

# Nairn Healthcare Group Patients Participation Group

## Community Car Scheme for the Group's community

Nairn Healthcare Group's Patient Participation Group (PPG) is seeking support to develop the business case for a sustainable community car scheme to supplement and enhance current transport arrangements in its area<sup>1</sup>. PPG proposes to join with other interested groups in Nairn to form a steering group with the purpose of establishing a scheme.

In the first instance, PPG is seeking seed funds to achieve two things:

- complete a survey of patients and relatives who use the Nairn and Ardersier GP surgeries as well as Nairn's Town & County Hospital to assess the nature of their needs for transport.
- complete a bid for funds to recruit and contract a consultant to prepare the business case and submissions for financial support for the scheme.

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The purpose of the survey is to ensure that any bid we make for financial support draws on solid evidence. Our intention is to devise and conduct both on-line and in-person surveys of patients. We have in-house professional skills in the use of survey monkey and have in principle been offered support by both NHS Highland and RCOP Scotland to provide advice and assistance in devising and supporting the conduct of the surveys.

The purpose in contracting a consultant is to obtain expertise in bid fund-raising to supplement those skills within the group and to build capacity in PPG for future community engagement opportunities.

### **Unmet need**

PPG is confident that unmet need exists. Both PPG and other local bodies, such as Nairn River Community Council (representing c 5,000 people, including those in one of two SIM-defined Areas of Deprivation) have noted numerous informal reports of transport difficulties, both within Nairn and in the surrounding rural communities. In our view whilst current provision is seen as reliable, it is insufficiently flexible to meet the nature of the demand for affordable services from patients and others. PPG in particular is aware of a number of extreme instances when impoverished, vulnerable adults have resorted to diverting essential funds to booking taxis in order to attend GP or hospital appointments. We are also aware of instances where patients have not attended appointments because of difficulties in arranging transport. The NHS generally, and Nairn Healthcare Group in particular, report a substantial and persistent problem with failed attendance at appointments. The Community Council is aware of examples where job-seekers have been unable to attend interviews because of timetable difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup> PPG's area includes all of Nairnshire, and those parts of east Inverness-shire encompassing Ardersier, Petty and Croy.

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## **Background**

PPG has attended or hosted a series of meetings with interested stakeholders, including Highland Council's local transport manager, two local transport providers (George Rapson Travel and D & E Coaches), Nairn Access Panel, Nairn Community Transport Association, The Community Transport Association UK and two Highland not-for-profit providers of community car schemes.

We have learned

- That existing services are not used to capacity
- That many more members of the community have been unable to make good use of the existing services and have had difficulties accessing health and care services
- That these issues are reflected in experience and initiatives reported across Scotland.
- That Community car schemes have the kind of flexibility required to meet the complex needs apparent in the community
- That community car schemes provide in addition a social service beyond basic transport: enhancing health and wellbeing by enabling the vulnerable to access social activities they might not otherwise consider within their reach.

## **Costs**