

# Women and Transport in Bristol:

## Evidence from the local context and examples of transport planning and provision for women

A report for Bristol Women's Commission

July 2014

Dr Juliet Jain

Senior Research Fellow

Centre for Transport and Society

Department of Geography and Environmental Management

Faculty of Environment and Technology

University of the West of England, Bristol

Frenchay Campus

Coldharbour Lane

BRISTOL BS16 1QY

0117 32 83304

[Juliet.Jain@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Juliet.Jain@uwe.ac.uk)

## Contents

List of Figures .....	3
List of Tables .....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
1 Introduction .....	6
2 Evidence from Stakeholder Interviews .....	7
2.1 Response to gender differences in transport needs.....	7
2.2 Equality Impact Assessment .....	8
2.3 Pubic Engagement .....	9
2.4 Response to funding opportunities .....	10
2.5 Public transport.....	10
2.6 Active travel .....	10
2.7 Marketing and segmentation .....	11
2.8 Summary .....	11
3 Evidence from Published Strategies .....	12
4 Examples of Transport Planning and Provision for Women .....	15
4.1 Transport planning for women .....	15
4.2 Transport services for women .....	16
4.3 Travel information for women.....	18
4.4 Personal Safety .....	18
4.5 Reducing the need to travel.....	19
4.6 Summary .....	19
5 Evidence from Secondary Data Sources .....	20
5.1 Census 2011 .....	20
5.1.1 Economic activity of Bristol residents .....	20
5.1.2 Travel to Work in Bristol and the West of England.....	21
5.1.3 Families with dependent children .....	22
5.1.4 Distance travelled to work.....	23
5.1.5 Modes use to travel to work.....	25
5.2 Bristol Women’s Voice Travel Survey ‘Shifting Gears’ .....	27
5.3 Summary .....	31
6 Women’s Perceptions, Experiences, and Needs.....	32
6.1 The cost of travel. ....	32

6.2	Public transport routes and frequency.....	34
6.3	Delays and unreliability of public transport.....	35
6.4	Personal safety walking, cycling and bus travel.....	36
6.5	Road safety – pedestrians and cyclists .....	37
6.6	Impact of school travel on the commute and working hours.....	39
6.7	The experience of travelling on public transport with babies and young children. ....	40
6.8	Improvements to public transport?.....	41
6.9	Consultation with women.....	41
6.10	Summary .....	41
7	Conclusions .....	42
Appendix 1 Methodological Considerations.....		43
Shifting Gears.....		43
Focus Group and Interviews Methodology.....		43
Appendix 2: Participants .....		44
Interviews with stakeholders:.....		44
Focus Groups Profiles .....		44
Case study interviews .....		44

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Spatial distribution of economic activity of women living in Bristol .....	21
Figure 2: Proportions of households with dependent children by car or no car by local authority (Census 2011) .....	23
Figure 3: Distance travelled to work by gender (Census 2011).....	24
Figure 4: Distance travelled to work by local authority for all women in employment. (Census 2011) .....	24
Figure 5: Distance travelled to work by local authority for women working 31hrs or more .....	25
Figure 6: Distance travelled to work by local authority for women working 30hrs or less.....	25
Figure 7: Mode of women’s travel to work as a percentage by local authority. (Census 2011) .....	26

## List of Tables

Table 1: Economic Activity of Bristol Residents aged 16-74 (Census 2011).....	20
Table 2: Commuting origin and flow into/out of Bristol (Census 2011).....	21
Table 3 Percentage of all households with dependent children by Local Authority (Census 2011) .....	22
Table 4: Age profile of the Shifting Gears Survey.....	27
Table 5: Geographic distribution of Place of Residences (Shifting Gears) .....	27
Table 6: Does the cost of public transport exclude you from leisure or social activities by age (Shifting Gears) .....	28
Table 7: Does the cost of public transport exclude you from employment by age (Shifting Gears).....	29
Table 8: Does the lack of public transport prevent you from getting to leisure or social activity by age (Shifting Gears) .....	29
Table 9: Does the lack of public transport prevent you from getting to employment by age (Shifting Gears) .....	29
Table 10: Do any of the following prevent you from using public transport b) after 6pm Safety at local bus stops and trains by age(Shifting Gears).....	30
Table 11: Do any of the following prevent you from using public transport b) after 6pm Safety on the bus by age(Shifting Gears) .....	30

## Executive Summary

Women's travel is different to men's travel, especially if they are the main carers for children or dependant adults. Transport planning and policy does not always systematically consider gender differences, thus women can be excluded from economic and social activities through the transport system. Gender mainstreaming can change the way decisions about transport are made to improve infrastructure and services not only for women, but for everyone. Thus, the research presented in this report is to support Bristol Women's Commission (BWC) understand the role transport plays in Bristol in facilitating gender equality, and identify weaknesses and opportunities.

Bristol is the focus of this report as this is the remit area of BWC. However, there are significant flows of people in and out of Bristol for work, education, leisure, and for some health care services (e.g. the hospitals). How the transport system operates impacts on residents and visitors – women, men, and children. Bristol and the three neighbouring local authorities – South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) have come together to deliver a strategic transport plan for the 'West of England' as the transport networks connect and facilitate the economic prosperity of the area. For instance, the north and eastern fringe of Bristol's urban area falls in South Gloucestershire creating a particular need for a collaborative approach.

Transport is considered to be gender neutral in the planning process and service provision. Gender is acknowledged in strategic documents and processes, but this does not direct gender mainstreaming in practice. Transport planning within local authorities mainly considers gender through the mechanism of the Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure that there are no adverse impacts of a proposed scheme. Likewise, employer transport provision is more likely to consider the adverse impacts of a generic policy (e.g. car parking charging) rather than seeking to implement a policy that specifically addresses or prioritises women's needs.

Urban design and transport design features are guided by national policy, and ensuring accessibility for pushchairs (buggies) is the most frequent issue noted that is likely to impact on women. However, in some instances gender specific programmes are part of bidding for project funding such as the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (e.g. mechanisms to encourage more women to cycle).

Local authorities, public transport providers and associated work place travel planners actively consult with the general public and employees through a range of mechanisms. Local authorities seem less knowledgeable about which groups represent women's interests in relation to transport needs compared to those representing people with disabilities, older people or BME groups.

There are a few examples of transport planning that have effectively used 'gender mainstreaming' within Europe with positive outcomes. These have utilized evidence that demonstrates gender differences in travel patterns and responded accordingly. There are examples of local authorities and the private sector providing transport services specifically for women, but these are useful, they do not change the fundamental way in which transport is planned. An example of a 'user generated' information service 'Mumderground' demonstrated how women's needs are not always met by traditional transport information systems.

Women's travel patterns in Bristol, and the three adjacent local authorities, are different to those of men in the area. Focusing on Bristol, more women who live in Bristol also work in Bristol. Men are

more likely to travel into or out of Bristol to work. Thus, more women work closer to home (e.g. within 5km) than men. While car journeys make up a large proportion of journeys to work for women, they are more likely to walk or use public transport for their commute than men. Twice as many men cycle to work than women. (Evidence for non-work journeys has not been included in this report.)

Evidence from the *Shifting Gears* survey conducted by Bristol Women's Voice (BWV) indicates that the main barriers for women using public transport are cost and personal safety. Safety at night is a greater concern than during the day. Public transport limits access to social activities more than other activities. A number of respondents indicated that any potential barriers to work, education, health care, or social activities were overcome by having a car.

Focus groups and interviews with a small number of women resident in Bristol identified a broad set of issues that impact on their experience of travelling, and their transport choices. This group did not experience barriers to economic participation, but this was mitigated by access to a car in some instances. They were more likely to find that social activities were limited because of reduced public transport services or concerns about personal safety waiting for buses at night. All women viewed the cost of bus travel as expensive, and the women with bus passes attached a high value to their free travel.

Women with young children presented bus travel as challenging due to the limited space for buggies and the attitudes of drivers and other passengers, but also acknowledged its benefits. The car gave them greater access to more leisure activities and was perceived as more cost effective. The car enables greater flexibility for dropping off and picking up children from childcare/school en route to/from work, but road congestion often affected journey times. Driving children to secondary school can be cheaper than the children using public transport, and opens up school choice.

It was identified that female refugees, especially those with children, may suffer particular transport exclusion due to cost and the need to change buses to access services.

Most of the women walked for many of their local journeys, or in the city centre, and the safety of the walking environment caused concern. Cyclists on pavements and cyclists and motorists 'red-light jumping' or failing to stop at zebra crossing were perceived as particular threat to safety. The newer design of pedestrian crossing indicators was also seen as unsatisfactory by some women. One younger woman saw that cycling met all her transport needs, but most other women did not cycle due to concerns about road safety for themselves or children.

A number of women did not feel that their opinions were always considered or responded to through consultations, and therefore felt frustrated by transport planning in Bristol (service providers and local authority).

In summary, gender equality is not overtly part of the transport planning or provision in the West of England area. Examples from other countries demonstrate how gender mainstreaming can work. Women need to be consulted and feel their views are valued. Evidence is needed to understand the needs of women in the most deprived communities, but focusing on how walking environments, pedestrian crossings, bus stops and public transport, and travel information could better serve women's needs would be a good starting point for transport planners and service providers.

## 1 Introduction

At a national level research has identified that there are gender differences in travel patterns and experiences of travelling. In Britain women are more likely to use buses and walk than men, and less likely to cycle. The numbers of women with driving licences have increased significantly over the last 30 years, but fewer women than men can drive. Even when women can drive fewer women have the main use of the car in one car households. Dependent children have an impact on the types of trips women make, as women are more likely to make multiple destination trips (trip chain) than men that incorporate caring related tasks (e.g. school run, shopping, etc). As women with children (or other caring duties) are more likely to work part time, they may spent a greater proportion of their income on transport costs. International evidence indicates women who are parents are more likely to work nearer to home than men, even if this limits their careers. Other evidence indicates that fear around personal safety can limit women's travel, especially in the evening or at night.

For this report the area of study is focused on Bristol, as this is the area of Bristol Women's Commission's concern. However as the Joint Transport Executive Committee and strategic planning brings together the four West of England local authorities (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire) the research takes this broader geographic remit. A number of the urban transport services cross boundaries, and there is a significant flow between Bristol and the three adjacent local authorities for work, leisure, education and health care. There is a strong connection between Bristol and South Gloucestershire as sixty percent of South Gloucestershire's population lives within the north and eastern fringe of Bristol.

The report brings together four areas of research: firstly evidence gained from interviews with stakeholders across the region; secondly, it presents some examples of gender mainstreaming in transport and where transport serves a specific need of women; thirdly it considers statistical evidence about women's travel from the Census 2011 and the Shifting Gears survey; and finally it explores qualitative evidence about how women perceive and experience travelling in Bristol.

The conclusions demonstrate that stakeholders need to focus on how their approaches to transport planning and provision could incorporate ideas from gender mainstreaming examples to produce improved gender equality in the area of transport. It also suggests that particular attention needs to be made towards walking and public transport, as these modes are used more by women than men. There are many opportunities that can build on existing activities. However, stakeholders need to have a depth knowledge of the issues, and many of the issues faced by the most deprived communities are not represented by the research presented here.

## 2 Evidence from Stakeholder Interviews

The evidence discussed in this section emerges from interviews with stakeholders from across the West of England region. Seven interviews were conducted with representatives from local authority transport planning departments, Joint Transport Executive Committee, and associated stakeholder organisations (see Appendix 1). This section is a synthesis of these interviews in order to protect the anonymity of the individuals who have contributed. Specifically it focuses on how and where gender is considered within the transport planning process, and opportunities for action.

As indicated by the Census 2011 (see section 3.1) there are substantial flows for work between Bristol and the three adjacent local authorities; in particular between Bristol and South Gloucestershire, as 60% of south Gloucestershire's population live within Bristol's urban fringe, and the north fringe is an important employment location<sup>1</sup>.

At a strategic level transport planning is driven by the underlying themes of increasing sustainability, improving air quality, and reducing road congestion in the context of growing the local economy (see also section 2). Transport planning at a local level is shaped by strategic aims framed by the Department for Transport, and associated guidance (e.g. cost benefit analysis, inclusive design, etc).

The interviews with local transport planners and other stakeholders emphasised the need to encourage sustainable travel modes, but some new employment zones are strategically sited near key road connections demonstrating the importance of vehicle traffic in relation to economic growth. The two stakeholders specifically engaged in work place access were particularly orientated towards increasing levels of sustainable travel across all employees; however one indicated that there were processes to assist those who were negatively affected by car parking restrictions/costs that could include low paid women, or women with specific childcare needs. More generally across the stakeholders, women as a social group generally are not targeted through specific policies, investments, or provision, but some believed that the push for a more sustainable transport network based on public transport and active travel will particularly benefit women, especially existing women bus users.

It should be noted that issues relating to car parking, whether on street or public car parking, are often managed and delivered separately to transport planning within the local authorities, as parking is a revenue generating activity. Thus, the operation of public car parks in relation to gender needs has not been explored in this section of the report in detail.

### 2.1 Response to gender differences in transport needs

Across the interviews few of the stakeholders were able to articulate a strong sense of why or how women's transport needs might be different to that of men, although there was an overarching emphasis on personal safety being a key issue for women. Some stakeholders had a greater awareness of differences in travel patterns than others, and the fact that fewer women cycle than men was noted as a policy challenge. It was also recognised that there are more older women than men, which may impact on transport needs (e.g. accessibility design, community transport, etc).

---

1

<https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/CSissuesandoptions/viewCompoundDoc?docid=109780&partid=11000>

This lack of knowledge did not equate with a lack of interest or a desire to do better; some of the stakeholders were very keen to find out how they might improve the way that they consider gender within the transport planning process during the interview.

Generally the stakeholders argued transport is planned (or provided) for everyone, and the imagined traveller is 'gender neutral' in this process.

