

# Health Connect

Envisioning new services that  
connect relevant travel information  
with healthcare provision

**MKOB**

Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire  
Improvement Partnership



## Acknowledgements:

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## Core team

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# Introduction

HealthConnect is a future service concept designed to improve access to health and social care services in Buckinghamshire. The vision for this service was developed through a project called Shape 50+, as part of the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (MKOB) Improvement Partnership's programme of work to improve council services through community engagement. Shape stands for Services Having All People Engaged.

The project benefited from many years of ongoing engagement and community development activity amongst residents of the community aged 50+. It set out to address the issues and concerns raised by these residents in the Bucks 50+ Conference in July 2007, mainly relating to the need for improved transport information. This was framed by the project group within the context of improving access to healthcare.

The project involved a concentrated programme of work over a period of 3 months to conduct four workshops, and numerous meetings by the project's core group and advisory panel. The whole process involved nearly 40 people from county and district councillors and officers, health professionals, voluntary groups and community representatives.

The key characteristics of the design approach adopted were:

- The opinion of every member of the working group was equally valued
- The design principles used were drawn from commercial service design practice
- The end point of the process was not pre-determined
- Designers synthesised and visualised the information into tentative service proposals
- Participants then refined the proposal and generated one specific idea

**A companion volume that outlines the Shape methodology for people centred service development is also available.**

# Local context

**23% of the UK population will be over the age of 65 by 2031 (ONS)**

**It has been estimated that about 70% of home visit patients could safely attend the surgery if they could access convenient and affordable transport.**

Buckinghamshire is predominantly a semi-rural and sparsely populated county: just over one-third of the population live in medium-sized towns, while the rest (slightly over 300,00) live in small towns, villages and isolated rural households.

Bus ridership across the county had been in gradual decline since the 1980s. The most significant decline is in rural areas where current public transport provision is sparse and infrequent, with bus services often running nearly empty. As commercial operators focus their services in more profitable areas, the Council's financial support for maintaining a basic level of service on non-commercial routes is increasingly relied upon. (Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011)

Increasing numbers of Buckinghamshire residents will, at some time or other, be required to travel to general or specialist hospitals in or outside Buckinghamshire that are not their closest and most commonly used hospital.

Many residents in deprived areas of the county consider journeys to hospitals and clinics to be the most difficult and expensive (Activity and Travel Needs Survey, 2004). In many rural areas even a relatively short visit to a surgery means an extended stay until the bus service returns.

# Current problems

Access to health services is often defined as providing patients with a choice of healthcare providers within a reasonable timescale. However for people living in rural areas access to services can be defined more geographically in terms of distance to services and time taken to travel to those services. Distance from healthcare services and lack of availability of both private and public transport can mean that some people living in rural areas may not make use of the services that are available and may be necessary.

This is sometimes known as ‘distance decay’, where uptake of services decreases with increasing geographical remoteness from the service. In addition, we identified the following problems associated with accessing transportation to healthcare services:

**Existing travel information is inaccessible, dispersed or unknown.**

**Information is too dispersed and there is no effective integration of information databases.**

**Healthcare providers are poorly equipped to provide useful information of how to get to and from the surgery.**

**Choosing a health provider often depends on transport options. However, health providers don't know what transport is available.**

# Service concept



HealthConnect is a service that helps people access relevant travel information at the point of booking a doctor's appointment. At its heart lies an already existing comprehensive information database of transport options (public, private and voluntary transport schemes), health services (local GPs, clinics, and hospitals), support services, such as condition related local support groups and an integrated appointment booking and journey planning facility. Combining all these different elements together in one system will make the process of finding relevant and up-to-date travel information a lot easier for patients, therefore increasing access to health provision as well as transport schemes in general.

