



St John

Here for Life

St John New Zealand Health Shuttle Service



Social Impact and Opportunities Report 2018

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Acknowledgements

Tena Koutou Katoa.

WEAVE Ltd (Director Rachael Trotman) and Julian King and Associates were commissioned to identify the social impact of the St John Health Shuttle Service.

A huge thank you to all those who so graciously gave their time and views for this research – and especially to health shuttle clients, volunteers and St John staff. The spirit of care and generosity that pervades St John New Zealand greatly assisted this work.

Ngā mihi nui.

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Summary

The St John New Zealand health shuttle service takes people to and from health related appointments. This report profiles the service and its social impact for clients, volunteers and health providers. It also presents opportunities to improve and develop the service.

The St John health shuttle service

- Began in Hamilton (1991)
- Run by local volunteers
- 34 locations (2018)
- Donation/koha based
- Community funded
- Open to all

In calendar year 2017



54 Vehicles



**1,643,000
km travelled**



600+ Volunteers



**61,000+
Volunteers
hours**



**\$2.76m
Resources
invested**

The St John health shuttle service is valued by its clients for these key reasons.

- **Improves health** – by connecting people with health care.
- **Accessibility** – it's open to all, easy to access and ability to pay is no barrier.
- **Gives independence** – supports independent living and control over personal health.
- **Supportive** – volunteers are highly praised as caring, helpful, friendly and professional.
- **Convenient** – door to door service or designated pick-up/drop-off points in isolated areas.
- **Trusted** – the health shuttle service is considered reliable, trustworthy, safe and high quality.
- **Community led** – the service is mainly community funded, managed and run.

Social impact

The core social impacts of the health shuttle service are as follows.

- › Improves access to health care
- › Improves health and general wellbeing
- › Reduces stress, gives peace of mind
- › Helps people live independently
- › Increases social contact and connection
- › Fewer missed health appointments
- › Saves clients' money

Health shuttle volunteers gain personal satisfaction and wellbeing from helping others, meeting people and giving back to their community.

Without this service, access to health care would decline and social isolation and stress in the community would increase. Ambulance services would be called on more for non-urgent issues.

46% of clients surveyed said they had no other option to get to health appointments.

Opportunities to improve and develop the service

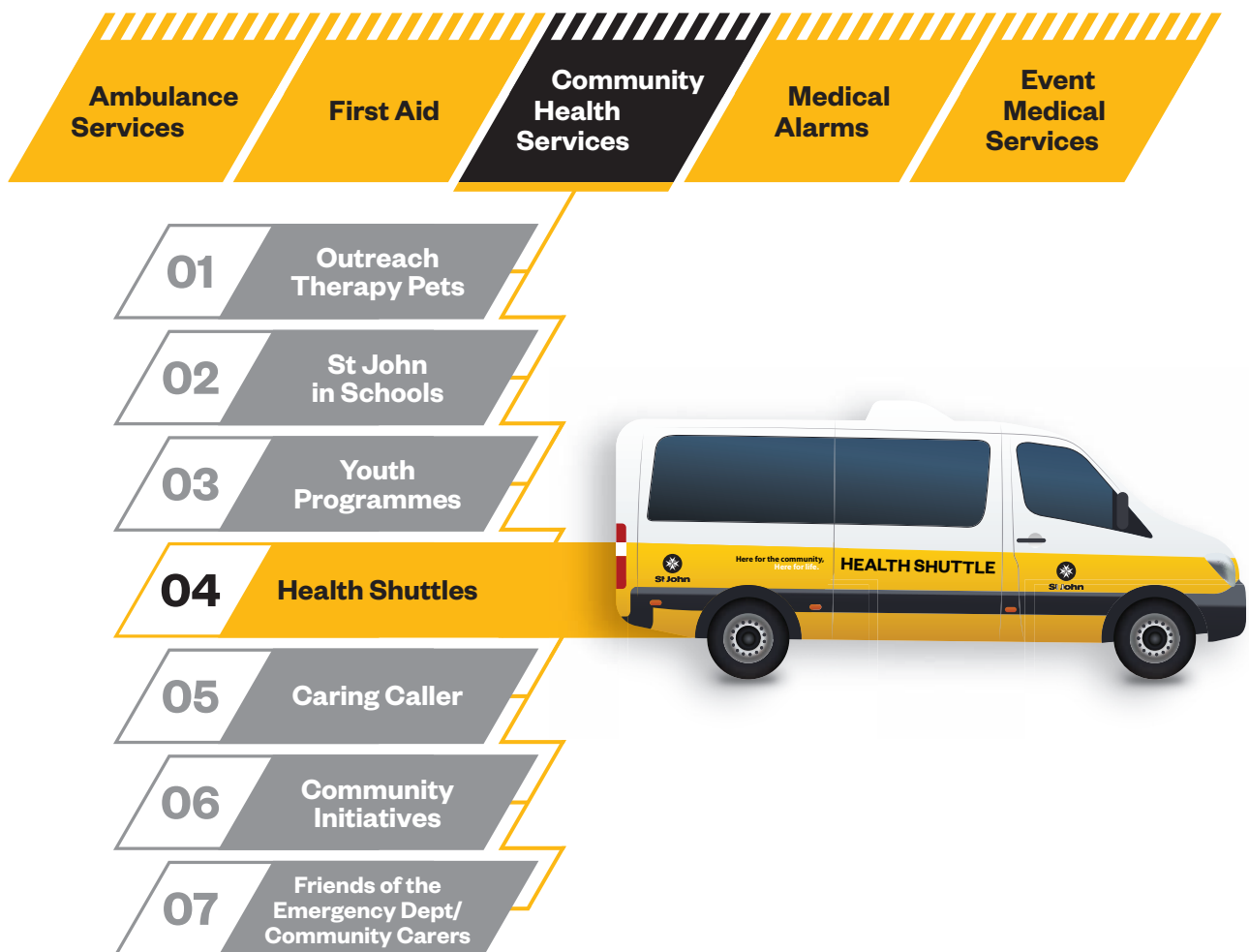
- › Grow the service, based on community need and in line with capacity to deliver.
- › Better promotion of the service (taking care to be able to meet increased demand).
- › Involve clients and volunteers meaningfully in service planning and design.
- › Utilise technology to improve the service, while retaining its human touch.
- › Build a sustainable and diverse volunteer base that reflects service users.
- › Streamline the volunteer recruitment process and minimise compliance for volunteers.
- › Increase community engagement in the service, including business sponsorship.
- › Partner strategically both nationally and locally for greater impact.
- › Retain core values of being community-led, service to others, empathy and quality.