*"We consider equality quite broadly, and gender is one of those protected groups"*

*"There is very little bespoke targeting that we do"*

*"You always default towards the safest 'grey' person that is sex-less, ethnicity-less - a citizen you try and best serve as well as you can by hitting this middle road"*

This perspective does not mean that women are completely ignored; as the next section demonstrates there are formal processes that ensure that any transport proposals do not have a negative effect on women (and others) for local government. However, where and how women are or could be considered produced some varied responses.

It was suggested by one stakeholder that providing transport with specific reference to gender could have a negative impact. For example, the stakeholder argued that by assuming women wanted to travel in a specific way to specific job locations could entrench particular labour market patterns rather than facilitating opportunities for all.

Another stakeholder suggested that where transport policy focused on sustainable travel modes (public transport, walking and cycling) as opposed to road building, then ultimately women would particularly benefit from this focus, especially where they are the existing predominant user group (e.g. bus users).

During a discussion that there is evidence that women are more likely to work closer to home, the aim of promoting 'local jobs for local people' through the planning process in North Somerset was identified as a proposal that could have particular benefits to women.

One interviewee also reflected on the potential for transport planning to consider the relationship between childcare provision and employment opportunities to facilitate opportunities for women.

The one area local authority transport planners highlighted as responding to the needs of women were in terms of pregnancy and buggies as a 'mobility' issue in urban design and accessibility. Such considerations emerge in the physical design of the urban environment (e.g. drop curb) or the provision of buggy spaces on a bus. In part, accessibility for buggies goes hand-in-hand with responses to accessibility legislation (DDA requirements) for wheelchair and mobility scooter users, and it was noted in the interviews that such guidance was directed from central government.

## **2.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

Local authorities are obliged to evaluate any new transport or other planning proposals, designing a scheme, etc, using an 'equality impact assessment' template that is generic for all of the local authority's activities. As gender is a 'protected group', any *adverse* impacts of a proposal are considered (alongside other protected groups) through completing the template form. The

template should be completed using a range of evidence. While this process has a benefit, one interviewee noted it can be tied up with local authorities' concern about working within the law.

This stakeholder indicated that while gender was considered it was rather low on the priority list:

*"The equalities impact assessment work that we do I would say mobility issues, BME issues, they come up far higher on the kind of priority umm non-English speaking. So even though I think the equalities statement does cover gender specific issues it is pushed quiet low on that list I would say"*

***"Why do think that is?"***

*"I think there is probably a perception that there isn't much of an issue there. I think that people think if you are a different gender why would you have different transport needs. I think particularly from politicians I've had that said before."*

One local authority discussed a specific example of how this process might consider gender:

*"As you'll see there in this particular impact assessment we were talking about parking, and the needs of people parking. And beyond pregnancy and people on maternity leave, we don't perceive there are people with specific needs. Carers those people with young children have needs in terms of car parking, but we struggle to find a specific need that women might have. Specifically in term of this report the needs are informed by 'safety by design'."*

The interviewee's specific reference here indicates how national standards and guidance influence how roads and other urban features are shaped at local level (unless a specific heritage issue needs a more local response).

## 2.3 Pubic Engagement

Previous research investigating gender equality in the planning has indicted that women are often excluded from the planning process. Local authorities and transport providers indicated that they consult with users, stakeholder groups, and the local population in a number of different ways which include citizen's panels, user audits, and open consultations on specific projects. Sometimes consultations are held in public venues, but a couple of the transport planners indicated that resource cuts are limiting consultation and more is being undertaken online. Stakeholders indicated that these mechanisms intended to reach everyone and felt that if fewer women respond to a consultation, there is little that the stakeholders could do. However, stakeholders indicated it is not always clear where to get specific opinions related to gender needs beyond existing mechanisms.

*"We don't have women's groups who specifically want to talk to us about transport."*

*"The distribution list we've got for the cycle forum for example, there are about 35-40 members of the cycle forum. I think there's only one or two women ... I think there is unbalanced representation there..."*

One interviewee explained that there are stakeholder groups that represent older people and those with disabilities, or race or transgender groups about specific security issues, but none that specifically represent women's needs. At a local authority level engagement with different 'user' groups is made in response to an issue that arises through a new activity, rather than reviewing existing transport provision or ways of planning. This is different to other stakeholders who provide

transport services. FirstBus for instance indicated that they have a good gender balance in their response to ongoing customer engagement about service provision and they use a range of social media to do so.

One stakeholder thought that ‘neighbourhood partnerships’ offered a mechanism where women in the community could be actively consulted, with specific reference to local travel and needs (e.g. footpaths, crossings, cycling facilities, and local employment, services and facilities that support work, education and caring duties).

## **2.4 Response to funding opportunities**

Quite a few activities undertaken by local authority planning teams are funded by particular schemes for which the local authority has to bid. A good example is the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, but interviewees indicated project funding may be sought through different funders (e.g. the European Union). The interviewees indicated that the types of activities or schemes being implemented are often influenced by the type of funding available to them, rather than having the opportunity to proactively take a particular gender focused activity. Examples where gender issues are part of funding bids are discussed with ‘active travel’ below.

## **2.5 Public transport**

A couple of stakeholders discussed the public transport offer in the West of England region, some of which connect the surrounding three local authorities with Bristol. Specifically related to access to employment, SusCom highlighted that new and improved services link parts of North Somerset and South Gloucestershire with employment locations the north fringe of Bristol (e.g. Kingsferry coach and the X18 bus), thus offering improved ways of accessing employment for all sectors of the community. The proposed Bus Rapid Transit and suburban passenger rail links to Portishead and the Henbury loop were perceived by some stakeholders as opening up opportunities for accessing employment through faster and more direct services. Stakeholders in the rural counties indicated that they were making difficult decisions about public transport cuts in rural areas, which are likely to impact on women, young and older age groups. While not discussed in the interviews, there are implications for people driving into Bristol from the surrounding areas to access not only jobs and education, but also hospitals, in terms of parking.

Across the stakeholders there was acknowledgement that safety while waiting and on public transport can be a concern for women. However, how safety or perception of safety could be improved was not indicated. One stakeholder indicated that from customer feedback personal safety for women appears to be less of an issue where there is a more homogenous user group (i.e. student bus services) than may be imagined, i.e. customers are not feeding back concerns.

## **2.6 Active travel**

Existing research indicates that nationally fewer women cycle than men and the decline in numbers happens at the transition to secondary school, but more women walk than men. In recent years Bristol has received funding for investment into promoting cycling from the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of the Cycling Cities and Towns initiative.

Two local authorities have taken forward initiatives focused on encouraging more women to cycle. This has been a response to funding opportunities through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in association with Sustrans and other co-funders, building on previous funding streams. Here specific

initiatives have been aimed (or being developed to aim) at women; for example, marketing to encourage women to cycle, buddying schemes, teaching girls cycle maintenance in school based workshops, etc.

Two stakeholders noted that there is a need to recognise how women are influenced by image and that provision of facilities can assist in breaking down barriers.

*“We did a study and I looked at some information with regards cycling and one of the little bit surprising responses that I got from that are young women are put off cycling because of make-up and hair”*

While from a feminist perspective one could dismiss the demands to achieve a particular image in the work place, but as one stakeholder indicated enabling women to be more active and receive the associated benefits to health and well-being (as well as broader societal issues around sustainability and congestion reduction) is important. This same stakeholder inferred that in work places where women are a minority it is particularly important to encourage organisations to think about gender specific needs such as gender separate changing facilities; and additional facilities such as a hair dryer (and hair straighteners) might make a difference for women concerned about their personal image in the work place. This is in addition to providing well-lit and safe places to secure cycles.

Safety and cycling was also raised as a barrier to women by a couple of stakeholders, but the specifics of how these could be addressed were not given.



Cycling is not an option for all women, as women themselves indicated later in this report, and walking is also a mode which currently more women undertake than men. While some local authorities have developed walking strategies (e.g. Bristol City Council), gender issues relating to walking beyond dropped kerbs did not emerge through the interviews. One exception came from South Gloucestershire Council where an initiative had been made with a public health focus to encourage women with young babies to participate in walking for health post pregnancy through a leisure activity, funded through the LSTF<sup>2</sup>.

## 2.7 Marketing and segmentation

Segmentation of the population is used in some instances to understand social and geographic difference as a way of targeting marketing to specific groups of people. Some stakeholders have been used social marketing to encourage more women to cycle. Different marketing techniques are used by service providers and other stakeholders. There is potential to further explore how marketing targets women positively and negatively with transport messages.

## 2.8 Summary

Generally gender mainstreaming does not appear to be incorporated into transport planning or provision. Gender is considered through the Equality Impact Assessment, but this is for local authorities only, and is a reactive rather than a proactive process. Awareness of gender differences emerges in specific projects but more generally there is a belief by some that focus on public transport, walking and cycling may offer more benefits to women than a road focused policy.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/walking-for-health/buggy-walks/buggy-walks/>

### 3 Evidence from Published Strategies

A number of documents available in the public domain via the TravelWest and local authority websites were examined to explore where and how gender is discussed. As indicated earlier, the main focus of the strategic documentation in the West of England region is the economy and sustainability, with an emphasis on reducing road congestion and providing faster more reliable public transport links, and improved cycling and walking environments.

Generally, these documents rarely comment on gender as an issue. Instead broader comments are made about social inclusion and equality, which cover a number of different variables including age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability, and reflect the need for Equalities Impact Assessments to be part of the planning process (see section 2.2).

<b>Equalities Impact Assessment</b>	Legal requirement for councils to assess the impact of transport policies and schemes in relation to race, disability and gender
-------------------------------------	--

The Joint Local Transport Plan is one such document that makes several references to planning for the needs of either women or gender without actually giving any specific indication of what those needs might be.

<b>Transport Needs of Women</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognise the needs of women in planning transport infrastructure and services.</li></ul>
---

Given this is an overarching strategy it is assumed that these needs will be reflected in the specifics of the projects undertaken by each local authority in line with this strategy's objectives. However, there are two major transport schemes that are central to the strategy: MetroBus – a bus rapid transport network connecting south Bristol with the north/east fringe<sup>3</sup>; and MetroWest – an extension of the suburban rail network to Portishead and the Henbury line<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, **public transport** is a key feature of the Joint Local Transport Plans, and with it supporting documents set out ambitions with regard to **bus** provision, including the proposed bus rapid transport network. In terms of gender the focus is on mobility and accessibility, including step free access in some instances. Accessibility improvements are also suggested through integration of services.

In interpreting the strategy's objectives that focus on how the public transport network can improve the

#### Accessibility

Substantial upgrade in the quality and reliability of bus services, together with much improved integration (in the bus network itself and with community transport and other modes of transport) will increase accessibility. New low-floor buses will also greatly improve accessibility for people with prams and buggies or mobility difficulties.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.travelwest.info/metrobus>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.travelwest.info/sites/default/files/documents/MetroWest%20Strategic%20Overview%20Leaflet%20for%20web.pdf>

connections to employment areas, especially linking economical deprived neighbourhoods, it could be assumed that such network improvements may benefit women seeking work. However, further investigation into how these services are managed to meet the needs of women in terms of timetables, cost, and safety provision would be needed, and evaluated for any direct benefits.

Alongside the main public transport aims, the JTP also presents other options to fill service gaps through community transport and demand responsive schemes. While in this document the focus is on the older population, there could be opportunities in considering how such services could operate to support access for women more specifically (see examples in section 4.2).

Walking and cycling strategies are set out the local authority level. Bristol City Council's '**Walking Strategy for Bristol: Our Vision for 2011–2021**' is carefully gender neutral in its presentation, using a man pushing a pushchair as an illustration on the cover. Its stated aims are to encourage more walking trips to enhance sustainable transport objectives, and assist health and wellbeing through gaining enhancement to the walking environment that connects across the central city areas. Its approach is to bring together infrastructure design with other measures such as way finding signage.

"We want to ensure that the walking environment is well maintained, accessible, safe and pleasant".

The walking environment impacts on women as discussed in the focus groups and interviews with women (see section 6). This quote from the walking strategy emphasises four elements of the walking environment (of which the first three were the upper most concern for women in the focus

groups). Although these are not gender specific issues, perception of safety affects women. Likewise in terms of accessibility, the strategy specifically considers obstructions on pavements that affect wheelchair users and pushchairs (the latter having specific implications for women who are parents) as well as dropped kerbs, seating and toilet facilities. It is not specified within the strategy but women may have a greater need for public toilets if with babies and young children, and for managing menstrual sanitation, thus it is good that toilet provision is considered within the strategy.

The walking strategy also considers some of the issues around pedestrian-cyclist conflicts, especially in 'shared space', indicating that illegal cycling will be policed. Following the information gained from the interviews it is assumed that the design of such shared space and the walking environment may adversely impact on women would be processed through the equalities impact assessment. (However as noted in section 6.5 there is a concern greater priority is being given to cycling over walking.)

Given that a greater number of women are main carers for children, it is possible to assume more women than men currently may be responsible for taking children to school in Bristol.<sup>5</sup> Bristol's walking strategy specifically addressess this area, although it remains carefully gender neutral in the

The 'Walk to School' campaign encourages staff, parents and pupils to include regular physical activity in to their daily lives by walking to and from school whenever possible. Walking levels to school in Bristol have increased from 54% to 60% between 2006–2010.

<sup>5</sup> There is not an obvious data set to evaluate the journey to school here at a local level, but the National Travel Survey (NTS) indicates that more women than men undertake 'escorting' trips, which include all types of destinations from education to health care. In 2013 NTS the average trip rate for escorting for education saw women making more than double the number of trips than men. Nationally nearly 60% of children aged 7-13 were usually escorted to school with the primary reason given as 'traffic danger' and nearly a third indicating 'stranger danger'.

presentation of the topic, and is focused on encouraging more walking to school. It does not give any specific indication of the measure to achieve such targets.