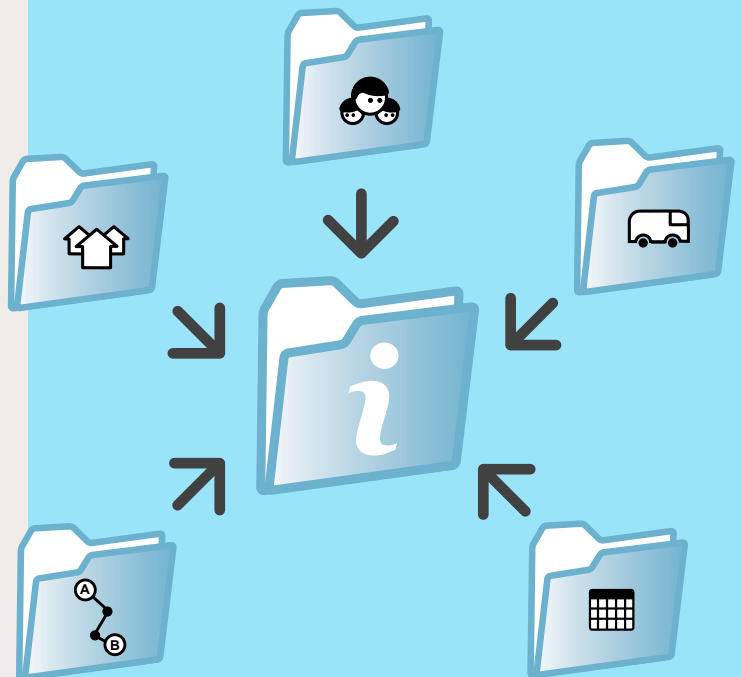
Essentially, HealthConnect seeks to make information widely available via different channels. The internet and telephone hotline for instance can be advantageous for people living in rural areas. Integral to the service is the development of partnerships with local transport planners, commercial operators, voluntary transport providers and other stakeholders such as parish councils, regarding accessibility to health centres or acute services.

# Service benefits

HealthConnect is designed to bridge the gap between the users of transport and healthcare services, and the information that exists to help them make informed choices and improve their quality of life. HealthConnect provides simplicity, joining disparate and often unfamiliar sources of information, with the user, whose simple needs often remain unmet.

The Government has already set the foundations for the service by working with local authorities to deliver a telephone enquiry service and the traveline website. Meanwhile the NHS has launched Choose and Book, a service that enables patients needing an outpatient appointment to choose which hospital they are referred to by their general practitioner (GP), and to book a convenient date and time for their appointment.

HealthConnect builds on these, and other services and provides the necessary interface for health providers to offer patients and families a wide array of information and choice. The Government and local authorities are committed to improving the flow and accessibility of information to ensure that their investments in these areas are translated into better experiences for all.

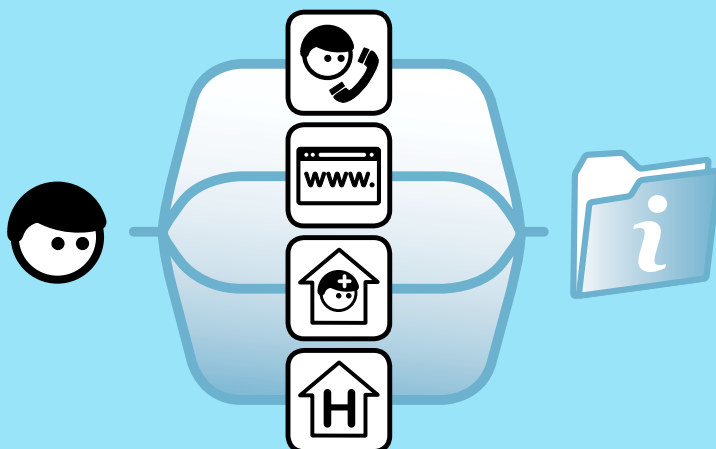


# Service users and access points

It is important that different people be able to access the information, equally, in different ways. We recognize that not every person will feel comfortable in using IT or the internet and finds speaking to a real person a lot more reassuring and helpful.

We also recognise that not all people know where to look for information or what questions to ask. So, we came up with a variety of options of how people might access the information.

**Information can be accessed through a telephone service, website or through the post; the service also allows people to rely on familiar sources of information such as their GP or hospital.**





**The HealthConnect website.** This is the most direct way of accessing the integrated appointment booking facility and journey planner, and any other information on health, local transport options and support groups. One part of the website will be openly accessible and will provide general information on health and travel options. Another section will allow patients to log in securely to a personal account where their health referral details will be accessible, and personalised booking options will be available.

**At your GP surgery.** As a primary point of contact for most patients, GPs will be better equipped to supply information about transport options and accessibility at the point of referral. Patients will be better informed about the implications of these when they make their choices for a secondary healthcare provider.

