for someone visually impaired and you've pulled up next to someone with a white cane..."

Female, user, 60+, Newport

"The driver? Yes and no. The other day when I was on it... drivers will pull over and jump out and have their cigarette. I understand that people deserve their comfort breaks but when you're trying to get to work for a certain time you get a bit worried."

Male, user, 22, Newport

The first *fflecsi* journey is often seen as an experiment with people waiting for the right opportunity to try it out – sometimes a non-essential leisure journey or one where it would not matter if they were late.

"My boss recommended it to me in November because she was using it. she knew I was leaving home for the first time and wouldn't be able to get the lift I'd been getting. I've been using it daily. It was half necessity. I've always had problems with standard buses running late but this tells you within a ten minute time range when it's going to be there."

Male, user, 22, Newport

"I first used it in November - I mentioned it to people in work and I thought I'd try. But I did it in a time period where I knew it didn't matter if I was late. I did it on the way home!"

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

Attitudes to **service times and frequencies** vary by locality and according to passengers' journey purpose. In Newport, the fact that fflecsi runs until 11pm (when scheduled services were finishing at 6pm) and on Sundays (when there were no scheduled services) was much appreciated.

"When I looked on the app and saw it runs until 23.00 I was really surprised because not even the normal public transport round here goes on that late."

Female pair, users, 37 and 35, Newport

"It's annoying not to have a proper bus service but at least fflecsi means you've got an option now."

Female pair, users, 18 and 20, Newport

Elsewhere, some would like (or even need) an earlier service to get them to work on time. Later services might allow people to engage in after-work or other evening social activities and Sunday services might benefit both shoppers and worshippers.

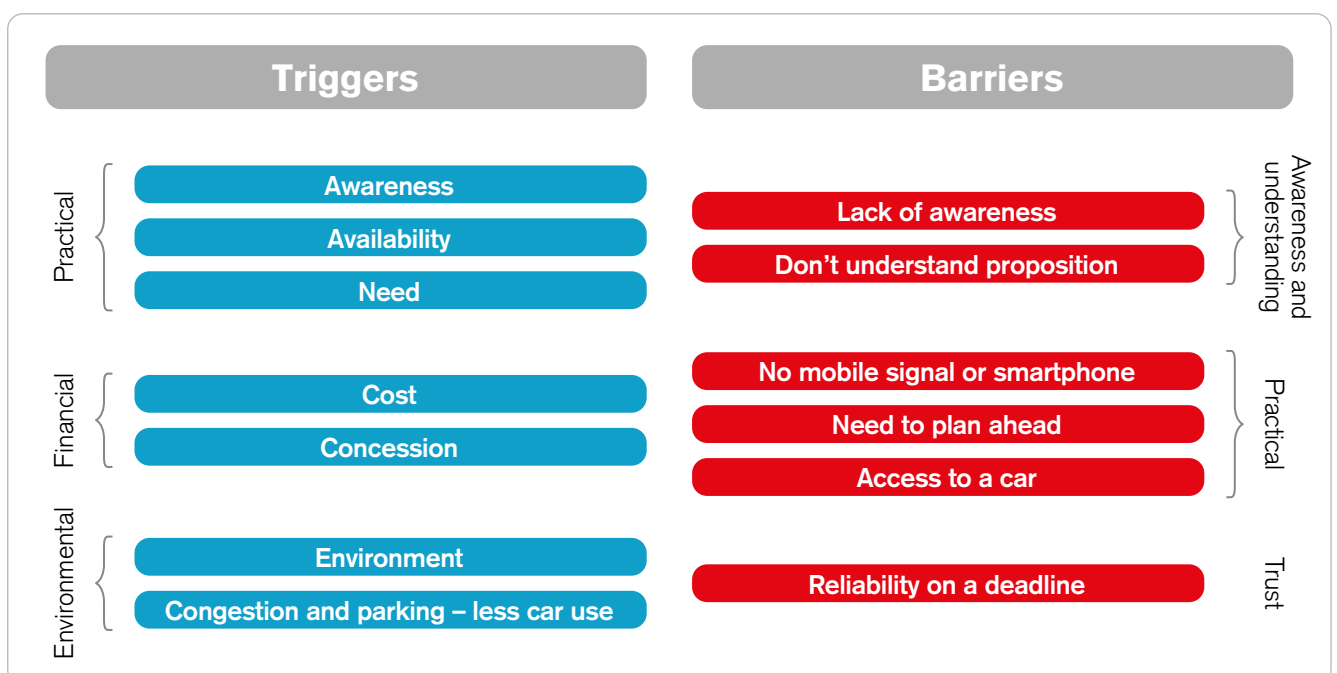
The **cost** of flexible journeys is felt to be acceptable. Compared with a taxi (potentially the only alternative for those without a car) it seemed very favourable. The fact that in Newport fflecsi tickets can also be used on scheduled services was appreciated, although few users appeared to be aware of this.

Triggers and barriers

Across the areas we covered, we have noted a consistent set of triggers and barriers (as detailed below). There are some nuances which mean that what might encourage take-up varies a little between the groups.

Congestion and parking are more of a trigger for workers/students and for leisure and tourists, while eligibility for concessionary travel is naturally most relevant

for those who are retired or mobility impaired. In Newport, fflecsi was often seen as quicker and more reliable than using a scheduled bus, particularly if a journey would have involved two scheduled services. In terms of barriers, the one noticeable difference across the groups is that reliability is of greatest importance to workers/students and the mobility impaired.