## Connecting citizens to reduce inequalities

### What's the challenge?

There are a number of areas of multiple deprivation in Bristol and many that suffer from poor transport links to access employment opportunities. In addition, health inequalities exist across the city that we must tackle.

### How are we going to achieve success?

Cycling offers an affordable and active way to travel to work and around neighbourhoods. We will focus efforts and interventions to ensure residential areas are well linked to local employment centres by the cycle network. We will also encourage the use of cycling as an active way to travel to help increase physical activity levels to reduce health inequalities. We will target hard to reach groups and encourage cycling by offering grants and incentives. Essential to success will be the involvement of local communities in planning and delivery, particularly via the local neighbourhood partnerships.

Bristol City Council has recently published its Draft **Cycling Strategy** (7<sup>th</sup> July 2014). Again this document is gender neutral, but recognises the fact that fewer women cycle and sees that the strategy should encourage more women cyclists. Elements of the strategy focus on issues of safety as well as the benefits of cycling.

However, the extract to the left demonstrates how cycling is believed to reduce inequalities by enabling affordable access to new and existing employment zones. The local neighbourhood partnerships are presented as a tool to engaging local citizens in the planning and delivery. As raised by one of the stakeholders there is an opportunity to actively engage with women in the community to understand their needs and opportunities through the neighbourhood partnership.

In summary from the sample of documents it is evident that transport planning is generally presented as gender neutral as indicated in the stakeholder interviews, except with trying to encourage more cycling. However, this does not mean that the outcomes of transport planning are gender neutral. The documents do not present any evidence about transport trends, or anticipated numbers of passengers, walkers or cyclists, let alone broken down by gender. The theme of reducing road congestion, if achieved, could benefit those women who need to travel by car by making their journeys more reliable and faster. Likewise faster more reliable public transport connections may benefit women who do not have access to a car. Also there is a need to see how proposed routes map on to areas indicating levels of deprivation to understand how these transport systems would facilitate new access opportunities for the most deprived communities, as well as women's mobility patterns around the city more generally.

## 4 Examples of Transport Planning and Provision for Women

Few specific examples of best practice *in the UK* were found through web searches of where local authorities, associated organisations, and transport providers have responded to specific needs of women. There are many more examples directly related to development issues, where women are being enabled to overcome extreme poverty in very different circumstances across the globe. There are examples from Vienna and Sweden of ‘gender mainstreaming’ being taken up in some elements of transport planning. However, it is worth noting that a number of services for women are emerging through the private sector and entrepreneurial activity in digital technology services (e.g. apps and websites).

### 4.1 Transport planning for women

Sweden is one country that appears to have used gender mainstreaming in the policy process. An online video (<http://vimeo.com/77692813>) demonstrates two transport examples. The first example explains how changing the priority for snow removal from the main roads (mostly used by men) to walkways and schools and female dominated employment locations, arguing it gives greater levels of access at no extra cost. The second example in the video shows how night buses can be safer for women if they stop between stops and only let one person of at a time. From a research perspective Vagland<sup>6</sup> (2013) examined how Sweden has been active in gender mainstreaming in transport over time, which has included consultation, encouraging more women onto committees, etc, as well as looking specifically at gender differences in travel.



Vienna is another location where gender mainstreaming was the focus of an urban regeneration project. There are several reviews of this example, as well as the information given on the city authority's website<sup>7</sup>. The approach has been to directly engage with the local population and understand different people's needs to ensure everyone has a voice in the planning process (see box below). In particular this approach has had to infrastructure design to be more inclusive, for example providing ramps for wheelchairs/mobility scooters and prams/buggies up flights of steep stairs (see photo).



Traditional traffic planning did not consider pedestrian traffic a main priority for the system and largely treated it as a “blind spot”. As a consequence structural disadvantages and barriers evolved for pedestrians, especially for women, children and elderly people. Traffic planning in Vienna wants to achieve equality for pedestrians by preparing planning recommendations, committing itself to pedestrians' concerns during traffic planning processes and initiating co-decision procedures that will give a voice to the less assertive.

<sup>6</sup> <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/conf/cp46v2.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/gendermainstreaming/;](https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/gendermainstreaming/)

[http://www.citylab.com/commute/2013/09/how-design-city-women/6739/;](http://www.citylab.com/commute/2013/09/how-design-city-women/6739/) <http://www.difu.de/node/5949>

There are a number of 'guidance' briefings that indicate ways of incorporating mainstreaming, but do not give detailed accounts of the instances that have emerged from them. Examples are from Britain<sup>8</sup> and Austria<sup>9</sup>. However, there is evidence that gender mainstreaming was incorporated into transport planning in some areas of Britain; for example, Transport for London claimed to be gender mainstreaming in 2008<sup>10</sup> and demonstrated a good understanding of travel behaviour and perceptions of travelling. The policy outcomes have indicate generic infrastructure issues, cheaper fares, and an emphasis that the Barclay cycle hire opens opportunities for those without a bicycle.<sup>11</sup>

One of the criticism in the interviews was that cycle infrastructure in Bristol did not adequately support women cycling with children. The extracts from a consultant's blog<sup>12</sup> give examples where cycle infrastructure planning could be considered 'good' for women's journey needs especially travelling with children.

I've visited 21 'cycling cities' — the famous ones in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany, as well as the lesser-known icons, such as Bogota, Colombia — to discover firsthand what infrastructure had transformed a city into a 'cycling city.' What I found was that each city had its own unique network of bikeways, but there were common themes: four to five metres of usable cycling space, complete separation from motorised traffic, a consistent level of service, as well as high-quality streetscaping and signage. All of the cycle routes in all of the cities were designed with cycling in mind — they were direct, quick, and traffic free. They were lined with cosy cafes, enticing boutiques, and townhouses with window boxes. Above all, they were beautiful.

In 2010 I launched my Cycling Super Highways concept: a vision for seven-metre-wide, six-lane cycleways (fast, medium, and slow lanes) — the highway of bicycling — that are completely separated from cars, and most importantly, designed for everyone, including people new or returning to cycling, sports cyclists in training, time-constrained commuters, kids with bikes with stabilisers, seniors on power-assisted bicycles, and mothers on cargo bikes cycling with their weekly shopping.

In total the examples above demonstrate that new ways of thinking can change the thinking and practices of planners and designers. Partly this requires a good understanding of the evidence of gender differences in mobility patterns (including modes and destinations) and then considering across a range of services and projects how women can be given greater equality by small changes.

## 4.2 Transport services for women

In the UK and around the world there are a number of transport services that are provided for specifically for women. Public transport services for women are occasional organised through

### Women's safe transport

This is an evening pre-bookable door to door transport service operating in and around the Northwich area. Bookings are taken between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. This service only operates on a Wednesday and Thursday evening and is open to any female.

community transport schemes, as with this example from North West England<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/a-place-for-everyone-gender-equality-and-urban-planning-111921>

<sup>9</sup>

[http://www.rali.boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H03000/H85000/H85400/\\_TEMP\\_/Frauen\\_und\\_Maenner\\_unterwegs/FUM\\_englisch\\_150.pdf](http://www.rali.boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H03000/H85000/H85400/_TEMP_/Frauen_und_Maenner_unterwegs/FUM_englisch_150.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>

[https://subsite.kk.dk/sitecore/content/Subsites/medarbejder/SubsiteFrontpage/KoebenhavnsKommuneSomArbejdsplads/MangfoldighedOgLigestilling/~/\\_media/A4482F9ED4C94370B7EC7DB379F8C0EE.ashx](https://subsite.kk.dk/sitecore/content/Subsites/medarbejder/SubsiteFrontpage/KoebenhavnsKommuneSomArbejdsplads/MangfoldighedOgLigestilling/~/_media/A4482F9ED4C94370B7EC7DB379F8C0EE.ashx)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Gender%20equality%20assessment%202012%20final.pdf>


<sup>12</sup> <http://blogs.aecom.com/connectedcities/what-women-want/>

<sup>13</sup>

[http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport\\_and\\_roads/public\\_transport/community\\_transport.aspx](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport_and_roads/public_transport/community_transport.aspx)


In the private sector taxi sharing for women is another opportunity which is being taken up by some private operators. There are two examples shown below.

## TAXI 2 - THE TAXI SHARING SERVICE



The Taxi2 web site enables passengers to link up with other passengers on their flight and travelling to a similar part of the world.

The scheme is not limited to Virgin Atlantic customers and passengers of other airlines can also share rides also.



### How does it work?

Virgin Atlantic's customers and passengers of other airlines simply:

- Log onto the site
- Input your flight and destination details
- The system will match you with suitable travelling companions.
- You are then sent the details to contact the matched traveller and can decide whether to agree to the match and make arrangements of where to meet following your flight. Easy !!!

**Please note: Your contact details will not be shared.**

- Print off the easy to make Taxi2 sign from the website so you can locate each other at the airport.

The system will also match female travellers who only want female travelling companions.

As it is a Beta service, for the first few months we are just offering it on the London to New York routes.

Share a taxi from the airport now at [www.taxi2.to](http://www.taxi2.to)

The co-innovator of Taxi2 is **Ed Maklout** who runs the technology startup "Siine". Read more about Ed in the co-innovator pages.



Der Verkehrsverbund  
der Region Hannover

Search

[Timetables](#)
[Tickets](#)
[Network Maps](#)
[News](#)
[Service](#)
[About GVH](#)

### Service

- Where to buy Tickets & Cards?
- Passenger Safety
- Handicap
- Night Transport**
  - Night Star Transport
  - Taxi Service**
  - Combined Mobility
  - Download
  - Links

print page

### Taxi Service

**Taxi-sharing** - You never took a taxi so cheaply. Hannover's 'TeilTaxi' scheme, so far unique in Germany, makes it possible. The project by TaxiBus GmbH, an üstra subsidiary, and 'Hallo Taxi 3811', combines the comfort of a taxi with a very reasonable fare.

It could not be simpler: several people share a taxi, and the more people travel the lower the cost per person. TeilTaxi operate all over Hannover from 6.30 am – 0.30 am. Journeys must be booked at least half an hour before the start time phone (0049-511) 8484.

**RegioBus Call-a-Taxi** - RegioBus offers its passengers in Barsinghausen, Burgdorf, Isernhagen, Lehrte, Neustadt, Seelze, Springe, Uetze, Wedemark and Wunstorf a Call-a-Taxi-Service. Thus you can also reach during night-, and morning hours more remote areas. CallTaxi operate up until 4 am.

For the Springe Call Taxi phone: 05034 - 47555

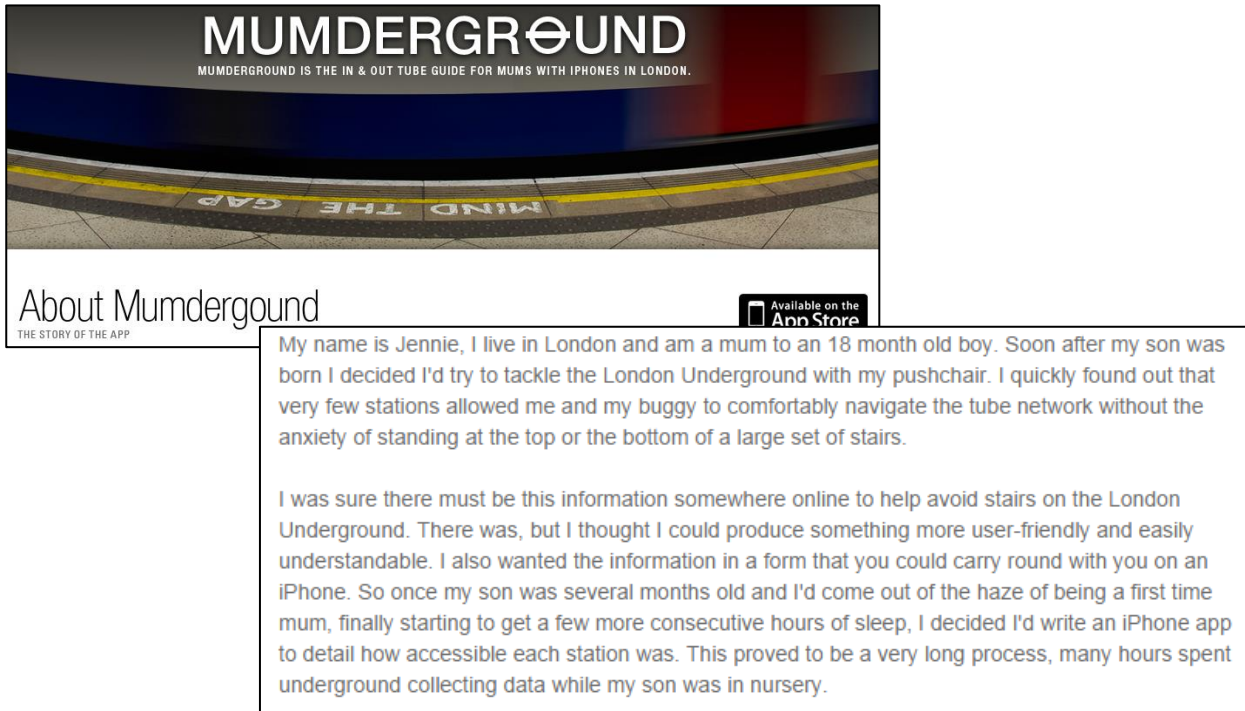
For more information check: <http://www.regiobus.de/>.

**Women's night taxi** - üstra offers the üstra-Women'sNightTaxi (FNT) for all female passengers, also accompanied by children, using light rails and buses at night. üstra grants a 2.50 € discount on every journey within the Hannover city area. The üstra-FrauenNachtTaxi is organised in association with Hannover City Council Women's Representatives, and operates from 1 October - 31 March from 7 pm - 6 am and from 1 April - 30 September from 9 pm - 5 am.