Two thirds of clients supported health shuttles only being utilised for health appointments. Other places health shuttles could take clients if local need and capacity existed were social services, local services such as shopping and banking and for social connection purposes such as visiting friends in hospital.

A flagship St John New Zealand community service

The Health Shuttle service is one of St John New Zealand's Community Health Services (see below).

These services support people to manage their own health and wellbeing, through community based health related support, prevention and education¹.



¹ For more on these services go to <https://www.stjohn.org.nz/What-we-do/>.

In 2016,

St John New Zealand identified a need to better understand and communicate the impact of its health shuttle service.

This report addresses this need and has FOUR parts:

01

About the health shuttle service

The resources invested to deliver the service

02

03

Social impact of the service

Opportunities to improve and develop

04

01 About the Health Shuttle service

1.1 Purpose, operation and context

The St John New Zealand Health Shuttle Service takes people to and from health related appointments, from their place of residence or from a designated pick-up point in isolated areas. It began in Hamilton in 1991 and in 2018 operates in 34 locations nationwide (see map on page 11).

Anyone who needs to access health care can use the service and while a koha or donation is sought, it is free for those who are unable to pay. Some clients are eligible for [Travel Assistance](#)² funding from the Ministry of Health, which funds their use of the health shuttle service.

Supported by several St John NZ staff, the 34 local health shuttle services are run by volunteer administrators, coordinators, shuttle drivers and Local Area Committees. St John NZ health shuttle services are mainly funded through local fundraising and donations from shuttle clients. Health shuttle services have grown organically from local need and have been managed in different ways by different communities.

St John NZ health shuttles respond to a universal need to access health care, especially for those who face challenges relating to distance, mobility, family support and affordability. The shuttle services contribute to many community and government priorities: health equity³, positive ageing⁴, quality of life, control over health and wellbeing⁵, social connection and local people helping each other.

A May 2018 report makes clear links between access, mobility and wellbeing, stating that investment in community transport is needed to meet local needs, respond to changing communities and improve health and community sustainability⁶. It notes that there is no one organisation responsible for access and mobility in New Zealand, and a context of population growth and ageing, centralising of services in urban areas and land use planning that tends to increase inequities rather than reduce them. As such, demand for health shuttles is only likely to increase.

“Before we had governments we had people looking after each other. St John is all about this.”

² See <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/hospitals-and-specialist-services/travel-assistance>.

³ See for example <https://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/what-we-do/work-programme-2018/achieving-equity>.

⁴ Goal Two in New Zealand's Positive Ageing Strategy is: Equitable, timely, affordable and accessible health services for older people, see <http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz/health-wellbeing/positive-ageing/positive-ageing-goals/index.html>.

⁵ See the Enabling Good Lives government initiative: <http://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/other-initiatives/enabling-good-lives/key-messages/>.

⁶ Bridget Burdett (May 2018), *Transport, Participation and Wellbeing: Evidence and Recommendations*, TDG, prepared for the Waikato Regional Council.



**By 2023
St John
New
Zealand
aims to be
a national
leader in
improving
access to
health care**

1.2 Strategic directions

St John New Zealand recognises that community need for transport to access health care is accelerating. St John is a major provider of community health transport nationally, within a wider landscape involving many small community and commercial providers.

By 2023 St John New Zealand aims to be a national leader in improving access to health care through community transport. In the next five years St John New Zealand's health shuttle service will focus on⁷:

- › Improving social and health equity⁸ by developing new services in high need areas
- › Improving social connectedness
- › Continuing to develop a more consistent model of delivery, while respecting unique local needs and supporting local energy and innovation
- › Exploring by Māori for Māori health shuttle services
- › A diverse and sustainable volunteer base
- › More community engagement and partnerships for greater impact
- › Improving information about the service, including client feedback
- › More co-design for local health and wellbeing with Area Committees, health providers, iwi/Māori and Pasifika communities, and St John's anchor partners.

The reach of St John health shuttles is growing, focusing proactively on communities with high identified needs for access to health care. The map on the next page shows the current locations of St John's health shuttle services.

⁷ St John Community Health Services Strategic Plan 2018-2023, June 2018.

⁸ See for example https://www.toiteora.govt.nz/determinants_of_health for a discussion on the determinants of health and health inequities.

Location of St John Health Shuttles 2018



Note: ‘rural’ or ‘urban’ reflects the core nature of each services; though many services cover both rural and urban areas.’

1.3 Service beginnings

The St John New Zealand Health Shuttle service began in 1991 in Hamilton as a 'Community Care Van'.

Three issues drove its establishment:

1

St John ambulances were being used for non-emergencies such as transferring people to and from hospital

The health shuttle vehicles have always been multi-functional, used in weekends for community work. Lou Zampese was involved from the beginning and credits former St John staff member Janet Hanlon with initiating the service, along with Local Area Committee members.

2

People with no transport options or limited mobility needed help to get to health appointments

The health shuttle service has grown slowly over time nationwide to become a flagship service for St John. It is a community based and volunteer led service, and Lou epitomises these community roots - he became a youth cadet with St John at 11 years old and has been involved with St John for most of his life. Now retired, he was Community Services Manager at St John Hamilton for 20 years, before becoming a health shuttle volunteer driver.

3

The need for a vehicle for St John's youth and community work.



“The Health Shuttle service grew slowly. The volunteers get a lot of pleasure out of helping people with no other means to get to health appointments”.

Lou Zampese with the second health shuttle vehicle around 1994 at Hamilton's St John Headquarters.

1.4 Health Shuttle Services profiles

Hamilton | Thames | Central Otago | Western Southland

Hamilton

The Hamilton health shuttle service has 25 volunteers and two vehicles running daily each week day.

Team Leader Rae Hooper notes that “The trend in Hamilton is for lots more people, traffic and health needs”. By 2030 the population will be around 175,000, which on current trends would generate 11,000 client trips per year. Since 2010 the service has transported 64,842 clients.

The service runs within Hamilton City boundaries and neighbouring services have developed to meet needs, with collaboration and sharing of vehicles across boundaries. Clients are diverse, though Rae observes two main kinds: people living on their own or who are older, who can usually afford to give some donation; and those who are “poor with poor health, often at a young age”. Most Hamilton clients go to hospital appointments (94%), with the remainder going to GPs or specialists, rehabilitation or dialysis.

Strengths of this service include:

- > A strong volunteer base, including long serving volunteers with huge knowledge and experience
- > A positive, welcoming culture that is increasingly attracting younger and more ethnically diverse clients and volunteers
- > The relatively well known nature of the service.

