



## Press Release

7 January 2008

### Surrey Voluntary Car Schemes – Report on User Survey 2007/8

Voluntary Car Schemes and Good Neighbour Schemes provide transport for isolated or disadvantaged people to GP and Hospital Appointments, to local shops and hairdresser's appointments, as well as offering home support to enable people to remain physically and mentally well, and independent. There are **81 schemes across Surrey** and they are supported by Surrey Community Action's Voluntary Car Scheme Adviser, Vicki Turton in conjunction with local CVS'.

In November 2007 all Voluntary Car Schemes and Good Neighbour Schemes in Surrey were sent a short survey to get updated information on the services they provided during the past year to isolated people in Surrey. 57 groups responded, giving a response rate of 65%

During this period there has been a **10.2% increase in demand for these services**. In 2005 requests for these services totalled an estimated 57,851 per annum, compared to the **2007 demand of 63,748 requests per annum**. Subsequently, the mileage travelled by volunteers taking isolated people to health appointments or shopping, etc. has risen to over **1.2 million miles per annum**.

The increase in demand for Voluntary Car Schemes to transport people to appointments or provide home support, correlates with the increasing centralisation of services in urban centres and the decrease in public transport options particularly in rural Surrey. Surrey's Accessibility Strategy highlighted some of the key issues that have led to an increased demand for Voluntary Car Schemes:

Social exclusion in rural areas tends to be much more dispersed than in urban areas and could be harder to target with area-wide solutions. A lack of mobility can cause real hardship for people to access health care facilities, employment, education, social and leisure activities and confidential advice especially for young people. In general access in rural Surrey relies heavily on the voluntary sector through the various voluntary transport schemes.

Voluntary Transport Schemes are run by volunteers who provide door to door, direct transportation to facilities, at a time that is convenient or required by the client, and will ensure the client returns safely indoors and will even put the kettle on! This means that an elderly person needing to attend a hospital appointment does not have to wait many hours at the hospital either side of their appointment just because there is no public or patient transport available – the car scheme is flexible according to the needs of the user. The volunteers also provide company and a listening ear to users who may be unwell or in need of some emotional support whilst at the hospital.

**Health-related requests made up 74% of the Voluntary Car Scheme demand in 2007, equalling over 47000 requests.** However, as well as providing transport to health facilities, volunteers also provide home support: befriending and visiting services, shopping services and prescription collection. All of these additional services are enabling more isolated or elderly people to remain independent in their homes.

For full statistical survey results please contact: Pari Dhillon on 01483 459292 ext 241 or email [parid@surreyca.org.uk](mailto:parid@surreyca.org.uk) or talk to Vicki about a scheme in your area on 01483 459292 ext 221 or visit [www.surreyca.org.uk](http://www.surreyca.org.uk)

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