While these provide safer opportunities for travel, they may not always be a result of dealing with underlying issues of gender inequalities in the transport planning process. It is likely that commercial companies may be responding to customer engagement.

### 4.3 Travel information for women

Information services through digital technology specifically aimed at women are few, and mostly aimed at women travelling abroad. The app 'mumderground' is a good example of how digital information can help women travel around a city, and is particularly effective because is a 'user innovation' (e.g. designed by a mother for mothers).



**MUMDERGROUND**  
MUMDERGROUND IS THE IN & OUT TUBE GUIDE FOR MUMS WITH IPHONES IN LONDON.

Available on the App Store

**About Mumderground**  
THE STORY OF THE APP

My name is Jennie, I live in London and am a mum to an 18 month old boy. Soon after my son was born I decided I'd try to tackle the London Underground with my pushchair. I quickly found out that very few stations allowed me and my buggy to comfortably navigate the tube network without the anxiety of standing at the top or the bottom of a large set of stairs.

I was sure there must be this information somewhere online to help avoid stairs on the London Underground. There was, but I thought I could produce something more user-friendly and easily understandable. I also wanted the information in a form that you could carry round with you on an iPhone. So once my son was several months old and I'd come out of the haze of being a first time mum, finally starting to get a few more consecutive hours of sleep, I decided I'd write an iPhone app to detail how accessible each station was. This proved to be a very long process, many hours spent underground collecting data while my son was in nursery.

Usually travel information systems are designed 'top down' focusing on connecting locations rather than any other issues, although some bus services may be shown as easy access. There are opportunities for creative thinking about the types of information women travellers might need, by engaging users in the process, whether from a commercial or public provider.

### 4.4 Personal Safety


The earlier example of the gender mainstream video from Sweden illustrates how women's safety can be re-considered in the way buses are operated, especially at night. While from a different cultural setting there has been a project to design a bus and bus stops to give increased safety to women travellers in Mumbai (Bombay)<sup>14</sup>, which focuses on lighting and seating at stops, women only doors near the driver, and a communication system.

The examples of women only night buses are examples of transport provision that responds to concerns about safety. Another example comes from Norwich. There the charity SOS<sup>15</sup> provides a transport service for vulnerable people (men and women) who have been at the city's night clubs at weekends. This is more than a bus service, as it includes medical aid too.

<sup>14</sup> <https://openideo.com/challenge/womens-safety/ideas/women-s-empowerment-through-mobility>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sosbus.co.uk/>

British Transport Police are also promoting safety on London Transport, with a particular focus on reducing sex crimes. Project Guardian has put greater numbers of plain clothes police on transport services and initiated a text number for travellers to report incidents.

 <p>You can now tell us about non-emergency incidents by text on <b>61016</b> Or call us on 0800 40 50 40 In an emergency dial 999 We're making it easier for you to talk to us</p>	<h3>Project Guardian</h3> <p>Project Guardian is a long-term project involving BTP, Transport for London (TfL), Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police, which aims to reduce <b>sexual assault and unwanted sexual behaviour</b> on public transport in London.</p>
--	--

Personal safety therefore can be tackled from a number of different ways: through design of the infrastructures and vehicles, the operation of services, the provision of special services and the way in which policing of transport networks is operated.

#### 4.5 Reducing the need to travel

As transport systems have become overcrowded there are moves to encourage employers to offer flexible and smarter working in an attempt to reduce peak hour congestion. While this is not driven by a gender mainstreaming agenda one of the benefits is assumed to be for women in terms of reducing time spent travelling and offering the opportunity to work around child care needs. For example, Transport for London discuss such benefits in their Smarter Working Guide<sup>16</sup>. While this is not a panacea as many women work in non-flexible environments (e.g. nursing, teaching, retail, and other place-based services), flexible working can offer alternatives which may reduce the impact of congestion (e.g. longer and unreliable journey times) on individuals, but other work place policies such as parking allocation would need move from a 'first come first served' approach.

#### 4.6 Summary

Planning transport that repositions women's travel needs rather than assuming transport is for all can produce some good outcomes in very simple ways. Evidence about how women and men travel is essential for understanding the differences and re-thinking planning approaches. Specific transport services for women may help at specific times and locations, and there are opportunities to look at how these may intersect with providing night time services when women may feel most vulnerable. Personal safety can be increased through design, service provision and policing, enabling women to become more confident to travel at night. Working with employers to promote viable home and flexible working may help women in some instances, but employers need to consider the consequences on wider travel to work provision.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/smarter-working-guide.pdf>

## 5 Evidence from Secondary Data Sources

The four local authorities under examination present very different geographical contexts for everyday travel. Bristol is distinct in that it is wholly urban; BANES is dominated by the smaller regional city of Bath and outlying towns and villages; North Somerset is more rural, with smaller towns; and South Gloucestershire includes a substantive area of north and east Bristol suburbs, employment and retail areas, with satellite towns and villages in the rural hinterland (e.g. Yate).

This part of the report considers the data from the Census 2011 and the Shifting Gears survey<sup>17</sup>. The Census 2011 enables data from the four local authorities to be grouped and compared. However, in terms of transport is limited to travel to work data only. The Bristol Women's Voice travel survey 'Shifting Gears' provides some useful indications regarding barriers to social and economic participation because of transport.

### 5.1 Census 2011

Data from the 2011 Census by local authority provides useful evidence about households and the journey to work in the four local authorities. In this report the four local authorities Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire are considered at local authority level where appropriate.

#### 5.1.1 Economic activity of Bristol residents

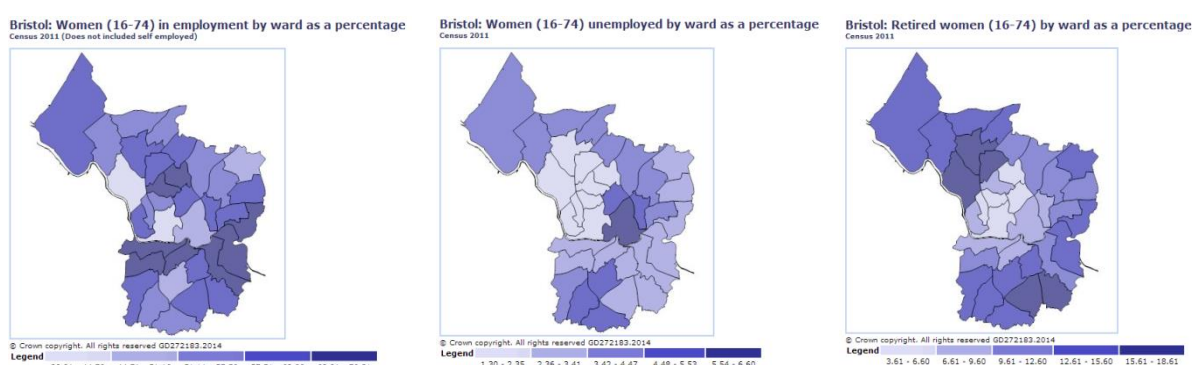
Table 1 indicates women's employment status in Bristol, and demonstrates that women are much more likely to work part-time or be the main carers at home than men. Levels of economic activity vary across the city, and also relate to the age distribution of the population. Figure 1 demonstrates a geographic overview of women's economic status in Bristol.

**Table 1: Economic Activity of Bristol Residents aged 16-74 (Census 2011)**

	<b>Women (%)</b>	<b>Men (%)</b>
<b>Economically active</b>	<b>66.6</b>	<b>74.6</b>
Economically active: In employment	58.2	64.9
<i>Economically active: Employee: Part-time</i>	<i>20.7</i>	<i>6.2</i>
<i>Economically active: Employee: Full-time</i>	<i>32.4</i>	<i>47.0</i>
Economically active: Self-employed	5.1	11.7
Economically active: Unemployed	3.3	5.3
Economically active: Full-time student	5.1	4.4
<b>Economically inactive</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>25.4</b>
Economically inactive: Retired	11.1	8.6
Economically inactive: Student (including full-time students)	8.9	9.1
Economically inactive: Looking after home or family	7.1	0.8
Economically inactive: Long-term sick or disabled	3.9	4.8
Economically inactive: Other	2.4	2.2

<sup>17</sup> There are other data sources that could be used in future research such as extracts from the National Travel Survey; LSTF travel to work survey; and other customer service surveys of commercial transport providers, if made available.

**Figure 1: Spatial distribution of economic activity of women living in Bristol**



There are pockets of high deprivation in Bristol measured across a series of indicators, with Bristol City Council noting Bristol has “32 LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in England for multiple deprivation (compared to 39 in 2007 and 35 in 2004)”<sup>18</sup>. (The BCC report does not explicitly look at transport related deprivation.)

While it is important to ensuring ‘deprived’ areas are well connected by transport links to employment, education and services, it should be remembered that very small pockets of deprivation can occur in seemingly less deprived areas. For instance, non-drivers or those without access to a car in an area with low public transport accessibility and higher levels of car ownership and relative wealth may be affected by transport exclusion.

### 5.1.2 Travel to Work in Bristol and the West of England

The Census provides a useful overview of commuting that supports observations of national trends gained from the National Travel Survey. This data supports previous evidence that women are more likely to work closer to home than men.

Of the 121,585 people who both lived *and* worked in Bristol in the Census 2011, 54% were women and 46% were men. Far more men commute into Bristol and from Bristol than women. Recently released origin and flow data indicate the strong relationship between South Gloucestershire and Bristol in terms of commuting (see table 1).

**Table 2: Commuting origin and flow into/out of Bristol**

to/from	Commuting <b>into</b> Bristol		Commuting <b>from</b> Bristol	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)
South Gloucestershire	17,724 (60)	44,103 (76)	12,584 (70)	31,905 (82)
North Somerset	8,129 (27)	9,418 (16)	2,866 (16)	4,243 (11)
BANES	3,812 (13)	4,597 (8)	2,572 (14)	2,761(7)
Total	29,665 (100)	58,118 (100)	18,022 (100)	38,909 (100)

<sup>18</sup>

[http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/council\\_and\\_democracy/statistics\\_and\\_census\\_information/Deprivation%20in%20Bristol%202010\\_0.pdf](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/council_and_democracy/statistics_and_census_information/Deprivation%20in%20Bristol%202010_0.pdf)

Currently, the modal split by gender of these movements is not available but the aggregate data for all trips indicates the predominance of the car. It also highlights the role played by different types of public transport links. For instance, there are larger numbers commuting by train between North Somerset and Bristol compared to South Gloucestershire and Bristol.

The limitation that journey to work is only one type of trip out of many journeys that women (and men) make. On top of this there is a population of retired women (75+), who also have a range of transport needs that may be shaped by different health needs, and access to health care; and who may need to continue working or participate in the voluntary sector (e.g. working in charity shops, WRVS, etc) and thus may need to travel during peak hours.

### 5.1.3 Families with dependent children

One major factor affecting women's employment and travel that has been noted by existing research on women and transport is the impact of dependent children. As noted earlier more women escort children to education and other activities than men. Of the four local authorities, more households have dependent children<sup>19</sup> in North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, while Bristol has the highest number of households with a lone parent.

**Table 3 Percentage of all households with dependent children by Local Authority (Census 2011)**

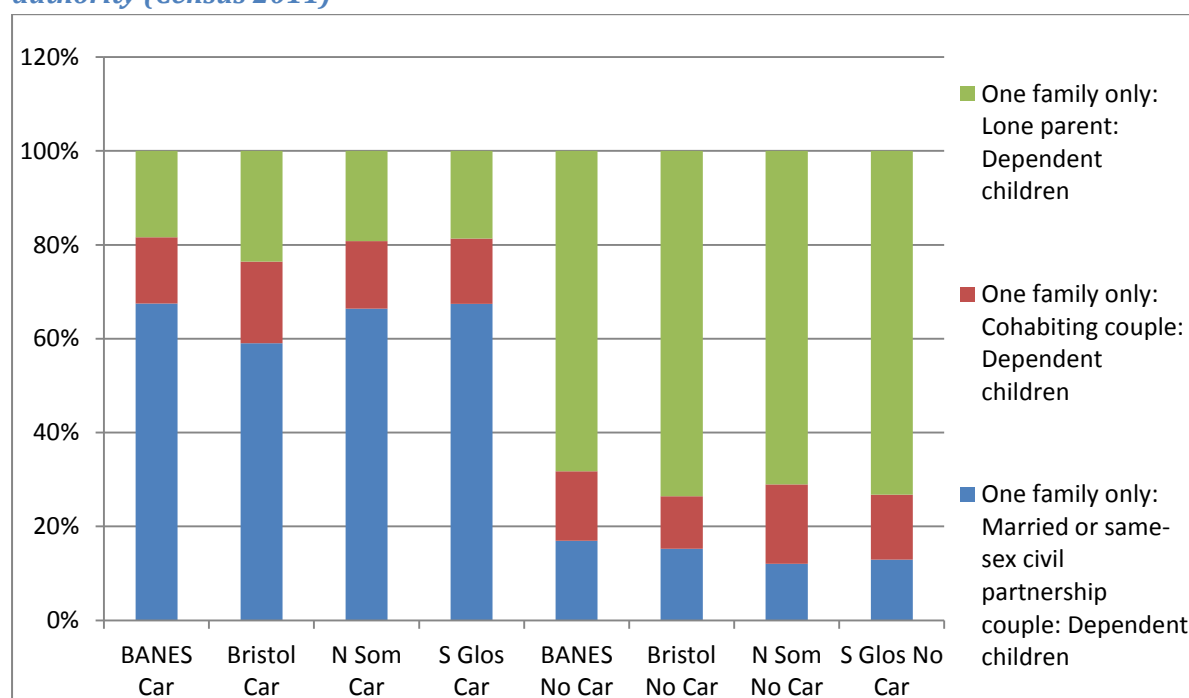
	BANES	BRISTOL	N. SOM	S. GLOS
Couples (Married, Civil Partnership, Cohabiting) with dependent children	16.6%	16.1%	19.4%	22.4%
Lone parent with dependent children	5.7%	8.2%	6.1%	6.4%

While figure 2 illustrates that couples with dependent children are more likely to have a car than lone parents, it should be remembered that women may not have access to a car in households with only one car. Single parents, without access to a car, who living in the more rural areas of the four local authorities and the urban peripheries of Bristol and Bath, may face greater risks of transport exclusion due to a less dense network and lower frequency of bus services to reach main employment centres than those living more proximate to urban centres or other employment areas, as well as experiencing higher transport costs and travel times due to distance.