A challenge for the service is that the Waikato Hospital is at the southern end of town, while much housing growth is in the northern area. The national booking system is being used to support planning and develop the service to reflect changing community needs. A third daily shuttle is being considered.

2017 Hamilton Stats

> **66,380 km**

> **7,966 trips**



Some Hamilton volunteers in 2017, several of whom helped to found the health shuttle service.

Thames

The Thames health shuttle service began in 2012, instigated by a local St John Opportunity Shop Manager. It covers a large area, from Te Mata on the West Coast of the Coromandel, across the Firth of Thames to Kaiaua, and down to Paeroa and Morrinsville.

The Thames service has 35 volunteers and six health shuttle vehicles, with one vehicle and four volunteers based at Paeroa since 2017. The service has recently taken on a community van that has a social connection focus – taking people for example to a Friendship Club or the hairdresser.

Around two thirds of Thames health shuttle clients are aged 65 years or older. Main routes are to Hamilton's Waikato Hospital and specialist health services. This is a long distance, rural service, often involving a two hour or more trip each way.

Thames Health Shuttle Coordinator Tricia Dawson notes that there are many retired people in Thames and that some are struggling. Connecting people with social support is considered a key role for health shuttle volunteers.

The shuttle service attracts volunteers who are community minded, helpful and empathetic. Challenges include the long drives and long days for volunteers, and bad weather, as slips and floods can cause issues. The service is growing steadily and eventually will need more resources, especially given a lack of transport options from Thames to Hamilton.

Thames Stats 1 March 2017 to 28 Feb 2018

> **189,939 km**
> **4462 trips**



Thames volunteers 2017

Central Otago

The Central Otago health shuttle service began in November 2011 and is based in Cromwell. It has one vehicle and around 25 volunteers from both the Cromwell and Alexandra communities.

The shuttle enables mainly older Central Otago residents to get to Dunedin Hospital and other health appointments in Dunedin. The Cromwell service was the first established through St John's partnership with Four Square in the South Island. Given the visibility of the health shuttles in many communities, Four Square recognized the value of sponsoring them.

Given the long distances involved, clients need to be able to get themselves to and from one of ten designated pick-up points. This shuttle service is well known in the smaller communities it serves, enjoying strong community support and donations from local community organisations. Challenges include the long distances and weather hazards, which means that some days the shuttle can't operate.

Central Otago Stats 2017

> **108,156 km**
> **2248 trips**



2017 Central Otago vehicle with the Four Square logo



Central Otago volunteers 2017

Western Southland

The Western Southland health shuttle began in June 2010 and is based at Otautau. It has one vehicle, around 15 volunteers and is run by the Otautau Area Committee. This shuttle covers all of Western Southland from Ohai to Tuatapere and the Southland Coast, and along the coast to Riverton. The major route is to Southland Hospital in Invercargill, 70km from Otautau.

Team Leader Shirley McCully notes that while a lot of older people use the shuttle, many children, families and people of all age groups use it too. More town than country folk tend to use this shuttle. The shuttle assists those without other transport options, and people who don't drive or can't get a license. For Shirley: "Some people are lonely, they get to talk to someone; they don't have to worry. The shuttle allows people to be independent and get to appointments without troubling someone else. It's a valuable community service".

This service has no immediate plans for changes or growth. Shirley puts its smooth working down to the volunteers and in particular to Margaret, who organizes the bookings. Handling the booking system is a well-recognised art within the health shuttle service.

Western Southland Stats 1 Oct 2017 to 31 May 2018

> **15,524 km**
> **88 trips**



Western Southland Health Shuttle

02 Resources invested in delivering the health shuttle service in 2017

The resources to deliver the health shuttle service are described below. These include volunteers, operational funding, capital equipment such as vehicles and support from the wider St John New Zealand organisation.

This analysis reviews one year's resource use (2017); it does not investigate trends over time. Nor does it compare resource use in different localities, given different local service models, scale efficiencies, urban and rural driving conditions and so on. St John New Zealand is moving towards a more unified model for the health shuttle service, which may make such comparisons feasible in the future.

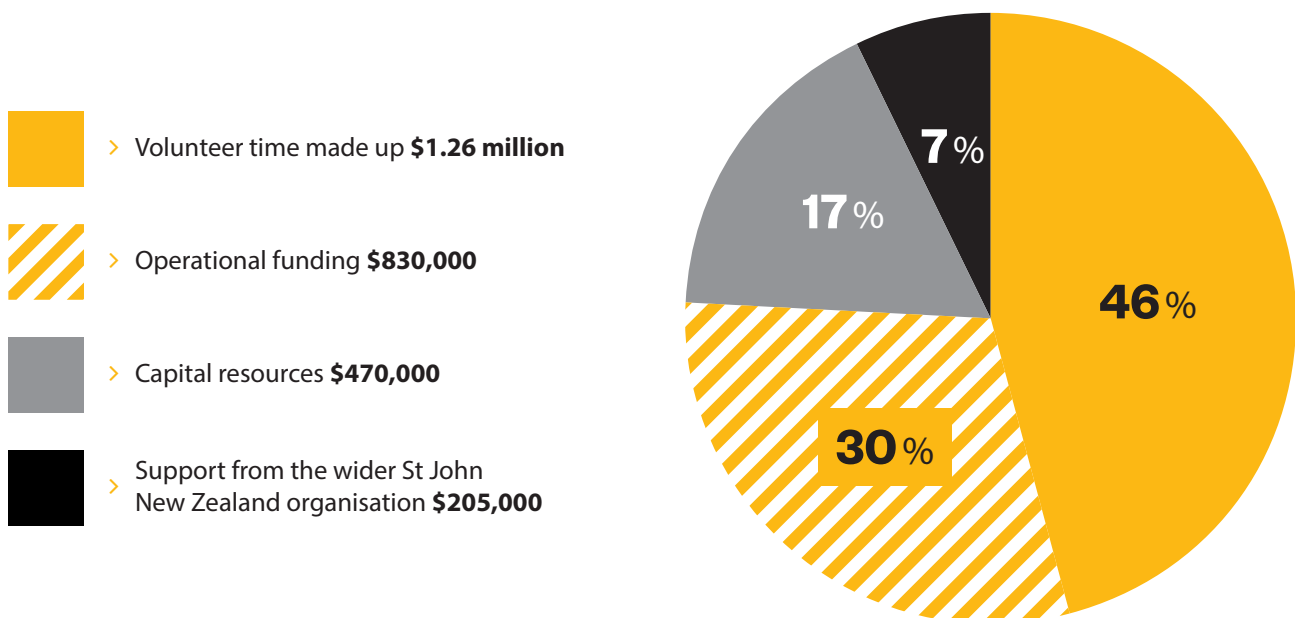
In 2017 **74,824 trips** were made, at an average cost of **\$37 per trip**.