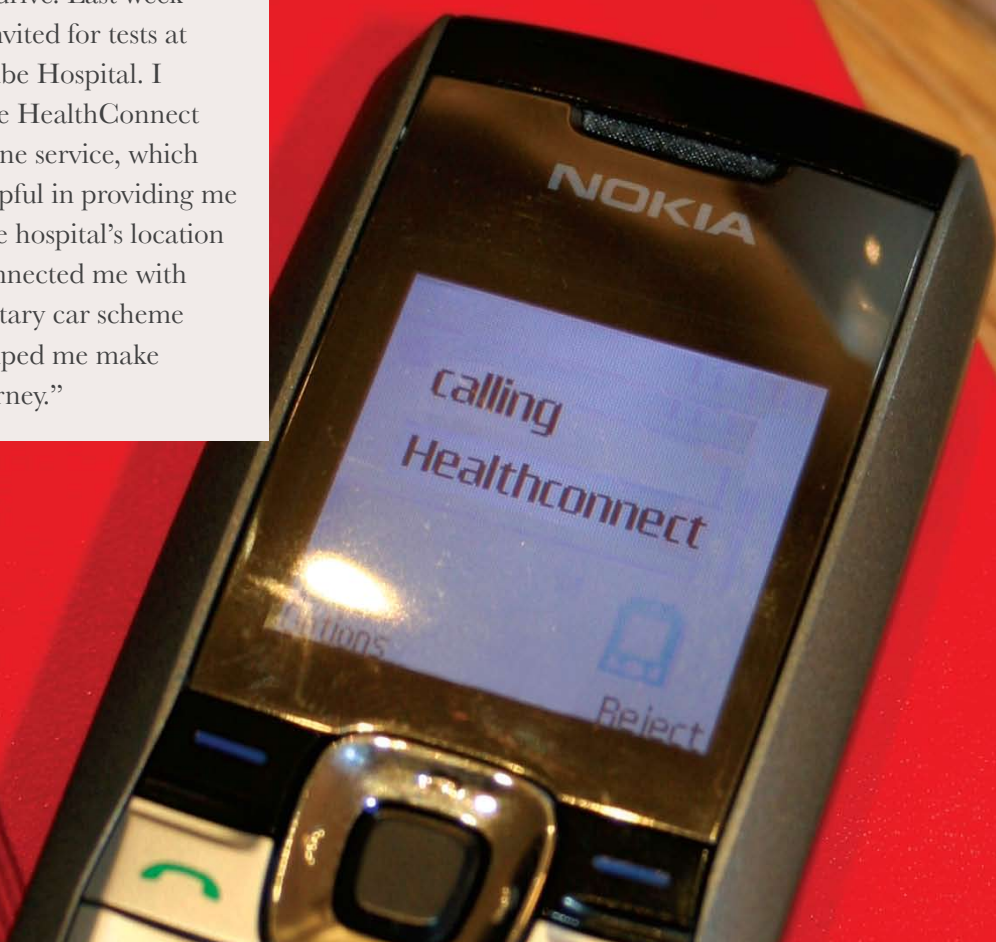
**Via the hospital.** Once an appointment has been made the hospital will be able to send out notices relating to travel and accessibility with appointment confirmation letters. These will arrive through the post and will provide all patients with information relating to special needs accessibility provision, travel payment options, voluntary car schemes and contact details for additional information.

**Over The Phone.** Patients and relatives can inquire about travel, health, appointment booking and journey planning information over the phone and ask for information material to be sent out to them. 'Over the phone' is the direct alternative to the online service, offering a more personal interface.

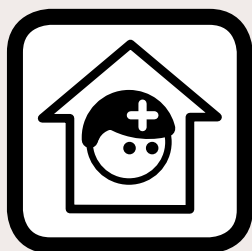
# On the phone



“I am 75 years old and my eyesight has been gradually deteriorating to the point where I can no longer drive. Last week I was invited for tests at Wycombe Hospital. I used the HealthConnect telephone service, which was helpful in providing me with the hospital’s location and connected me with a voluntary car scheme that helped me make the journey.”



# Via your GP



“Before referring me to a specialist, my GP printed out the different options that I could choose from. As the waiting lists in two of the hospitals were relatively similar it was helpful to know that getting to one of them from my home would take twice as long as the other.”

**Referral options**

**NHS**  
Stratan Grove Surgery  
2 Alvaradit Drive  
Princess Hieborough  
H53 6LG  
Tel: 01495 643 211  
Fax: 01495 643 111

**Inform yourself**  
Your NHS number:   
Your password:   
enter gate

**Choose a clinic**  
Please choose a clinic that you would like to book an appointment with from the list below. You can find out about travel options, waiting times and hospital reviews on [www.healthconnect.org/bucks](http://www.healthconnect.org/bucks) or by calling us on 0800 123 456. Alternatively, your GP receptionist will be happy to provide you with this information.