Not having a car can be problematic. However it should not be overlooked that not all women in a couple relationship with a car may have limited access to the car. Given the much higher percentage of families living in South Gloucestershire, many of whom will be living in Bristol's urban fringe, these women may be facing equal challenges to those living without a car in Bristol itself.

<sup>19</sup> A dependent child in the Census is classified as under 18 in full time education. Those aged 16-18 who are not in full time education are not classified as dependent.

**Figure 2: Proportions of households with dependent children by car or no car by local authority (Census 2011)**



#### 5.1.4 Distance travelled to work

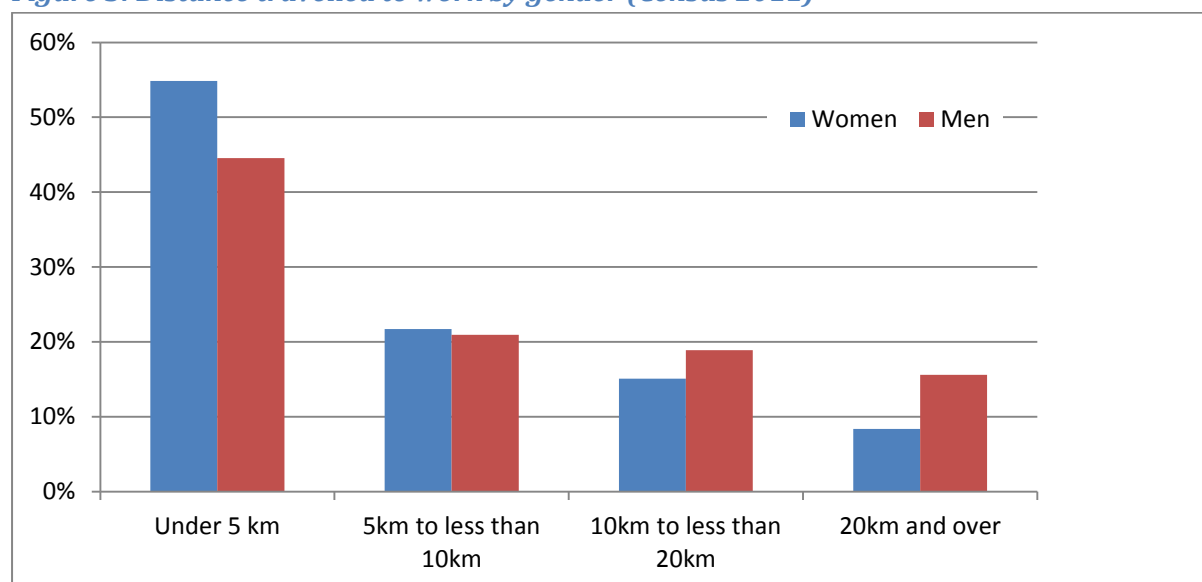
Data collected by the census gives an “as the crow flies” distance between home and workplace postcodes<sup>20</sup>. This data is useful to provide evidence for gender differences, and confirms other evidence that women tend to work closer to home than men. However, this data is unable to show the more complex journey patterns made, such as dropping off children at childcare or school on the way to work, which may add to the distance and time actually travelled. Likewise, for public transport users may have to travel into a city centre and out again making the journey much longer than the actual distance between home and work. Mapping (with GIS) of origin and destination data in at an aggregate level could enable the visualisation of dominant spatial relationships between smaller geographic areas within Bristol.

In the West of England area the variations in travel patterns and modes by area are indicative to the geographic context of urban and rural areas, i.e. Bristol has higher levels of public transport use than the other areas, and people are more likely to live closer to their work. Figure 3 demonstrates that in the four local authorities women are more likely to travel shorter distances to work (under 5km), and more men than women travel long distances to work. Looking specifically at the distance women that travel (figs 4, 5 & 6) Bristol has more women working closer to home than in any of the

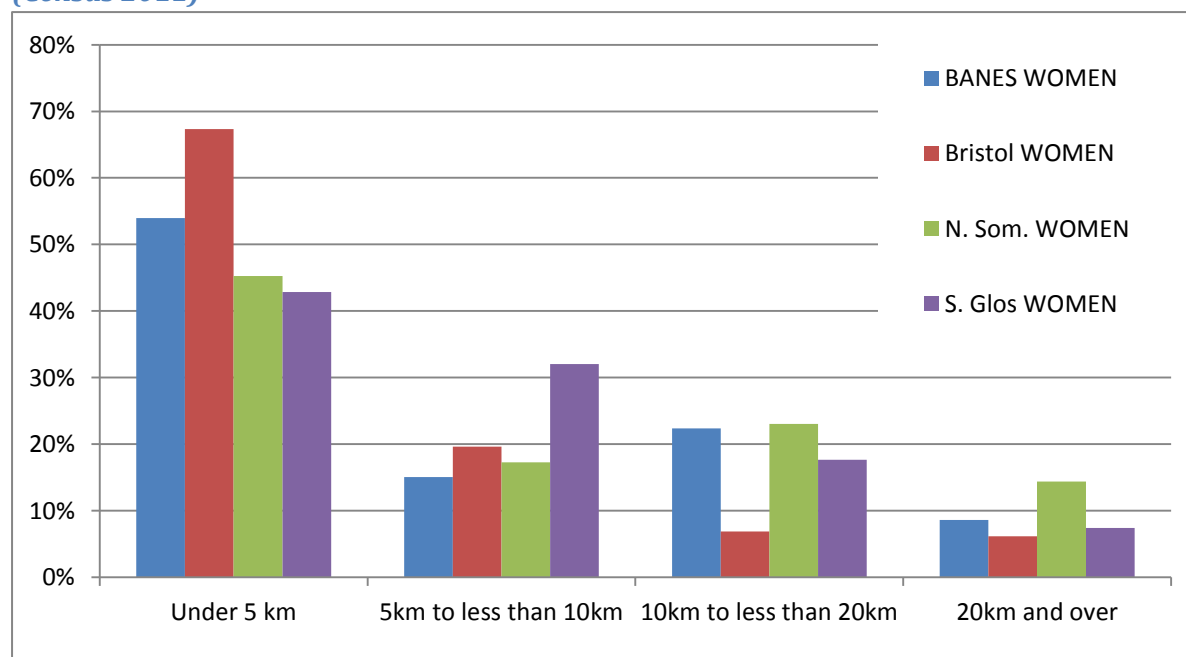
<sup>20</sup> “This applies to the distance in kilometres between a person’s residential postcode and their workplace postcode, measured in a straight line. Derived distances that result in a distance travelled that exceeds 1200km are treated as invalid and a value is imputed. A distance travelled of 0.1km indicates that the workplace postcode is the same as the residential postcode”  
<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs702ew.pdf> - 22 May 2014

other three local authorities; for part-time workers all four local authorities have more people working within 5km than those working full time. More women living in North Somerset travel longer distances to work than the other three areas. One assumption that could be made is that part-time workers have less time available for travel to work, and therefore have greater reliance on local jobs that may limit their opportunities where local employment is either orientated to particular skills or offers only low-paid work. However, a more detailed enquiry at a refined geographic scale would need to confirm such an assumption.

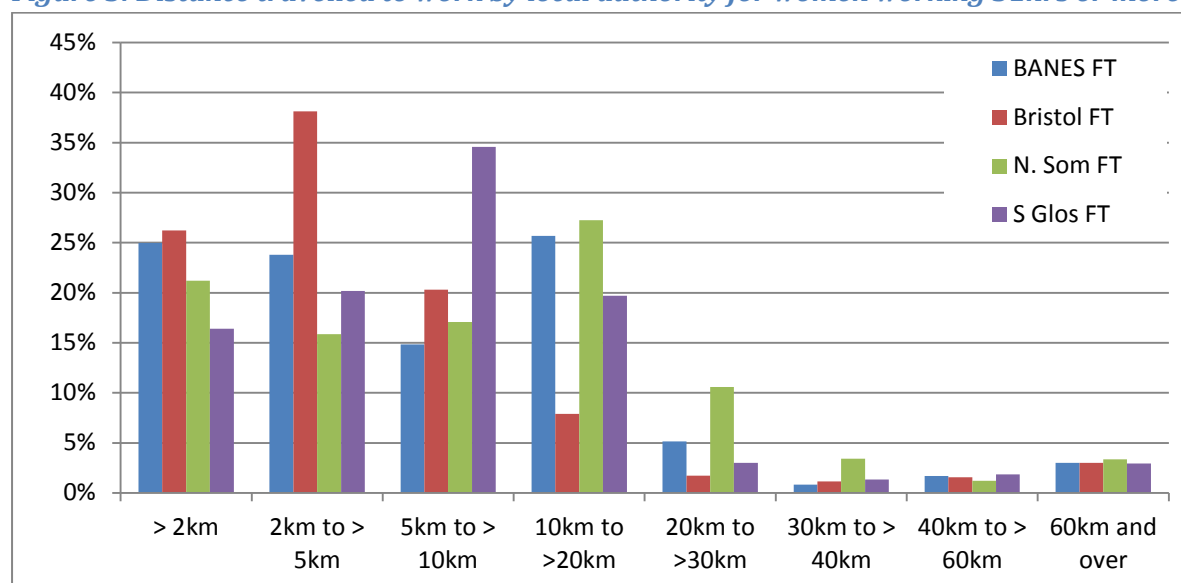
**Figure 3: Distance travelled to work by gender (Census 2011)**



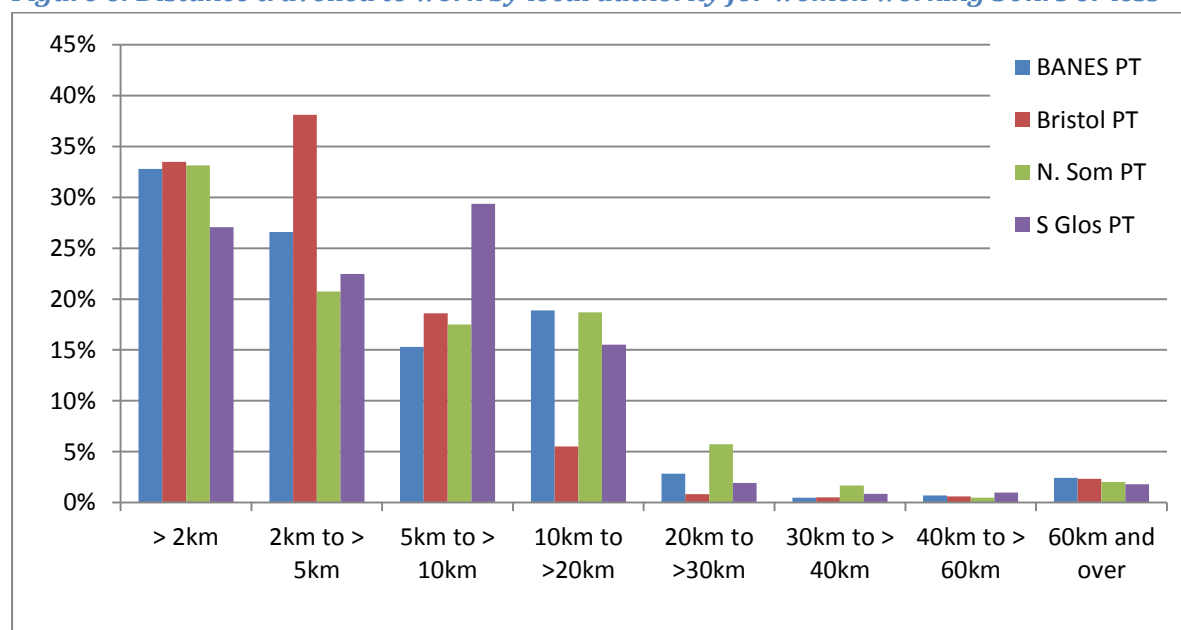
**Figure 4: Distance travelled to work by local authority for all women in employment. (Census 2011)**



**Figure 5: Distance travelled to work by local authority for women working 31hrs or more**



**Figure 6: Distance travelled to work by local authority for women working 30hrs or less**



(Part-time hours in the Census are grouped at 30 hours or less. This grouping could mask greater variation between working 16 hours or less and those employed on 17-30 hours.)

Proximity to work may affect the mode used, particularly the viability of walking and cycling. Thus, the numbers of people living closer to work in Bristol is likely to be a factor in the higher levels of active travel.

### 5.1.5 Modes use to travel to work

Looking only at women's travel to work, the Census 2011 data indicates a greater reliance on the car for women in rural areas than in Bristol. Reflecting national trends fewer women cycle to work, although the proportion of women cycling in Bristol is much higher than the surrounding area. The higher levels of walking to work in Bristol and South Gloucestershire are indicative of the level of urban population.