For each **\$1** of government funding⁹, **\$10** comes from community donations, grants and other sources.

\$2.76 million worth of resources were used in the health shuttle service from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (FY 2017, Figure One).

Volunteer time made up \$1.26 million (46%); operational funding \$830,000 (30%); capital resources \$470,000 (17%); and support from the wider St John New Zealand organisation \$205,000 (7%).

Figure One: Resources used in the health shuttle service (\$2.76m), FY 2017



⁹ This \$1 relates to Ministry of Health Travel Assistance funding, see <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/hospitals-and-specialist-services/travel-assistance>.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart of the health shuttle service. In FY 2017, volunteers provided **61,239 hours** of service. Using the 2018 New Zealand Living Wage (\$20.55 per hour) as a proxy for the value of this time, the monetary value of volunteer time in FY 2017 was **\$1,258,000**. The social value of a health shuttle service run by volunteers however is considered to be priceless (see social impact section).

Operational funding

Funding is necessary to keep wheels on the road and to ensure clients enjoy a safe, high-quality health shuttle service. Accounting records for FY 2017 were analysed to understand the sources of funding for the service (where the money comes from) and expenditure (where the money goes).

Where the funding comes from

\$1.12 million in funding was received in FY 2017. St John New Zealand has a strong base of donations and grants (\$706,000) that underpin the operation of the health shuttle service, accounting for 63% of its funding (Figure Two).

Other funding sources included Ministry of Health Travel Assistance funding of \$102,000 (9%), sponsorships of \$100,000 (9%), funding from the wider St John organization of \$98,000 (9%), and \$111,000 (10%) funding from other sources.

Where the funding goes

\$830,000 was spent on health shuttle operations in FY 2017. Most of these operating costs related to running and maintaining vehicles \$474,000 (57%) and personnel \$287,000 (35%) (Figure Three).

Figure Two: Health shuttle service funding sources (\$1.12m), FY 2017

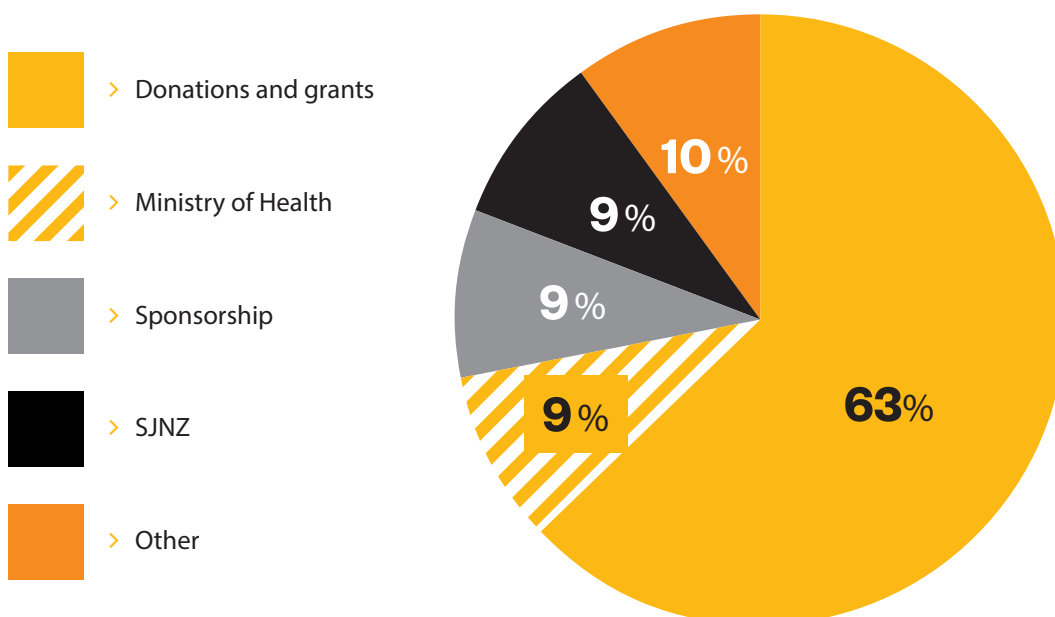
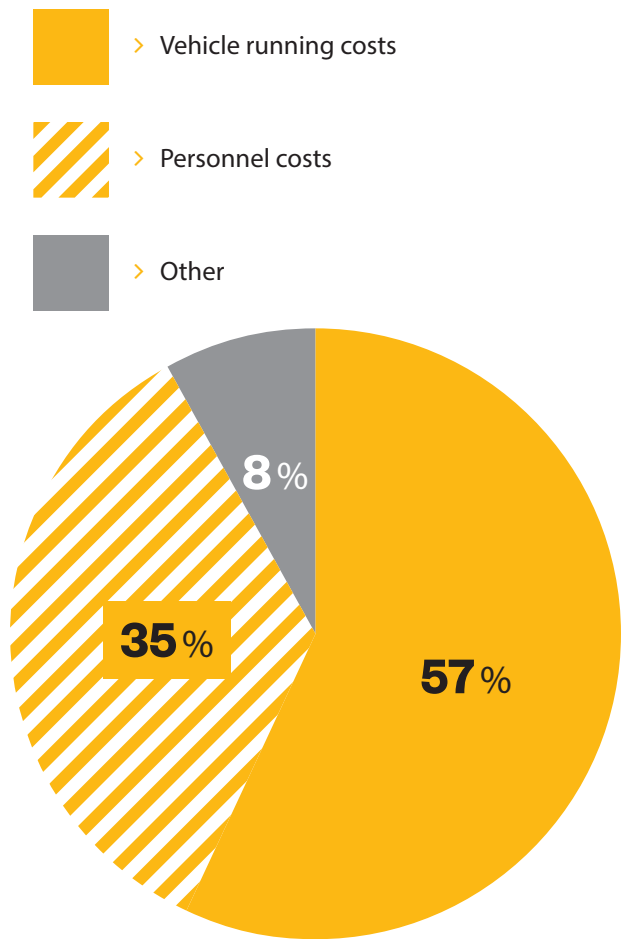


Figure Three: Health shuttle service operating costs (\$830k), FY 2017



Vehicle running costs included fuel and oil \$183,000 (39%), repairs/maintenance \$157,000 (33%) and registration/road user charges \$100,000 (21%), and other vehicle costs of \$33,000 (7%). **Personnel costs** included volunteer-related costs \$139,000 (48%), staff costs \$135,000 (47%), and other personnel costs \$13,000 (4%). **Other operating costs** included items such as advertising, travel and accommodation, telephone and other office expenses.

