

Age and Experience

Developing a Strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population

SATA Response (June 2006)

Introduction

We very much welcome the development of a Strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population.

As a user-led organisation working for the provision of accessible transport as a basic right for all people in Scotland, SATA has a concern for the needs of all disabled people who face barriers to their mobility and limitations on their quality of life.

We therefore think that throughout this Strategy particular attention should pay to the needs the 59% of disabled adults and the 54% of adults with long term illness (LTI) who are over the age of 60.

Contribution and opportunity

Organisations which represent and serve older people, especially those with disabilities, should get the financial and other support which would help them to function effectively.

Resources and services should be targeted at the less well off and less mobile. For instance:

- Some 43% of elderly disabled adults and 44% of adults with LTI live in households with annual incomes of £10,000 or less.
- Some 30% of disabled adults and 29% of adults with LTI are nearly twice as likely to live in the most multiply deprived areas of Scotland compared to 18% of non-disabled/LTI adults.

- Some 48% of disabled adults and 45% of adults with LTI live in households without a car compared to 21% of non-disabled/LTI adults.
- Age combined with disability has a major effect on travel frequency. Over two thirds of all disabled adults (65%) either cannot go away for weekends or find it difficult to do so.

Work

More should be done to assist disabled people into training and work at all ages, including the provision of transport services, so that they have the benefits that others have in later life.

Services

Research shows that a wide range of services, including demand responsive transport, is required to enable older disabled people to gain access to local services and amenities.

Recent research shows a high percentage of elderly disabled adults view a range of local services (outpatients, doctors, bank, public transport, chemists, post office, grocery shops) as inconvenient to use compared to their younger counterparts.

Health and well-being

Research shows that mobility is a key element in achieving and maintaining a healthy and social life style, as well as gaining access to health, social and other services.

A high percentage of older disabled adults and older LTI adults give health reasons and difficulty using buses as main reasons for not using public transport more. They therefore have to rely on families and friends or on special services.

Housing, transport and surroundings

Over twice as many disabled adults (43%) and adults with LTI (39%) live in local authority housing and housing association rented properties as non-disabled/LTI adults (18%). Not only should the quality of this housing be ensured but a wider range of well designed accommodation should be made available in establish and supportive communities served by local services, including transport services.

The quality of the local living environment is vitally important for older disabled people. They need to be supported by measures which both promote and preserve this quality and by services which assist their mobility, especially door-to-door transport.

Other

The figures quoted are from recently published research for the Scottish Executive into 'Improved Transport for Disabled People' (ISBN 0 7559 6033 5)

Given the high, and increasing, coincidence of disability and ageing, the findings and recommendation from this research are extremely relevant to a Strategy for Scotland with an Aging Population and must be cross-referenced and given effect when strategies are implemented. The same applies to other strategies whether national, regional or local.