*Figure 7: Mode of women's travel to work as a percentage by local authority. (Census 2011)*

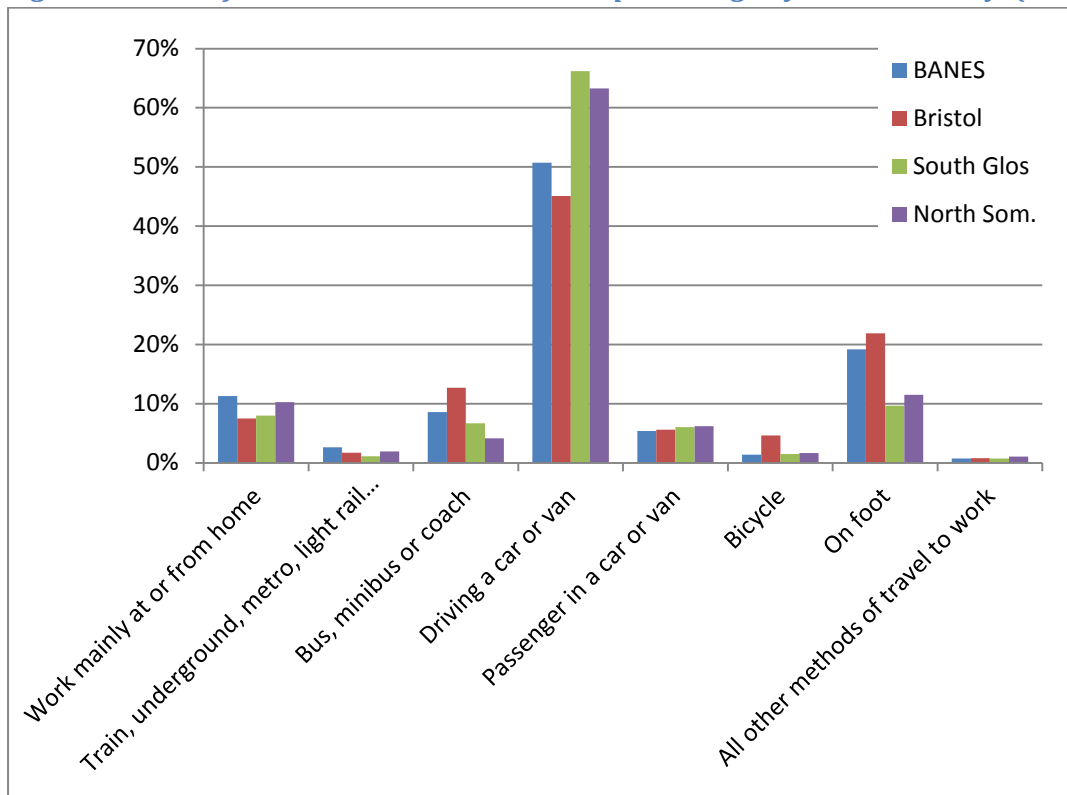


Figure 7 is a reminder that the car as a means of accessing employment still predominates. For transport planners the dominance of the car is problematic, as discussed earlier in the report, and the emphasis is shifting travel to work from the car to public transport or active travel modes, as well as encouraging car sharing. Women may choose to travel to work by car for a variety of reasons, as well as to other activities, even if there are alternative options (see section 5).

The Shifting Gears survey data also assists in elucidating why there are barriers to using public transport for women to which this report now turns.

## 5.2 Bristol Women's Voice Travel Survey 'Shifting Gears'

The Bristol Women's Voice (BWV) conducted a travel survey in 2013 that generated evidence from 124 women and tables 4 and 5 provide their age and residential location. An electronic link for this online survey was distributed via different networks and some survey forms were completed manually and subsequently entered by the BWV. Most of the respondents live within the Bristol City boundary, although a few are from postcodes that incorporate South Gloucestershire (e.g. BS16), and three in North Somerset. Some postcodes such as BS11 are not represented at all, and are more likely to have higher levels of deprivation and engagement. The aim of the survey is to capture any barriers to participation (socially and economically) caused by public transport.

**Table 4: Age profile of the Shifting Gears Survey**

Age	Frequency (number)	Percent
Not given	20	16.1
18 to 24	8	6.5
25 to 34	23	18.5
35 to 44	25	20.2
45 to 54	16	12.9
55 to 64	29	23.4
75 or older	3	2.4
Total	124	100.0

**Table 5: Geographic distribution of Place of Residences (Shifting Gears)**

	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	75 or older	No Answer	Total
BS1	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	5
BS2	1	4	1	0	1	1	1	9
BS3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
BS4	1	3	4	4	7	0	1	20
BS5	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	8
BS6	0	8	5	2	7	0	2	24
BS7	1	2	4	2	4	1	4	18
BS8	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
BS9	0	0	3	0	2	0	1	6
BS10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
BS13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
BS14	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
BS15	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
BS16	2	0	1	3	3	0	3	12
BS20*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
BS21*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
BS23*	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
No Answer	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	6
Total	8	23	25	16	29	3	20	124

\*Post code areas completely in North Somerset

There were three main strands of enquiry to the survey: cost, lack of public transport, and safety, which drilled down to impacts on access to employment, education, health and social activities. There is little variation between the responses for the four destination activities, but social activities appear to be more affected than employment. This finding may be attributed to the fact that many social activities are discretionary and therefore cost is more closely evaluated as 'value for money', and they may occur in the evening when services are less frequent and concerns about safety rise due to the dark. However, due to the small numbers of responses it is difficult to assess any statistical significance without the merging of groups, which would then lose any meaning.

One of the challenges imposed by the lack of information about car ownerships/access to a car particularly relates to questions such as 'does the cost of public transport exclude you from any of the following'. While between 40-61% across the four activities indicate it never affects them, the majority of comments qualify this type of choice by stating (1) they have a car, (2) they have a bus pass, or (3) they cycle/walk. One comment relates to the cost of travelling with children makes bus travel too expensive. However, what does stand out is that cost of public transport can particularly affect access to social activities, particularly for younger women.

The Shifting Gears data indicates that more people believe that lack of public transport affects their ability to access social and leisure activities more than their employment. However, half of the 8 younger respondents were affected accessing employment, and this warrants further investigation due to the small numbers in this sample.

**Table 6: Does the cost of public transport exclude you from leisure or social activities by age (Shifting Gears)**

What is your age?	Does the cost of public transport exclude you from leisure or social activities					Total
	No Answer	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	
No Age Given	4	2	2	2	10	20
18 to 24	0	3	3	1	1	8
25 to 34	0	2	2	11	8	23
35 to 44	0	1	8	8	8	25
45 to 54	1	1	4	3	7	16
55 to 64	5	1	5	5	13	29
75 or older	1	0	0	0	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>124</b>
	<b>(9%)</b>	<b>(8%)</b>	<b>(19%)</b>	<b>(24%)</b>	<b>(40%)</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

**Table 7: Does the cost of public transport exclude you from employment by age (Shifting Gears)**

What is your age?	Does the cost of public transport exclude you from employment					Total
	No response	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	
No Age Given	5	1	3	0	11	20
18 to 24	0	0	2	2	4	8
25 to 34	0	2	1	7	13	23
35 to 44	2	1	2	6	14	25
45 to 54	1	2	0	3	10	16
55 to 64	8	0	2	5	14	29
75 or older	1	0	0	0	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b> <b>(14%)</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<b>10</b> <b>(8%)</b>	<b>23</b> <b>(19%)</b>	<b>68</b> <b>(55%)</b>	<b>124</b> <b>(100%)</b>

**Table 8: Does the lack of public transport prevent you from getting to leisure or social activity by age (Shifting Gears)**

Leisure or social activity	What is your age?							Total
	Age not given	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	75 or older	
No response	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	5
Always	3	2	1	1	1	2	0	10
Often	3	2	2	7	1	3	0	18
Sometimes	7	2	13	12	9	15	2	60
Never	6	2	7	5	4	7	0	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>124</b>

**Table 9: Does the lack of public transport prevent you from getting to employment by age (Shifting Gears)**

employment	What is your age?							Total
	Age not given	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	75 or older	
No response	3	0	1	0	0	8	1	13
Always	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	7
Often	0	3	1	2	2	1	0	9
Sometimes	6	1	8	9	4	7	0	35
Never	9	4	12	13	8	12	2	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>124</b>

Lack of public transport can be interpreted in multiple ways depending on the context. One can assume lack can include infrequent services, not being proximate to a bus route, or services that

operate in restricted hours. Again there are more responses indicating some impact on social/leisure activities than compared to accessing work.

In terms of safety far more people are concerned about travelling after 6pm by public transport, than during the day. The following two tables indicate that there is concern about safety at bus stops and trains, and being on the bus. More than half the group indicate concern for safety while waiting and travelling by bus after 6pm has affected them, with a small number clearly seeing safety as a reason not to travel at night by public transport. It is likely then that there is an association between safety and barriers to social activities, as well as for employment for people working evening and night shifts.

**Table 10: Do any of the following prevent you from using public transport b) after 6pm Safety at local bus stops and trains by age(Shifting Gears)**

Safety at local bus stops and trains	What is your age?							Total
	No age	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	75 or older	
No response	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	8
Always	3	1	0	1	0	3	0	8
Often	0	1	4	7	3	3	0	18
Sometimes	6	3	6	8	8	12	2	45
Never	5	3	13	9	5	9	1	45
Total	20	8	23	25	16	29	3	124

**Table 11: Do any of the following prevent you from using public transport b) after 6pm Safety on the bus by age(Shifting Gears)**

Safety on the bus	What is your age?							Total
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	75 or older	
	6	0	0	1	0	3	0	10
Always	3	1	0	1	0	3	0	8
Often	1	1	3	7	2	3	0	17
Sometimes	3	2	7	6	9	10	1	38
Never	7	4	13	10	5	10	2	51
Total	20	8	23	25	16	29	3	124

The question asking about physical access issues 32% of respondents indicated having a buggy was an issue compared to just over 3% being wheelchair users, but very few people in the survey indicated that they had a disability. More people indicated that they had difficulty with walking (42%) than other access issues. Comments worth noting relating to this particular issue but not dealt with in the following section, is that people are affected by bus drivers starting to move before passengers reaching a seat. One other comment of value was associated with the storage of bags (e.g. shopping/luggage) being a problem and connects with the discussion of buggies in the following section.

### 5.3 Summary

The Census 2014 highlights some of the differences of women's and men's travel in the West of England Region, and the flows in and out of Bristol. In particular it notes that women living in Bristol are more likely to take local jobs, but while bus, walking and cycling demonstrate higher levels of patronage than in other areas, travelling to work remains the main mode for women. Without data on other journeys (e.g. school run, shopping, etc) it is difficult to understand the more complex journeys that many women may make and the impact of transport infrastructures and service provision on these broader sets of journeys.

The Shifting Gears survey starts to indicate some of the challenges for women's travel, and the importance of understanding non-work related journeys in terms of social participation. While this survey represents only some of Bristol's women, their particular concerns focus on issues such as cost, orbital routes, personal safety, and accessibility of transport with buggies, which are expressed in the comments. The comments in the 'open' sections are brought together with the findings from the focus groups and interviews presented in the next section.

## 6 Women's Perceptions, Experiences, and Needs.

The views of women who use the transport network in Bristol are important to understanding the specific barriers and challenges that should be addressed. This section of the report brings together evidence from open questions the BWV 'Shifting Gears' survey, and focus groups and interviews with women who live in Bristol. (See appendix 1 and 2 for details about the sample.) Not all respondents completed the 'open questions' on the Shifting Gears Survey. While these comments add value to understanding issues, it is difficult to make generalizable assumptions from this data; however, it should also be noted that just because people do not make a comment it should not be assumed there is "nothing wrong".

In general the women who participated in the focus groups/interviews were not overtly *excluded* from essential activities because of transport, for example not being able to take up a job offer, or attend a hospital appointment; but social activities seem to be more affected. This outcome reflects the limitations of the sample involved in the research. However, these women expressed how choices around work, shopping, and social activities are directly and indirectly influenced by journey times, travel information, personal and road safety, cost of public transport, public transport frequency and routes, public transport waiting environment, walking and cycling infrastructures, and work place parking. Some of these women had been active in some aspect of campaigning for transport improvements, and were frustrated by the way people were consulted and represented.

Women who were parents were more likely to find that their journeys to work or other events was affected by managing children's needs and care (e.g. dropping off at school). This group raised specific issues about children's independent mobility, the cost of children's travel on buses, the challenges of travelling with babies and younger children on public transport, and the suitability of car clubs for families.

In total, the women in the focus groups demonstrated how they utilize strategies to manage their mobility needs and desires, and highlighted that women (of all ages) sometime impose 'self-limitations' to participating in some activities in response to the transport 'offer' available to them:

*"I could do it but.."*

*"But it's a lot of effort isn't it"*

*"..life's too short, you know so I don't. I think ...I've got friends who again make the same- they self-limit what they do based on what is easy to do by public transport or by walking" (FG 65+)*

This part of the report will consider four themes that connect the Shifting Gears survey with the focus groups/interviews – cost, public transport routes and frequency, reliability and safety. It then picks up a number of other issues raised in the focus groups/interviews about the walking and cycling environments and the specific needs of women with children.

### 6.1 The cost of travel.

The cost of travelling received the most comments in the Shifting Gears survey.

*"Will use the car more often due to cost." (Shifting Gears)*

*"I cycle instead which is free." (Shifting Gears)*

*"Make bus fares cheaper so it's affordable to get the bus" (Shifting Gears)*

Cost was also a strong theme in the focus groups and interviews in a variety of ways. In particular the women in the 65+ focus group explored how women are more likely to be economically poorer than men, either because their pensions tend to be smaller or that they may not be economically active due to being at home with small children. For example:

*“You can say costs they affect everyone who is poor but there are more poor women in families than poor men and in that sense you could label it a gender issue, an issue of poverty as it affects women”*

*“Yes my daughter in law is not working the children are little and she finds it very expensive. She is dreading the day she’s got to start paying for the children ... and it restricts their lives because they can’t afford to go across town or and it does restrict them.” (FG 65+)*

In the focus groups the Diamond Card was described as liberating and a great benefit by those old enough to be in receipt of one.