Capital resources

In the health shuttle service, capital resources are predominantly the fleet of **54 vehicles** nationwide.

Depreciation was used to estimate capital consumption in this analysis. For illustrative purposes, this method provides a reasonable basis for estimating the portion of capital resources consumed in a year. Economists prefer to use an annuity formula, which incorporates the opportunity cost of capital in addition to depreciation – however, available data did not permit the use of this method.

\$471,000 in depreciation was recorded in FY 2017.

Support from the wider St John organization

\$205,000 was contributed by St John New Zealand to support the running of the health shuttle service, including staff costs and apportioned costs for use of St John facilities, covering overheads and administrative costs.

A new structure came into operation on 1 July 2018, including three regional paid health shuttle managers, plus administrators. As the health shuttle service transitions to this new structure, staffing costs are budgeted to grow by an additional \$189,000 in FY 2018.

The estimate of resources contributed by the wider St John organization is likely to be conservative, as the accounting basis may not apportion the full value of this support.

03 Social impact of the health shuttle service

3.1 Method

Data on the social impact of the health shuttle service came from these methods.

Clients

- 117 clients surveyed by phone.
- 6 face to face client focus groups, involving 53 clients.
- A day on the Hamilton health shuttle talking to clients and volunteers.
- A visit to the Thames service talking with volunteers.
- Overall, feedback from 170+ clients, from 29 of the 34 St John New Zealand health shuttle services.

Volunteers

226 volunteers surveyed through an online survey.

St John staff

Interviews by phone, Zoom or face to face with 5 St John staff involved with health shuttles.

Health providers

Feedback via email from 6 health providers from 4 local services.



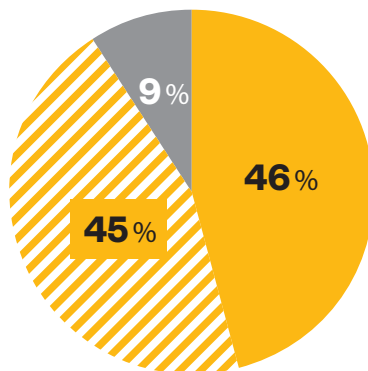
3.2 Profile of client respondents

Regional St John administrators and some local service administrators surveyed a total of 117 clients from 25 services by phone.

Of the clients surveyed, the youngest was 29 and the oldest was 92.

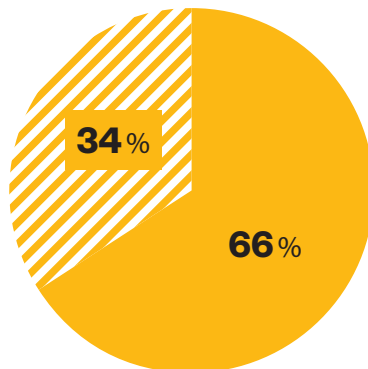
Age

- > 71 to 90 years (46%)
- > 51 to 70 years (45%)
- > 21 to 50 years (9%)



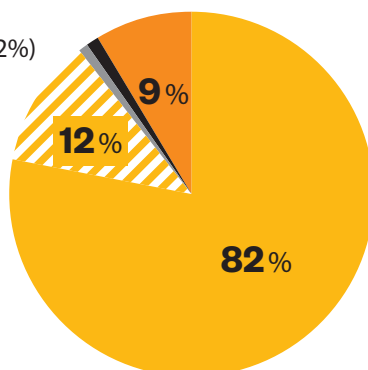
Gender

- > Female (66%)
- > Male (34%)



Ethnicity

- > New Zealand European (82%)
- > Māori (12%)
- > Cook Islands Māori (1%)
- > Indian (1%)
- > Other (9%) (South African, Dutch, American)



Stated iwi affiliations were Ngāti Wehi Wehi, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Maniapoto and Taranaki Whanui.

Focus groups and service visits

Six local services ran a focus group session: Gore, Ashburton, Tokoroa, Otaki, Cambridge and Waihi.

A day was spent by an author of this research on one of the Hamilton Health Shuttles, talking with clients and volunteers. The Thames service was also visited and local volunteers were interviewed.



“In our focus group we had 8 people, one guy who sleeps in a car, a young mum with an 8 month old baby, and then across the ages through to 86 years. We also had ethnic diversity.”

Ashburton

3.3 St John Health Shuttles - what do clients think of?

Clients were asked the question:

“When I say St John Health Shuttle Service, what is the first word that comes to mind?”

Responses are pictured below.

Friendly
Service
Convenient
Brilliant **Saviour** Support
Courtesy
Invaluable



3.4 How does the health shuttle service impact on clients?

The range of impacts of the service for clients are presented below, from most to least mentioned.

- Provides access to health services
- Volunteers are friendly, caring, helpful and well trained
- Gives peace of mind, reduces stress
- It saves me money, it's affordable
- Gives independence, don't have to rely on others
- I don't have to drive
- It gives me social contact

A common theme from clients was that the service is a 'lifeline' and that they could not manage or would struggle to get to health appointments without this service. The fact that a partner or other support person can come with clients if there are seats available is greatly appreciated. The shuttle's availability is reassuring for clients and their families, providing safe and reliable access to health care.

Some people using the service are house bound. The shuttle is an outing and allows them to meet and mix with other people. Some have made friends and widened their support network through the shuttle.

*"They are always there when needed.
It's just a phone call away."*

*"I have made friends. The drivers and
assistants are so friendly and helpful."*

*"It's just great to know that I am not putting
my thumb out to anyone anymore. I feel safer.
My treatment is a lifesaver."*

*"It can take months to get an appointment;
the shuttle is the only way I can keep appointments."*

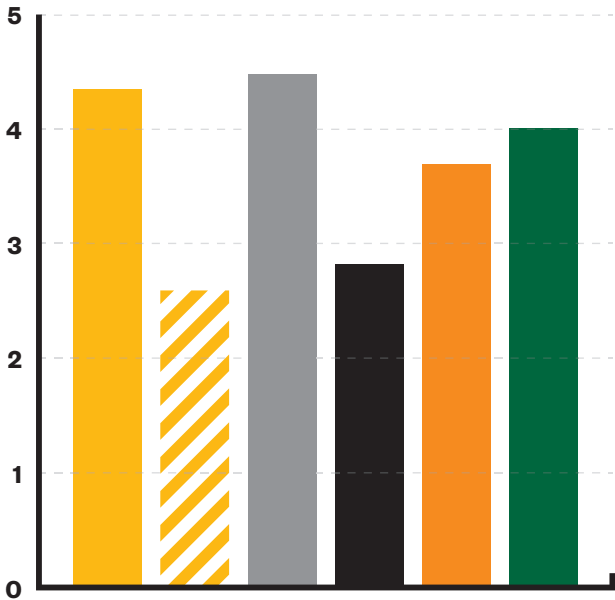
*"Everyone is so friendly, it becomes an
outing and this in turn reduces stress."*

