

**Case Study – ‘Shopmobility Paisley
and District supported with new
mobility equipment for their
members’**

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What is the Community Benefits Gateway?

The NHS in Scotland spends considerable amounts of money on goods and services every year^{1,2}. Asking suppliers to deliver ‘community benefits’ as part of their NHS contract, is one way that the NHS can deliver wider social, environmental, and social benefits to an area.

The ‘Community Benefits Gateway’ (CBG) is an online portal which allows NHS Suppliers to identify how they can support a local community in Scotland. The portal – developed by National Services Scotland - works in two steps:

- 3rd sector organisations in Scotland identify and upload requests that would benefit their local community and reduce inequalities. These are known as community benefit ‘needs’ within the system.
- As part of their contract with the NHS, suppliers can then view the community benefit ‘needs’ within the CBG portal, and where appropriate, contact the 3rd sector organisation to offer support. These are known as suppliers’ ‘bids’ within the system.

The CBG portal aims to encourage initiatives such as work placement opportunities, volunteering, advice, building facilities etc.

This case study sets out an example of how a community organisation has been supported with community benefit from an NHS Scotland supplier, through uploading their ‘need’ within the CBG.

About the organisation that received the support

Established for over 25 years, Shopmobility Paisley and District (now part of the Shopmobility Network in UK) has been providing support to people with disabilities and mobility issues (long term or temporary) by providing hire of mobility scooters and wheelchairs, six day per week. They are located in the heart of Paisley, but their service covers the whole of Renfrewshire. They have a current membership base of 415 people.

“Our aim is to get out and about across Renfrewshire hiring free and low-cost mobility equipment. The more equipment we are able to purchase, enables us to locate it in different key hubs across Renfrewshire as well as in our location base in Paisley ... Why should people need to come on a bus or a train if they live in Langbank to Paisley to hire a scooter for the day? We also provide a small, low cost, repairs and maintenance service. (Karen Miller, Office Manager Shopmobility Paisley and District)

¹ NHS National Services Scotland. ‘Annual Procurement Report 2021-2022’. Available at: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/media/3492/nhs-nss-annual-procurement-report-2021-22.pdf>

² Public Health Scotland ‘Scottish Health Service Costs’. Available at: <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/scottish-health-service-costs/scottish-health-service-costs-high-level-costs-summary-2020-to-2021/>

About the community benefit that was delivered

Shopmobility Paisley and District expressed their goal within the CBG to expand support to as many individuals as required in their area. To do this, providing more mobility equipment across the area was essential to meet the demand for their services.

“We need to maintain equipment...all equipment has a lifespan of about four years before they break...so we have to maintain a stock ... and that is the rationale for trying to get some assistance through the Gateway, particularly given the fact that our service does link with health as well.” (Karen Miller, Office Manager Shopmobility Paisley and District)

Shopmobility Paisley and District reported that engagement with local Third Sector Interface (TSI) – Engage Renfrewshire and Invest in Renfrewshire (Rensen) – was key for them to become aware of the CBG and submit their community need.

“As a result of our social enterprise development, and our links with “Engage Renfrewshire and Invest in Renfrewshire”, we became aware of the CBG; we are the first organisation on Renfrewshire that have received support via the Gateway which we are very grateful for.” (Karen Miller, Office Manager Shopmobility Paisley and District)

The organisation reported the process of using the gateway and submitting a ‘need’ to be positive, clear, simple and straightforward. They received additional support when submitting the application which they reported to particularly helpful.

“At first it took me a wee while to get used to the system and get my head around it, but once you familiarise yourself with it is absolutely fine, no problems. I have a lot of experience (with funding applications) and I’ve done hundreds of them but this was a bit different... the person that administers (CBG) is spot on, as they come back to you very quickly; if (the community need application) it is not up to standards, they won’t publish it for you and they’d say “we need more information” which I found was really good...” (Karen Miller, Office Manager Shopmobility Paisley and District)

Shopmobility Paisley and district received support from Abicare Health Solutions Ltd. They reported that the support offered – two wheelchairs – went beyond their initial expectations, including the prospects of a long-term cooperative relationship:

“We were contacted quite quickly by Dr. Gbenga who runs and owns Abicare Health Ltd. He liked the way we had written the community need application and that had come across to him as something that he can relate to, something that he wanted to do, and help us. We are still in touch, and he is keen to sustain a long-term relationship with us – that is something great that has come out of all this that we really did not expect.” (Karen Miller, Office Manager Shopmobility Paisley and District)

Impact

Since providing new mobility equipment, the organisation has seen significant engagement from the local communities – especially the wheelchair rental services which has been very busy. This has influenced business growth and the creation of new jobs to meet the high demand.

“We have had a lot of very positive feedback; the hires have been well over 250 times and that is just for two wheelchairs! which is phenomenal. They are lightweight, they look good, they fit in the back of a car...people are hiring long term which helps generate income for our Charity. The equipment has helped hundreds and hundreds of people across Renfrewshire. The word of mouth is very important...the impact for us is that we’ve managed to secure more funds, we’ve been able to take on more staff – because we are busier, we need more people –, it creates jobs. Our wheelchair service is through the roof!” (Karen Miller, Office Manager Shopmobility Paisley and District)

A further note on impact

According to 2018 UK-wide research from Red Cross, UK short-term wheelchair helps preventing users of further injury and aids recovery time³. Additionally, access to mobility equipment has shown apparent benefits to social integration, sense of independence and overall life satisfaction^{4,5}

“We have one user, a young woman who has quite significant mobility issues, and she has not been out (of the house) for three and a half years. So, we took one of the wheelchairs out to her for a day and...that has changed that woman’s life, it really has! She goes to the local church, into the community...she has a young child and has never ever been able to pick her up from school, but she is now, thanks to the wheelchair. So, the impact for that one person has been so significant.” (Karen Miller, Office Manager Shopmobility Paisley and District)

By applying to the CBG and highlighting their community need, Shopmobility Paisley and District received new mobility equipment which has proven having a significant positive impact on the wellbeing of the local people, supporting them to overcome accessibility barriers and helping them in re-connecting with their communities again.

For more information on the Community Benefits Gateway visit: <https://nss-content-test.azurewebsites.net/procurement-and-logistics/sustainability/access-our-community-benefit-gateway>

Access the portal here: https://nhsnss.service-now.com/community_benefit

³ British Red Cross. 'Maintaining Mobility Report' (2018) Available at: <https://www.redcross.org.uk/maintaining-mobility>

⁴ Thoreau R. (2015) The impact of mobility scooters on their users. Does their usage help or hinder? A state of the art review. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4510203/>

⁵ World Health Organisation (WHO) (2015). 'Fact sheet on wheelchairs. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/205041/B4616.pdf?seq>