*“This is a women’s health issue ...The bus is for them liberation, its good health its being able to socialise it being able to be part of the world...” (FG 65+)*

Thus, the cost of travel was expressed most by the under 65s, although the some of the women with the Diamond Card discussed the cost of travelling before 9am. The benefit of the Diamond Card was also noted in the Shifting Gears survey.

*“I have a bus pass, which is very valuable to me” (Shifting Gears)*

*“I come in so far in the car and then I use the park and ride because its free, otherwise I wouldn’t come into town as it would be too expensive”*

*“Those cards are a god send aren’t they?”*

*“Oh we all need one” (FG 65+)*

However, one mother questioned the validity of the universal older person’s bus pass, giving the example of her parents being able to afford to pay the fare, whereas she was struggling to pay to travel by bus with her children. She did acknowledge the difficulty of administering any means tested benefit.

It was recognised by some in the focus groups that recent changes in the fare structure by FirstBus in Bristol had been helpful, but many people seem confused about bus fares, especially if they were not regular users, and where to find the information. In particular, it was not clear where fare stage boundaries were (£1.50-£2.50), and the participants did not have a clear idea of the cost of child fares or the availability of family tickets.

The interviews with the mothers reveals that when on a limited budget travelling together with friends with young children by car was seen as more economic than travelling by bus (ie. two adult fares at £4 each). They also noted that once children were a fare paying age that the additional cost was a further disincentive to catch the bus as free parking often could be found, or parking charges, were similar or less than the bus ticket. Focus group participants were also put off travelling for shorter multiple trips by bus because of the cost.

Cost was particular issue to those living further out of the city, and there appeared to be some frustration regarding having to by a FirstDay ticket (£4) because of the move to single only fares.

One person noted that where work place parking charges that were made on an annual basis had been paid, there was a disincentive to using the bus for some trips as it was perceived as an additional cost.

Two women who worked with refugees raised a very pertinent point about this particular group. This group has an extremely limited amount of money, and one participant described how they may be housed in areas of Bristol at some distance from the ESOL classes and other refugee services (a £4 day ticket out of their daily allowance of £5 is a significant cost)<sup>21</sup>. Also these women may pay for children travelling in their care (an £8 family ticket is only available after 9am on a weekday for 2 adults + 3 children). However, it was noted by the other participant that some refugees can obtain free bus travel, but it may not be easy or clear to them how to do so. This participant also questioned whether cultural attitudes towards women's mobility (i.e. stay at home with the children) were further embedded with the ghettoization of immigrants and refugees, and thus reducing the opportunity for developing English language skills and the ability for wider social integration.

A further point was raised about the increasing cost of community transport for charities facilitating trips for housebound elderly people, making it difficult to continue activities and thus having an impact on mental health and well-being. Women are more likely to be in the very old group. Also older people who are undertaking voluntary work often find it expensive to travel.

*"I have friends who are doing voluntary work and they can't afford to travel, they can't even afford to go on the bus." (FG 65+)*

It should be noted that no-one mentioned the cost of running car, or the cost of petrol, except for one mother, who justified the added expense of having two cars in terms of the liberation and freedom it offered her.

## **6.2 Public transport routes and frequency.**

The focus groups and interviewees talked about bus routes: having to change buses in the centre, orbital routes, and loss of services. One focus group participant, who had not too long move to Bristol, found understanding the bus route information very difficult and this was a barrier to her using the bus. In particular, she found the abstracted map difficult to relate to the real geography, and wondered why the information produced by Transport for London was so much easier to use.

There were some very positive accounts of good routes taking interviewees from the northern/eastern suburbs directly into to Bristol, and to some of their other local amenities. Generally if you want a bus into the city centre then there is often a bus route, but this was not for all people.

*"I generally walk because the bus doesn't go where I want to go" (FG65+)*

---

<sup>21</sup> The figure for the daily allowance was given as £5 by the participant.

Changing buses in the city centre can be a barrier for people. The barrier may be associated with the need to walk some distance between stops with bags and/or children and/or mobility problems, as well as issue of safety personal safety. It is also seen as time wasting. Where an area is served by two bus services, and the stops for these services are in different locations can be a problem. This issue was raised one participant who had struggled when she had a minor foot injury. Another perceive the lack of direct bus to Southmead Hospital from where she live a barrier to accessing the hospital as she would need to walk 20 minutes to reach a direct bus. One focus group participant indicated that she would drive to work if she was attending a medical appointment, because of needing a two stage route with one section being across areas.

*“More bus routes that cross the city tangentially” (Shifting Gears)*

There was a general perception that there was a lack of orbital routes, which affect the flexibility of using the bus, and the need for more orbital routes was noted by a number of participants in the Shifting Gears survey.

Cuts in bus services were noted in the focus groups and interviews.

*“I’ve noticed recently there have been some bus cuts in services recently and for instance I was in St Werberg’s the other day on a Sunday and the last bus was 7 o’clock and I couldn’t do what I wanted to do, so I had to get a lift from somebody... They’ve also cut a service to where I live.” FG 18-64 nd*

Specifically the cut in the bus route number 25 was raised by Brenda. Although this did not particularly affect her traveling to work, it impacted on her social activities and through the renewed need to escort her children to out of school activities. The 25 route had previously enabled the children to travel independently to their drama club at the Tobacco Factory. The problem with bus route 5 is that it only goes as far as Rupert/Nelson Street, and Brenda was concerned about their personal safety to wait or change at these locations (poor lighting, enclosed, lonely space), thus the parents (usually the mother) is now obliged to walk with the children the full return journey twice in the evening after work.

The lack of obvious connections between Bristol Temple Meads and the bus station was noted and also the difficulty of direct access to Bristol Temple Meads by bus from many areas of the city make it challenging with heavy bags.

### **6.3 Delays and unreliability of public transport**

The focus group participants noted that the count-down displays helped them manage their public transport usage, and recognised that delays were an outcome of road congestion at peak hours. Generally there were very positive comments about the real time information helping them to feel safer when travelling. One participant stated that if there was a long wait indicated then she would walk to the next stop rather than wait and feel unsafe at a bus stop. However, there were some complaints that the next bus displays did not always work and concerned that this could put some people off using buses.

*“The other thing that I thought was good was when they introduced the illuminated displays saying the bus is coming, but sometimes in the morning even though generally it’s not bad I’d of stood and one’s coming in 2 minutes, 2 minutes, 2 minutes and the five minutes went*

*passed and it didn't come and then a bus that wasn't due came ahead" (FG 18-64 no dependents)*

Sometimes buses were also noted to come that when they were not indicated and participant had temporarily left the bus stop and then missed the bus

Frustration was expressed particularly when services on a low frequency (i.e. three per hour or fewer) failed to turn up, as then the wait could be 40 minutes or more for the next bus. This extended wait and delay can be critical for meeting appointments, other connecting services or work, as well as feeling vulnerable at a bus stop, or needing to keep children entertained and safe while waiting. Participants noted that they had to build in extra time for each trip by public transport, and this need was particularly difficult to women with children who also found it difficult to organise small children out of the house for a specific time.

Three of the participants/interviewees worked in education and noted that delays and unreliability affected their work, with students often arriving late into the class, so that morning classes were often disrupted. One of these women thought it was that the (younger) students had a poor sense of timekeeping and needed to catch an earlier bus, but also recognised that students may be travelling quite long distances into Bristol (from south Wales, Gloucestershire and Somerset and beyond) for further education.

#### **6.4 Personal safety walking, cycling and bus travel.**

Mostly safety was talked about in terms of personal safety at night, but one women described how she felt vulnerable on buses due to overcrowding during peak times. In the Shifting Gears survey the open responses to the question about safety indicating concern with travelling at night, and most of the comments connected to the question about travelling during the day were actually about travelling in the evening.

All the women were concerned with personal safety at night, although one of the mothers with young children indicated that they rarely went out alone at night due to the phase of life they were in. The main points were around walking through the city centre and waiting at bus stops, as they felt vulnerable if travelling alone. The older group were particularly fearfully of being mugged.

*"I have an alarm. I have my mobile phone switched on and I have an alarm with me I don't like having to do that" (FG 65+)*

One of the mothers described how she had been mugged walking home in a group, and personal safety was her biggest concern with travelling around the area. She relayed how she had learnt to drive at 18 and had relied on a car most of her life because she felt safer driving. However, in recent years they had decided as a family to live without a car (sharing a car with friends for weekend/holiday trips), thus by reducing their costs by not having a car she felt she could justify the costs of taking a taxi when required because it would take her door to door.

Other women (who had a partner) indicated that they chose not to travel into Bristol at night alone and indicated it would be rare for them to go anywhere unaccompanied (e.g. the cinema or theatre). Two women who were single also used taxis for this reason, but one of them described how cycling around made her feel safer in places that she wouldn't normally walk through.

One of the challenges for public transport is that it can never replace the door to door experience of car travel, and Brenda expressed this was exactly why she would prefer to get a taxi than travel by bus particularly in the evening. Many women felt vulnerable waiting at the bus stop especially in winter evenings in places where there was low lighting and few people. However, where there were people, these could be undesirable people, with women expressing concern about drunks and people with mental health problems.

*"I would get the car at night because I wouldn't want to hang around for a bus at night because of the safety concern" (FG 18-64 no dependents)*

Similar concerns about undesirable others were also associated with travelling on the bus, especially at night.

*"I would be more nervous hanging around the bus stop than if I were on the bus." (FG 18-64 no dependents)*

*"I used not to like going out at nights, but now I do and I've got used to it." (FG 18-64 no dependents)*

This second quote came from a who identified she preferred to travel through places that were busy than quiet as this made her feel safer, and she also identified a particular place to walk through as dangerous – The Bear Pit.

*"Have you ever been in the Bear Pit at night?"*

*"No"*

*"Neither have I and I wouldn't fancy it. Would anyone else? Would you?"*

*"If I were walking through the Bear Pit it would be because I was out in the evening with someone" (FG 18-64 no dependents)*

This particular location was also raised by the 65+ FG. One of the women believed that there were plans to make a walkway for pedestrians and cyclists above the area but believed that it was not really tackling the problem (down below) and that this new infrastructure would have its own safety problems due to the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

Other lonely places women avoided were the cycle path (Bristol-Bath) and multi-storey car parks.

*"I don't like multi-storey car parks and they are the same thing the loneliness of them" (FG 18-64 no dependents)*

The evidence indicates that personal safety has a number of different issues and are dependent on the location, personal experience, and perception. The Bear Pit and some bus stops (e.g. Nelson Street as discussed in 5.2) are areas specifically mentioned as places where women were concerned about personal safety.

## **6.5 Road safety – pedestrians and cyclists**

Road and pedestrian safety intersects a number of issues raised across the focus groups and interviews. Mostly the perspective was the pedestrian perspective, but there was some discussion about cycling too. Generally in the 65+ focus group were concerned about the impact of cycling on pavements on the pedestrian, whereas others were more concerned about the safety of cyclists.

This tension is born from the challenge of providing a specific cycle network for cyclists where busy roads are perceived to be too dangerous to cycle along.

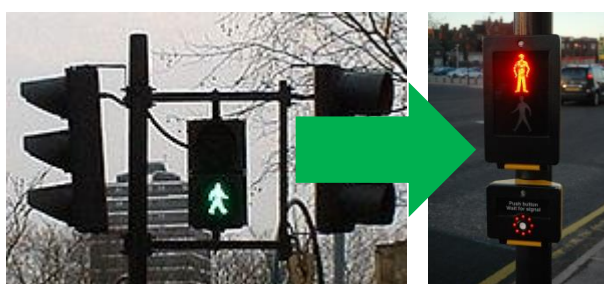
*“The pavements we have to use are part of transport because I am travelling from my home to the city centre. I’m walking and I’m dodging idiots who are cycling on the Gloucester Road pavement along with shoppers, buggies, wheelchair users and older people can’t get out of the way.” (FG 65+)*

In the other focus group there was only one cyclist (a younger woman), and cycling was perceived as far too dangerous by the other two participants. The one cyclist generally felt safe cycling and saw it as the most convenient and quickest way to access her needs. However, she did note that she perceived the infrastructure as unsuitable for women cycling with children and thought this particular group could be missing out on the health and convenience aspects. Two of the mothers with young children also were concerned about safety and cycling with children, particularly because the infrastructure was intermittent and of poor quality in terms of a barrier from the traffic. Thus for one mother to give up her car, not feeling able to cycle with children was a particular barrier.

The two mothers with teenage daughters had two different perspectives of letting their daughter cycle. Brenda praised the opportunities for cycle training offered by Lifecycle in giving her daughter greater freedom. They had paid for training, and their daughter particularly perceive cycling in the dark safer than walking. The other curtailed her daughter from cycling to school because of the lack of good infrastructure through some very busy road junctions.

Women, as main carers, are often concerned with teaching children how to travel safely. In the early years this focuses on learning how to cross roads, and in later years empowering 11+ group to travel independently. Three issues were raised about crossing roads with young children; the design of the signal, the amount of time, and red light jumping. The latter was also a concern for women in focus group 2. These are not gender specific, but where women remain the main carers and walking in greater numbers then it will affect them more than men.

There has been a recent change in the design of road crossing signals from a “green man”<sup>22</sup> signalled on the opposite side of the road, to one that is elbow-shoulder height on the right hand side of the crossing, presumable designed to make the pedestrian to look towards the on-coming traffic (see right).



Anna indicated that the change in design in her local area had made it *more difficult* to cross the road, particularly because the new crossing was visual only and not auditory (no beeps). She described that if the child distracted her it was easy to miss the signal and then a further wait was incurred. Anna (who is a regular car driver) recognises there is a balance to be made between the needs of different road users, but demonstrates the challenges faced because children are unpredictable in their behaviour (or immediate needs), and less patient in waiting. She also illustrate the tension between taking a risk, using adult judgement, to cross a junction diagonally in

<sup>22</sup> The image is of course genderless.

the time given, and imparting the 'rules' to her children to cross sensibly which extends the time taken to cross two roads as only one section can be managed in the time given. This format of road junctions is not unique to this location, and can be found in many high streets across the region.