*"It's a marvellous service. The hours and comfort
are good, the people are wonderful and so helpful.
They make you feel like life is worth living."*

Surveyed clients were asked to rate the impact of the service for them on the factors below, where 0 is no impact and five is a huge impact. The service impacted most on their peace of mind, followed closely by their health, general wellbeing and ability to live independently, then by social contact with others and finances (105 responses)

Impact of service

- > Your health: 4.3/5
- > Your finances: 2.6/5
- > Your peace of mind: 4.6/5
- > Your social contact with others 2.8/5
- > Your ability to live independently: 3.7/5
- > General wellbeing: 4.0/5



“Several clients would have been blind if not taken to hospital appointments. Renal patients would not survive.”

3.5 Most important or valuable thing about the service to clients

The most important or valuable things about the service to clients are as follows, in order from most to least mentioned.

- > Able to access health services
- > It’s reliable and on time
- > It’s convenient
- > Volunteers are friendly, caring and helpful
- > It’s a high quality service
- > Gives peace of mind, reduces stress
- > Gives independence

3.6 Impact of having no health shuttle service on clients

When asked if they had any other option to get to health appointments other than using the service, 54% said that they did and 46% said that they did not (105 responses overall).

Clients were asked about the impact on themselves and their family if the service did not exist. Key impacts identified from most to least mentioned were as follows.

- Have to ask family, friends or neighbours
- Unable to get to health appointments
- Struggle to get to health appointments
- Have to rely on the bus or another provider
- Could taxi but too expensive
- Financial impact
- Increased stress

Having to rely on others was the major impact mentioned, if the service did not exist. This would cause hardship for some, if family members work or are busy or if family relationships are strained. Relying on friends or neighbours was an option for some, but not one they generally wished to pursue.

Almost half of the people surveyed stated that the health shuttle was their only option and that their health and quality of life would decrease without the service. Public transport is often either unavailable or considered unreliable, and other transport providers are not generally as accessible or affordable as the health shuttle. A few people said they would be forced to drive and that they are too old or otherwise less able to do this.

For St John staff, if the health shuttle didn't exist the St John Ambulance Service would be called upon more, as more people would wait until there was a crisis before accessing health care. People's health would suffer and social isolation and stress in the community would increase.

“If we didn’t exist, my goodness, whose responsibility is it?

No one agency owns the community transport issue or takes responsibility for resolving it.

We transport hundreds of people every week and save tax payers a lot of money. Centralisation of services drives the need for community transport, especially for our rural communities.”



3.7 Client stories

A day was spent on a Hamilton health shuttle in April 2018, talking with clients. Some of their stories are shared below. Names have been changed to protect identities.

Mark and his wife are in their 80s and use the shuttle together once a month or more, to get to health appointments. Mark's wife had a stroke in 2008 and their life changed completely after that, as she is in a wheelchair and Mark has become less and less mobile. They are at the edge of their ability to live independently and are looking for a rest home to live in.

"The service is a lifeline for us, it's wonderful."

Lance has been using the shuttle for eight years and has been a member of St John since 1996. He has dialysis three days a week for five hours each time:

"Dialysis is life for me. The shuttle is also a social outing and we have a community of passengers that I have gotten to know. If there was no service I would have to pay for a taxi which would be impossible. I am very happy with the service."

Moana has used the service in both Rotorua and Hamilton for about seven years. She has respiratory issues and without the service would have to walk everywhere if she can't get dropped off or use the bus. She likes the convenience of the service, its friendliness and sees it as a huge asset to the community.

Kelly is a young Mum who has been using the service for about a year. She finds the service to be reliable and timely and she has never had a bad day on the shuttle. She finds that bigger shuttles are better as they can take wheelchairs and prams; the shuttle sometimes has capacity issues. The service could be improved by running earlier and later but she acknowledges that volunteers are running the service. When asked the most valuable thing about the service, Kelly said:

"Just being treated like a human. I have seen them [the volunteers] deal with all walks of life and they are very respectful, very caring. Having a door to door service is perfect."

Once dropped off from the shuttle Kelly was going in search of an emergency food parcel for her family.

Doreen is in her 70s and came with her granddaughter onto the shuttle. She was anxious about her appointment finishing in time to be able to get home again on the shuttle by 3.30pm. Doreen appreciates the service for getting her to health appointments and for getting her out of the house and allowing her to see a bit of the city. She does not have a big family and would have to get a taxi if the shuttle wasn't there. She finds the shuttle service to be friendly and reliable.



3.8 Volunteer and St John NZ staff perspectives

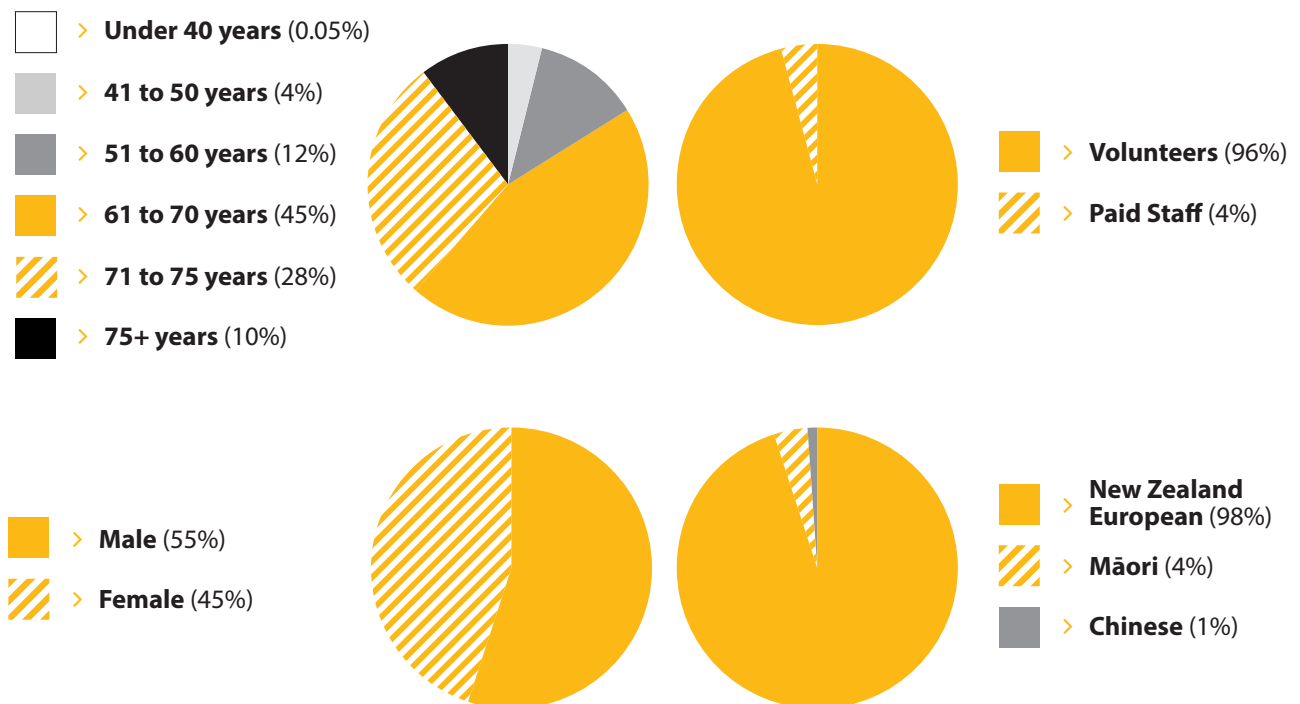
An online survey was sent to the 600+ health shuttle volunteers and to the St John New Zealand staff who support the health shuttle service. A total of 226 responses were received nationwide and 85% of those responding were shuttle drivers. The remaining 15% were administrators who manage shuttle bookings, local area committee members and St John staff.

