



KEY ISSUES

Public Transport provision affects patient attendance at health appointments

Patient non-attendance is very costly for the NHS. Transport factors can be a cause of missed health appointments.

ABOUT DHC

Derek Halden Consultancy staff and associates have leading expertise in transport planning, community development, psychology, transport and accessibility modelling, social inclusion, marketing, environmental assessment, and economic development.

Common to all projects is a commitment to draw from state of the art knowledge to ensure that solutions are soundly based and tailored to the needs of clients.

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVISION AFFECTS PATIENT ATTENDANCE AT HEALTH APPOINTMENTS

As part of the follow up to the 2003 Social Exclusion Unit "Making the Connections" report DHC was commissioned by the Department for Transport to review where and when transport factors made the greatest impact.

The work included analysis of patient attendance data, modelling of access by public transport, and interviews with healthcare staff and patients.



Improved communication and information, and reducing administrative errors are currently viewed as the main ways to tackle patient non-attendance. However improvements in transport information and administration need to be linked with these initiatives.

The main transport concerns related to:

- Reliability problems for both public transport and patient transport.
- The high transport cost associated with multiple appointments particularly where public transport is poor and taxis are needed.

The research identified a significant positive relationship between public transport accessibility and attendance rates at hospital for peri-urban areas. However there was no significant relationship for city centre areas with dense public transport networks or for rural areas.

Booked appointments make a very large impact on attendance rates since they tackle the transport and non transport factors affecting patient attendance in an integrated way. People can arrange their treatment at times when they can arrange suitable transport and by requiring contact between health providers and users administrative problems are minimised.