

Contribution made by Traveline Scotland to Modal Shift

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The Scottish Executive's Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department commissioned MORI Scotland to conduct a programme of research to establish the extent to which Traveline Scotland has contributed to modal shift. Traveline Scotland is a public transport information service for travel within Scotland and to other parts of the UK and is one of 11 partnerships which deliver the National Traveline Service. The research comprised two main components: a telephone survey of 223 Traveline Scotland users, and two focus groups. The overarching aim of the research was to establish the extent to which Traveline Scotland has contributed to modal shift.

Main Findings

- Respondents in the telephone survey were asked what types of journey they called Traveline Scotland about. The most commonly mentioned types of journey respondents enquired about included: journeys to their place of work, education or learning, journeys to visit family and friends and journeys to the shops in the town centre.
- For all journey types included in the research, public transport use increased and car use decreased after contacting Traveline Scotland. This suggests that modal shift is related to receipt of travel information from Traveline Scotland. The research shows that because a shift occurred across a range of journeys, Traveline Scotland contributes to modal shift rather than modal shift being dependent on a particular type of journey respondents make.
- Although a degree of modal shift occurred after contacting Traveline Scotland some people continued to use their car for journeys they had contacted Traveline Scotland about. Some of the reasons given for not making the change to public transport included: the car is more convenient on this occasion and public transport will take too long.
- This suggests that while information about public transport might be an important factor in facilitating change, the journey itself is the key. The Traveline Scotland service may be accurate and efficient and meet people's information needs, however there is only so much that public transport can accomplish and it would be unrealistic to expect public transport to meet everyone's travel needs.
- The research suggests that Traveline Scotland makes it easier for people who are in the process of switching to public transport, facilitating that transition or supporting the desire to identify a public transport option. Traveline Scotland seems to reinforce public transport decisions rather than bring them about. The research indicates that Traveline Scotland seems to function well as a bridge to modal shift, making public transport information more accessible to the general population.

Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of the research was to establish to what extent Traveline Scotland has contributed to modal shift. Within this broad framework, key areas of interest were:

- how many journeys have been made by public transport that would otherwise have been made by car, as a result of accessing information from Traveline Scotland;
- how many journeys continued to be made by car and the reasons why;
- how many journeys were made by public transport which would not have been made otherwise and the reasons why;
- types of journey Traveline Scotland was used for;
- reasons why people chose public transport for these journeys;
- examine any short-term and long-term changes in transport behaviour; and
- investigate what changes and improvements could be made to the service to further improve its contribution to the use of public transport

Methodology

The research comprised two components: a telephone survey of Traveline Scotland users and two focus groups.

The telephone survey was conducted with 223 Traveline Scotland users from 4th – 18th April 2005. The sample was derived using the 2004 and 2005 (Jan – Mid Mar) Scottish Household Survey (SHS). The sample comprised 760 people who had either telephoned Traveline or used the Traveline internet service. All 760 people had given permission to be re-contacted for future research.

To complement the findings from the telephone survey, two focus groups were conducted with Traveline Scotland users in Edinburgh and Glasgow. These were conducted during the week commencing 23rd May 2005. These people had previously taken part in the telephone survey and had given permission to be re-contacted for future research. Quotas were set by gender, age and preference for using the Traveline Scotland website or telephone service.

Findings

Profile of Traveline Scotland users

The research shows that two-thirds of Traveline Scotland users surveyed were women and a third were men. There

were significant differences between the original sample drawn from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS)¹ and the sample of Traveline Scotland users (derived from the SHS). Traveline Scotland users were more likely than the population as a whole to be women, aged 25-44, employed, earning £36,400 per annum and living in urban areas.

Travel behaviour patterns

There was some variation in travel behaviour among the Traveline Scotland users surveyed. Overall, more users drove a car or were a passenger in a car than used most forms of public transport. However, buses were used almost as often as the car. The use of public transport was strongly related to the presence of cars in the household and household income. Traveline Scotland users were also more likely than the population as a whole to be multi-modal – using a combination of public transport and cars. Information from the focus groups emphasised this further, in that participants chose a particular mode(s) of transport depending on the type of journey they had to make.

Traveline Scotland's contribution to modal shift

For all journey types included in the research, public transport use increased and car use decreased after contacting Traveline Scotland. This suggests that modal shift is related to receipt of travel information from Traveline Scotland. The research shows that because a shift occurred across a range of journeys, Traveline Scotland contributes to modal shift rather than modal shift being dependent on a particular type of journey respondents make. However, when respondents were asked directly, there was no consensus on whether they would have made the switch to public transport without contacting Traveline Scotland.

Although a degree of modal shift occurred after contacting Traveline Scotland, some people continued to use their car for journeys they had contacted Traveline Scotland about. This suggests that while information about public transport might be an important factor in facilitating change, the journey itself is the key. The Traveline Scotland service may be accurate and efficient and meet people's information needs, however there is only so much that public transport can accomplish and it would be unrealistic to expect public transport to meet everyone's travel needs. Some of the reasons given for not making the change to public transport included: the car is more convenient on this occasion and public transport will take too long.

Attitudes towards public transport use

To shed more light on why some people continue to use their cars, attitude statements were analysed by key demographic

¹ 2004 and 2005 (up to March) data was used to form the original SHS sample of which TLS users could be extracted

variables. Five types of people were identified: those whose public transport use had **peaked**, those who felt **constrained**, those who felt **uninformed**, those who were **lazy** and those who showed **complacency**. Women's travel behaviour was more likely to have peaked than males and they also felt more uninformed about the services on offer. There was also tendency for females to be more lazy than males. In contrast, males were more likely to feel constrained and complacent about public transport use and car dependency.

Attitudes towards Traveline Scotland services

Users were positive about Traveline Scotland services. Users from the telephone survey showed a preference for using the website, over the telephone and text messaging

services. In the focus groups there was a sense that the website was difficult to use at first, but became easier the more it was used. The only negative comment users made about the telephone service was that they disliked being directed to a travel operator to find fare information. The number of repeat users to the telephone and website services further emphasises that Traveline Scotland is providing a useful and efficient service.

The research suggests that Traveline's main role for users is to inform and support a decision that is in the process of being made or to reinforce that decision by laying out the public transport solutions available to make a journey. The research indicates that Traveline Scotland seems to function well as a bridge to modal shift, making public transport information more accessible to the general population.

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The report, "Contribution made by Traveline Scotland to Modal Shift", which is summarised in this research findings is available on the Social Research website at www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

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