Interviews were also undertaken with five St John staff.

“The shuttles aren’t just about picking people up. They are about friendships, connection, going above and beyond. There is something deep and magical about the service.”

3.9 Profile of volunteer and staff respondents

Of the volunteers and staff surveyed, the youngest was 28 and the oldest was 81. Most were aged between 61 to 75 years, with only one person under 40 years.



Some people noted more than one ethnicity.
'Other' nationalities noted were South African, Canadian, Dutch and British.

3.10 Volunteer profiles



Bill Hill

Bill has been volunteering for St John for 40 years. He volunteers one day a week for the Hamilton service and was formerly involved with the St John Ambulance Service. Bill notes that volunteers tend to want more flexibility and some can be less reliable than in the past. The service is "Used by many, abused by a few. Some go crook if you are early or late. Most people think we do a wonderful job."



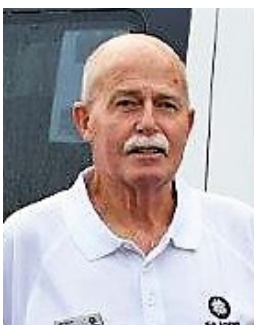
Bev Wilkins

Bev is retired and has been volunteering for St John Hamilton for 30 years. Meeting people is a major attractor for Bev and she has gotten to know many people and made many friends over the years. There is a great community of volunteers at St John. "Where would we be without the volunteers? St John needs stable, reliable volunteers."



Steve Joynes

Steve is an engineer who runs his own business. He volunteers one day a week and became a Hamilton health shuttle volunteer to meet new people, be part of a team, contribute to his community and because he enjoys driving and helping people. "You don't know who you are going to meet. Most people are very grateful. You make some nice friends and appreciate your own health. It gives you a window into how and where people live – you see some tough things. For example we take people from hospital to home and there is no-one there, no food. A lot of people say they couldn't cope without the shuttle. Volunteering keeps your body and brain active, you learn a lot about health issues, community issues, you get to know the community. Sometimes other volunteers become like family."

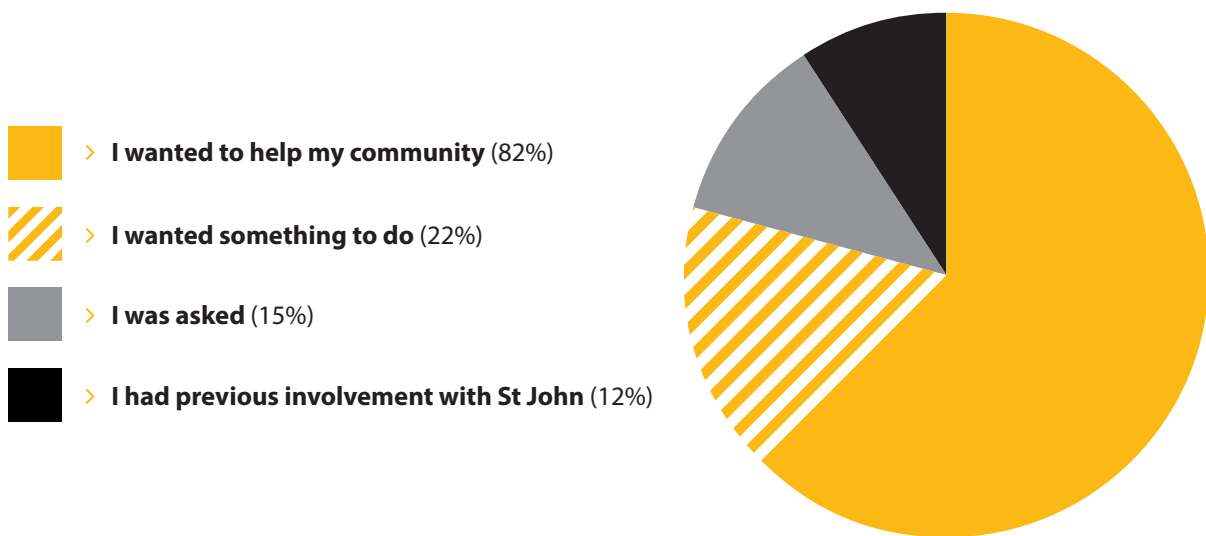


Ian Shaw

Ian is retired and volunteers around three days per week for the Thames service. He was a Volunteer of the Month for the Northern Region in 2017. He also volunteers for St John NZ's Friends of the Emergency Department. Ian worries about older people living on their own in Thames. He and other drivers often go the extra mile for clients: "It's not just a driving job, we need to do the extras. Volunteers are like minded, they want to help our older people because they really need it."

3.11 Reasons for volunteering

The most common reason given for volunteering for the health shuttle service was a desire to help the community (82%). Other reasons included wanting something to do (22%), being asked (15%), or having had previous involvement with St John (12%).



Other reasons given for volunteering were:

- > Hearing about the opportunity to volunteer from family, friends, neighbours or advertising
- > Wanting social contact
- > Being able to support those less able or fortunate
- > Retiring and having time available
- > Liking driving or wanting to keep confidence up driving
- > Wanting to support St John
- > Knowing people who need the service.