Encouraging greater uptake of flexible bus services

Our research among existing and potential users of flexible bus services suggests a number of steps to be taken to encourage greater use of flexible bus services.

- Promote the services more widely, including journey possibilities and who can use them. Provide better explanations of how the services and the booking process work. In Newport, the ability to make cross-city journeys without having to take two buses should be highlighted.
- Align service hours with users' needs, in particular for travel to and from work and education.
- Provide reassurance regarding journey reliability (potentially by publishing performance statistics) and better information on how to make a booking that ensures arrival by a specified time.
- Review websites to ensure they answer potential users' questions. Consider 'how to' guides (possibly videos) for booking and using the service as well as having an interactive map of the area served.
- Engage with local support groups to promote the service and potentially to facilitate wheelchair assessments.
- Start appropriate promotion via tourist information centres, local attractions and at beauty spots, including leaflets and posters with details of how to book a ride.
- Ensure internet search engines return results for 'fflecsi' if the term is entered using English spelling ('flexi').
- Address concerns around the reliability of mobile coverage and work with local medical, educational, leisure and retail establishments to facilitate the booking of return journeys.
- Promote the green credentials of public transport to car owners along with its benefit in avoiding the hassle and cost of parking.
- Consider vouchers for a free journey and other incentives to encourage trial as well as encouraging feedback and user reviews.



Operators and local authorities

Interviews were completed with the operators and/or local authorities in the same six areas as the user and prospective user interviews (Denbigh, Pembrokeshire, Conwy Valley, Newport, Tees Valley and Sevenoaks) as well in two areas that had opted not to participate in the *fflecsi* pilot, namely Gwynedd and Swansea.

The findings for Newport generally mirror those of the operators and authorities elsewhere, in particular the slightly more urban operations. Please see our initial report for the key findings from these audiences.

Conclusions

These conclusions have been slightly updated to include observations from Newport in addition to the three, predominantly rural, Welsh areas (Denbigh, Pembrokeshire, and Conwy Valley), and two English operations (Tees Valley and Sevenoaks) reported previously.

- Once the flexible concept is understood, it is seen as an attractive option both by previous bus users and by some who might be open to using it in place of a car.
- Promotion and education are key if bus users and potential converts are to fully appreciate the concept, the ride booking system and the fact that it is 'for everybody' (not just elderly or disabled members of the community).
- Demand Responsive Transport is well-suited to serve the rural communities covered in the *fflecsi* pilot where the economics of scheduled bus services are marginal at best.
- It also has a role to play in metropolitan areas such as Newport where it provides bus services in areas not served by scheduled services as well as enabling cross-city journeys that would otherwise require the use of two scheduled services. In Newport it also provides buses in the evenings and on Sundays.
- The profile of passengers and their journeys is remarkably similar across the three Welsh operations – as are their attitudes towards *fflecsi*.
- Shopping, attending appointments (medical, job interviews and so on) and leisure trips predominate. The current operating times in areas other than Newport may not accommodate conventional commuting hours or journeys to school/college.
- While the idea of a service that integrates with existing scheduled bus and train services is appealing to some, there are widespread concerns about the reliability of any connections and whether the service can be trusted to deliver against this particular promise.
- For many, using an app to book a ride is appealing and marks the service out as innovative and modern. Many of those who were initially uncomfortable at using the technology have adapted to it, while some prefer to use the call centre. This is a key part of the offer and a reassurance if people experience any difficulties with the system.
- The vehicles used are generally well liked (including by those with mobility impairments), but it is the drivers who are the face of the service and who make the passenger experience what it is.
- The successful introduction of a DRT service is dependent on a good working relationship between the partners (operators and local authorities). Transport for Wales's role in enabling access to the ViaVan software solution and back office, as well as the call centre, has been critical in establishing the *fflecsi* operations.
- However, if DRT schemes are successful in boosting passenger numbers post-pandemic, the economic argument may switch in favour of scheduled services (particularly where commuting is significant).
- **The research points towards a valuable role for DRT as a part of the overall transport mix.**



Methodology

This research was jointly funded by Transport for Wales (TfW) and Transport Focus Wales. We commissioned Define Insight & Strategy to conduct the research.

Because of the Covid pandemic, interviewing was conducted remotely, primarily via video link which meant the interviewer was able to show stimulus materials such as shots of the various websites. Telephone interviews were conducted with a few people without access to the internet.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the TfW call centre as well as operators across the areas in helping to identify and obtain the agreement of passengers booking both by telephone and via the app, to co-operate in the research.

Interviewing in Newport took place in February/ March 2022 when Covid restrictions had been substantially reduced. In total we completed 84 user/ potential user interviews (fifteen interviews were conducted as friendship pairs/trios).

Define also completed twelve executive depth interviews (by video link) with local authority and operators in the same areas as well as in Gwynedd and Swansea to get the view of stakeholders who had chosen not to participate in the TfW pilot.

Transport Focus previously looked at Demand Responsive Transport in 2016 in terms of users' views of pre-booked community buses and shared taxis in collaboration with the local authorities in Suffolk, Worcestershire and Hampshire³.

³ That report is available at: <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/demand-responsive-transport-users-views-pre-booked-community-buses-shared-taxis/>.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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