The time to cross the road, and red light jumping was a concern raised by a number of participants, particularly the women in 65+ focus group, and mothers with younger children. In particular, the focus group women were concerned with cyclists who jumped lights between other vehicles on multi-laned junctions/roads, whereas the mothers were more concerned were pedestrian crossings (toucan/pelican and Zebra) were abused by motorists.

Anna also noted that there was an issue with understanding the speed restrictions in her local area, and that the road went from 20mph outside the school to 30mph where the crossing is located. She suggested a blanket reduction to 20mph might make more sense, as drivers tend to speed up and then ignore the pedestrian crossings.

In summary issues of road safety were generally seen from a pedestrian's point of view. As women walk more than men, this may not be surprising, but it is evident that this is an area for further investigation of for policy despite a walking strategy being in place in Bristol.

## **6.6 Impact of school travel on the commute and working hours.**

Three women with school age children had to negotiate work around dropping off and collecting children from childcare and/or school en route to or from work. For two of the three, this need to either drop off or collect, forced them to travel to work by car, although neither really wished to do so. For Carol the place of work was too distant from home and the school to have enough time between leaving work at 2pm and collecting the children at 3pm. She was reliant on grandparents for childcare and dropping off in the morning, in order to get to work for 9am. Carol noted that her place of work had plenty of car parking spaces which enabled her to continue in this particular job at this location. Travelling to work by bus was possible, but would take involve a change and take at least 90 minutes each way, and likewise cycling would take too long. Carol saw the potential of moving work locations nearer to home as an opportunity to cycle to work.

Dora currently works full time and has the responsibility of getting three children to two schools as her job currently has more flexibility in start/finish times than her husband's work, and is closer. Having children at secondary and primary school has increased her reliance on the car for commuting, and this is partly the outcome of grandparents becoming too ill to help with out of school care. Dora noted there were three reasons for driving her children to secondary school. The first was physical ability of her short and slight daughter who found it tiring to walk 2 miles up hill to school with a heavy bag (which was compounded through her daughter's desire to conform by wearing court shoes as part of the blazer and skirt uniform). The second reason was to ensure the other child went through the gate in the morning, rather than potentially playing truant. The third reason was that travelling independently by bus or cycling were not considered viable options due to the cost of the bus and road safety issues for cycling. (Both these older children walk home after school without an adult.) There is a threefold impact on Dora by driving her children to school. The first is that her onward journey to work is affected by road congestion; the second is that work place parking is often full up by 9am; and the third is that delay due to congestion or finding a parking

place affects her mental well-being (raised anxiety), ability to offer a good service due to effects of anxiety, and make her late for time-sensitive work.

Driving children to school can be an emotive topic, which leads families to be criticised about the impact of their choices on road safety, congestion and the environment. Brenda expressed such sentiments about schools that do not have a geographic restriction on their catchment area generating extra car journeys. She was very pleased to have the opportunity to send her children to a local school to which they could travel to independently either by walking/cycling with local friends or using the suburban train (Severn Beach). Dora had a slightly different perspective about school choice. She suggested that free travel for all school age children would open up more opportunities for school choice for all families, and having to pay for bus travel.

In Bristol it costs parents to send children to schools by public transport if the school is within 'walking distance' or the chosen school is not the closest school (with some exceptions). With two or more children attending it may become economical to drive children to school, and some parents may feel they have little choice because of transport issues. The cost of travel may also

be an additional economic burden for those in Further Education (post 16) where course specialisations may be limited to specific establishments, and students may need connecting buses.

The impact of incorporating the journey to school (or childcare) into the journey affects modal choice, work place parking, and wellbeing. There are many reasons for women taking their children to school, and journey times to school or child care pick up are time sensitive.

## 6.7 The experience of travelling on public transport with babies and young children.

Travelling on the bus with young children can be a very positive experience – children find it fun, and women can find it empowering. Buses were seen by one woman with two children under five to be the easiest way of reaching the city centre, especially as her local bus stopped near the Museum, a leisure destination with the children. Yet participants raised some challenges faced with using buses with pushchairs.

Firstly, travelling with babies/toddlers necessitates carrying a lot of stuff (changing, toys, drinks, food), often in the basket under the pushchair. While respondents were very pleased that most buses are accessible, this was negated by the anxiety of whether space for a further pushchair would be available. A number of the Shifting Gears participants had also noted the problems of travelling with a buggy on buses. Stuff carried under the pushchair makes it harder to fold, and carrying a baby (perhaps with a slightly older toddler) with a folded pushchair and bags can be difficult. Likewise there is little space to store folded pushchairs (and bags) on many buses. Women with

### Who is eligible?

For pupils aged 5 - 16, travel support is provided between home and school if:

- pupils attend the nearest appropriate school as determined by the Local Authority and the distance between home and school exceeds the statutory walking distance ie two miles or more for pupils under 8 years of age and three miles or more for pupils aged 8-16 (accompanied as necessary).
- Additionally, children aged between 8 and 11 years from **low income families** are entitled to travel support where they live more than two miles from their nearest, appropriate, qualifying school.
- Children aged 11 to 16 from **low income families** are entitled to travel support from their home to one of their three nearest qualifying schools as designated by the Local Authority if the distance is between two and six miles or to their nearest, suitable preferred school on grounds of religion or belief, if the distance is between two miles and 15 miles.

[www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/school-travel](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/school-travel)

toddlers and carrying a baby found it difficult if they had to stand and hold onto children. However, when the bus was empty it was perceived as an ideal way of reaching the city centre.

Secondly, negotiating the pushchair onto the bus can cause delays. While most bus drivers are patient and helpful, it was noted that there were occasions where they were not, which adds to the anxiety and stress of the journey. Occasionally passengers are also unpleasant and unhelpful to parents negotiating the bus with babies too.

One mother, who had breastfed her baby in a number of public places indicated that she would have been very reluctant to breastfeed on a bus, thus choosing to use the car over public transport while the baby was under the age of one. The reason given was that it would be too uncomfortable to breastfeed on the bus because buses are quite bumpy and jerky.

Buses therefore can be a great way for families to travel, but there is a lot of anxiety around bus travel with young children and it can be physically difficult when buses are full.

## **6.8 Improvements to public transport?**

The Shifting Gears survey asked women how what they would like to see improved in terms of public transport and this was answered using free text. The cost of travel was the most important aspect commented upon, with most people indicating that they viewed the price as being too high, and a few comments about a cross network (Oyster-style) travel card were associated with costs. While fewer people talked about reliability, this was the second most important desire, with a couple of people noting the need for more bus lanes/policing of bus lanes to improve flows. Other comments demonstrated the challenge of managing the demand for accessible space between wheelchair users and parents with buggies. A few people commented on bus routes and these comments focused on more through routes to reduce changes in the centre and more orbital routes.

## **6.9 Consultation with women**

Some of the women involved in this research have taken part in surveys or other research, or have become active in campaigning around a transport related issue. They felt that often if they did feed into consultation, they did not know how their voices had shaped the outcome, if at all. Others felt that those in authority had not gained control of producing an integrated transport approach and were failing the needs of the city. The older women in particular perceived that cycling was being given too greater focus over the needs of pedestrians.

## **6.10 Summary**

Women experience a diverse set of issues when travelling. While none of the focus group/interview participants presented major barriers to accessing work, education, health care or social activities, they all indicate issues that affected their daily mobility. Personal safety at bus stops and walking in locations like the Bear Pit impacted on travel choices. Some bus cuts had affected social activities. Cost of bus travel also impacted on travel behaviour. The design of pedestrian crossings and red light jumping were also considered an important issue. Travelling on buses with babies and young children also needs to be made easier for women. Specific issues around very economically deprived women, such as refugees, warrants further investigation.

## 7 Conclusions

This research demonstrates that transport planning and provision in the West of England region needs to define what women's transport needs are and how to respond to these needs through a more equitable process. The Equalities Impact Assessment does serve a useful process, but this mechanism should not be the only way of considering equality. A more proactive approach to considering gender, as illustrated by examples from Sweden and Austria, can result in some useful outcomes for everyone, not just women.

However, stakeholders need help. They are not unwilling to consider gender, but it appears they often have little knowledge or resources to tackle gender mainstreaming head on. This includes knowing how to access women in the consultation process. The suggestion of using neighbourhood partnerships is a useful one. Women who are active in responding to consultations do not feel that their voices are being heard or listened to, and therefore communicating back to participants is as important as collecting their opinions.

On a positive note, some stakeholders saw the potential of current transport planning goals – particularly around increasing levels of public transport or stimulating opportunities for local jobs, as helping women. In taking forward such proposals stakeholders (local authorities, providers and employers) need to consider the routes and frequency of services that serve women as well as men, and this may mean considering different types of transport options (e.g. demand responsive transport). However, many trips by women are not for work, and 'care' related journeys need to be given equal value to those that are directly related to the economy.

Walking should be prioritised as a mode of transport, as most people walk whether for full journeys or as part of multi-modal trips (e.g. car park to city shopping, bus stop to place of work). For example, timings at crossing points should be made to pedestrian advantage, and abuse of crossings needs to be addressed. A resolution needs to be made about shared space for pedestrians and cyclists so that pedestrians are not disadvantaged. This is not to say that cycling should not be encouraged; and continuous cycling infrastructure that makes it safer for women and children to cycle would be welcomed by women.

The perception of that public transport costs are high in Bristol. For some of the poorest women this may well be an issue; and measures to alleviate transport related poverty needs to be examined in greater detail, including that of refugees. The challenges of travelling by bus with young children need further investigation by those who commission and manage services as well as private sector suppliers. Likewise, the location of interchange bus stops and their environment needs consideration from a gender perspective, notably the interchanges along Rupert and Nelson Street in Bristol city centre would benefit from improved lighting, seating, etc. The impact of service cuts on women should also be evaluated. There is also an opportunity to examine how public transport travel information can better serve women and their particular needs.

Finally, the relationship between transport and other policies – economy, health, housing, education, etc, should not be disregarded, and an integrated response to gender equality in Bristol is necessary, especially if more sustainable transport choices are to be encouraged through political decision making.

## **Appendix 1 Methodological Considerations**

### **Shifting Gears**

Data was supplied from the Shifting Gears survey. There are some limitations with the design of this survey, and it is recommended these are addressed in future surveys. Firstly, as it has not captured any information about their existing travel behaviour (e.g. access to a car and public transport use) and these are likely to affect women's perceptions of public transport. Some of the age groups are very small or zero. The views of hard to reach groups such as younger women and the less educated are important to considering the future trajectories for gender equity. Some questions were not answered, possibly because they were not deemed relevant (e.g. older women not answering about education).

The impact of very small numbers makes it difficult to move beyond the descriptive statistics to seek any statistical correlations. Thus due to the nature of the data, only descriptive data has been used.

### **Focus Group and Interviews Methodology**

Two focus groups were run; the first with women aged 18-4 without dependents, and the second with women aged 65 and over. Despite recruiting seven participants for each of these groups, only three turned up on the day. A third focus group was planned with women aged 18-64 with dependents (children or adults) but there was not enough sign-up for it to run. Hence, one to one interviews were conducted with (3) women with children at a time/place that was convenient to each of them. All participants were given an adult FirstDay bus ticket as a "thank you", which were donated by First Bus. All participants lived within the administrative boundary of Bristol City Council, and employment included (or formerly included) administration, teaching, creative arts, consultancy.

A further four interviews were conducted with women with children aged 1-15 (see profiles in appendix two) to make up for the focus group short fall. These were conducted in the women's home or a location of their choice, and they were also given a FirstDay ticket as a thank you.

Thus, the research has not captured the views and experiences of the most deprived women in Bristol's community. Despite this limitation, one participant who worked with immigrants raised some pertinent issues about this particular community of women that should be considered by BWC.

## Appendix 2: Participants

### Interviews with stakeholders:

- Leader of the Joint Transport Committee
- Representatives from the transport planning teams at Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council.
- Suscom
- Representative from the Travel Planning Team UWE

An interview was substituted with Q&A written answers from FirstBus.

### Focus Groups Profiles

	Age group	Lives in	Employment status	Driving licence	Access to a car	Uses public transport	Cycles?	Dependents
Flora	25-35	Easton	Part time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Gemma	55-64	Bedminster	Part time	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Helen	45-54	Bishopston	Full time	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Isabel	65+	Kingsdown	Contract	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Julia	65+	Bishopston	Retired	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Kathrine	65+	St George	Retired	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

### Case study interviews

**Anna** has two children under 5 and lives with her husband in a northern suburb of Bristol (BS10). They have two cars. Currently Anna is a full time carer of their children. Her husband travels away with work, so she is often on her own with the children during the week. She used to cycle a lot when living in London, but rarely cycles now. She uses the car for a lot of local trips, but often uses the bus to travel into the centre of Bristol.

**Brenda** has three children, aged 8, 12, and 15 and lives with her husband fairly central to Bristol city centre (BS6). Brenda works part time as a teacher three days a week, and freelance two days a week. They have chosen to live without a car, so Brenda's main modes of transport are walking, public transport or taxis.

**Carol** has four children under the age of 7, and lives with her husband in BS9, very close to local shops. She works two mornings a week (until 2pm) teaching in BS15, and is reliant on her and her husband's parents for childcare and school drop off on those days. They have one vehicle, which Carol generally has the main access to, as her husband cycles to work. Her husband would like them to give up the car for sustainability reasons.

**Dora** has three children aged 7, 14, 16 and lives with her husband in BS16. Dora works full time as an academic. Her husband has elderly parents locally, who have been ill/disabled. They have two cars.