“It’s a chance to meet and help others. One day I will be in their position and will need people like us to help me.”

“I have been attended to by St John and wanted to give something back.”



3.12 St John Health Shuttles – what do volunteers and staff think of?

Staff and volunteers were asked the question:

**“When I say St John Health Shuttle Service,
what is the first word that comes to mind?”**

Responses are pictured below.

Reliable
Community
Assistance
Help
Transport
Caring
Service

3.13 Impact for staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers were asked what the greatest benefit or impact for them was of volunteering or working for the health shuttle service.

There were four main impacts for volunteers and staff from being involved with the health shuttle service, from most to least mentioned below.

- Get to help others
- Get to meet people, social contact
- Give back to the community
- Personal satisfaction and wellbeing

Volunteers enjoy feeling useful, helping others in the community and being part of a team. Many people volunteer to meet other people, make friends and feel a sense of belonging.

This is a very tangible service where volunteer drivers in particular see firsthand the impact of their work. Gratitude and appreciation from clients is highly valued and helps motivate people to volunteer.

The health shuttle opens people's eyes to realities for people in the community who have poor health, are isolated or otherwise struggling to meet their own needs. Assisting people in these challenging situations gives volunteers and staff immense personal satisfaction.



“Gives me a reason to get out of bed in the mornings. I enjoy meeting people and being of assistance to those who need help.”

“Makes me a very humble person.”

“Meeting older people and their insight of the past.”

“A good feeling from “giving back”.”

3.14 Health provider perspectives

Six health providers gave feedback on the health shuttle service: a GP from Russell; a retirement home manager in Hamilton; a Middlemore Hospital representative in South Auckland; the Cancer Society in Invercargill; Presbyterian Support in Ashburton; and an Alzheimers focused organisation in Marlborough. All have clients or patients who are regular users of the health shuttle service.

For health providers, the health shuttle service means fewer missed appointments. The Russell GP noted a marked reduction in 'no shows' since the shuttle began in Russell. Data from District Health Boards on reductions in missed appointments due to health shuttle services is not currently available, but could be sought in future.

The service also improves access to health care. The retirement home Manager noted that the health shuttle service provides ease of access to medical appointments for his 150+ retirement community.

"People need to know about the service and who it's for."

For Presbyterian Support Services in Ashburton, the shuttle service takes pressure off their own vehicles, allowing them to focus on other local services and trips in Ashburton. They could also call on a St John volunteer driver if needed for their vehicle services.

The Middlemore Hospital representative noted that while the hospital provides a shuttle, many patients can't get to the designated pick-up point to use it, and that others can't afford to pay for parking at the hospital, so the St John NZ shuttle benefits these people in particular. They noted the huge need for medical transport services in the South Auckland community.

"We have many patients on a benefit/minimum wage and any hospital trip may use up all the family's disposable income for the week. Some have to rely on others for lifts or even hitchhike, making arriving on time or at all a lottery (Russell GP)."

Several health providers commented positively on the calibre of the volunteers they dealt with.

The main perceived benefit for clients is access to health care, and to a wider range of health services and rehabilitative programmes (such as dentistry, mental health services and physiotherapy). The shuttle is considered to remove barriers and make people more willing to be referred for health care, knowing that they can get to it.

The shuttle is considered a lifeline for many, and particularly the elderly who live alone, not just to get to health care but for the social contact and care received from the drivers and fellow passengers: "It makes the whole day going to hospital less of a trauma and more of a social event to look forward to" (Russell GP).

The service reduces stress, and clients being able to bring a support person was seen as positive. Some clients being able to access Ministry of Health Travel Assistance funding for the shuttle is also helpful.

04 Opportunities to improve the service

Over half of the clients and many volunteers participating in this research felt the service was fine as it was, or did not have suggestions for how to improve it.

The two main suggestions were to promote and market the service more, including through social media, and provide more shuttles and grow the service. For volunteers, ensuring ongoing recruitment of volunteers and a streamlined recruitment process were also common themes.

One person suggested raising awareness of the service in Māori communities, especially linked to marae.

Further suggestions were as follows.

- Provide information and advice on how to access Travel Assistance funding, a fact sheet for each service, how to claim tax on shuttle donations, on other options if the shuttle is too full, appropriate koha/donation for each service, and relevant information such as how to access home support, eligibility for other residential care and respite funding and making a Will.
- Diversify volunteer training to include briefing drivers and assistants on specific health needs, or to help people navigate the health system including filling in forms, client advocacy and being a support person at appointments.
- Provide a national 0800 number and improve the answer phone message and website information for clients. Use technology to streamline and enhance the service (GPS, bookings, promotion).
- Consider increasing volunteer and shuttle provision, for example for hospital transfer at night and weekends and later than normal pick-up and drop-offs.
- Design the service based on client needs and feedback.
- Partner with other organisations to provide support for those struggling or living on their own, including Age Concern and the Salvation Army.
- Identify the need for wheelchair hoist capacity across the service and ensure vehicles match local needs.
- Move towards having a paid Coordinator for each local service.



“The clients are the best people to ask about what they need.”

05 Opportunities to develop the service

When asked if there were any other services or places they would like to be transported to, 65% of clients said there were not and 35% said there were.

A significant number of clients noted either that medical appointments were the priority, and/or that they did not expect St John volunteers to take them anywhere else.

A range of suggestions were given as to where else the health shuttle could take clients, as follows.

- Social services such as WINZ and ACC.
- Local services such as banking, shopping, hairdressers.
- Social connection such as social gatherings, visiting people in hospital or rest homes, social clubs, support groups, family events.
- Other health services – dentist, pharmacy, Spec Savers, foot clinic, therapeutic pools (these are already possible).
- Bring long term inpatients home for a break from hospital.

Overall, feedback was that the priority is health appointments but that the shuttle could be utilised to take people to other places in some areas, depending on local need and volunteer interest and capacity.

It was noted that growth and development depends on the local area and needs of each community, and local capacity to respond.

Finally, a key issue for St John staff is how to support volunteers with the challenging things they may see and hear in their work, avoid burnout and feel able to increase, decrease or cease their volunteering work. The high level skills needed by health shuttle volunteers are acknowledged – involving administration, management, fundraising, lifting, driving and caring. St John is working to increase access for volunteers to a wider range of professional development opportunities.

“Just use it for medical appointments. That’s what St John is for. Not to go shopping.”

“It could mean that the service is unavailable for more important appointments, but could be investigated in some areas.”

“We need to be careful about growing the service as we need to be sure we can cope with the increased numbers.”



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