**Inform yourself**

- 1. Amersham Hospital**  
Approx waiting time: 28 days
- 2. Wycombe Hospital** ✖  
Approx waiting time: 21 days
- 3. The Mandeville Hospital**  
Approx waiting time: 31 days

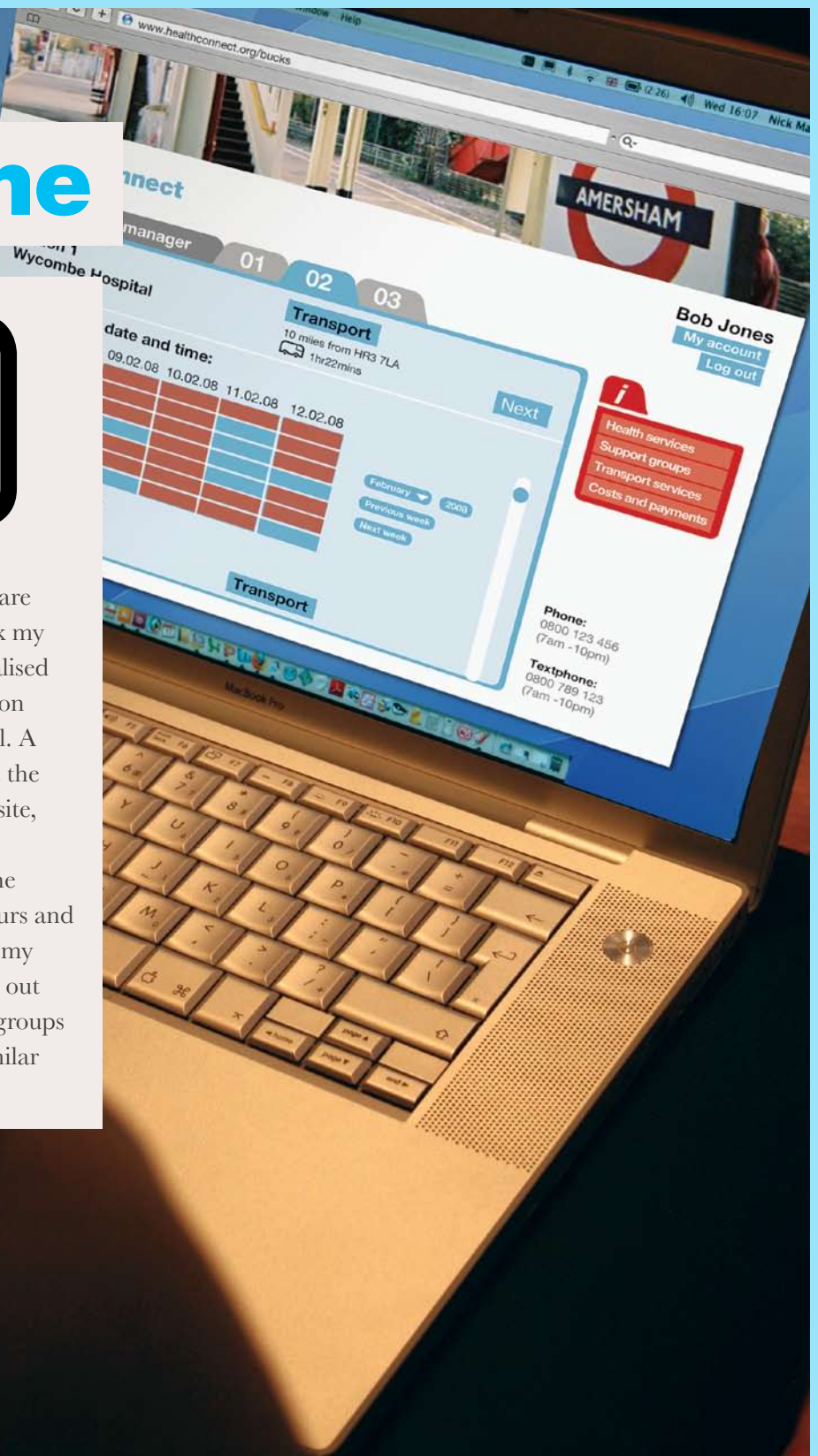
**Transport**  
2 miles from HR3 7LA  
1hr20mins

**Transport**

# Online



“My husband and I are in our 80s. Last week my husband was hospitalised for three days at Luton & Dunstable hospital. A friend told me about the HealthConnect website, which was helpful in providing me with the hospital’s visiting hours and the best way to plan my journey. I also found out about local support groups for people with a similar condition.”



www.healthconnect.org/bucks

## HealthConnect

### Journey planner

**Travelling....**

**From**  
From  
GP or hospital in:  
Amersham  
Post code  
Address

**Travelling to...**  
To  
GP or hospital in:  
Amersham  
Post code  
Address

I need to arrive on 12 February 2008 at 10:00 hours

**Advanced options**

**Show me...**

- The fastest routes
- Routes with the fewest changes
- Routes with the least walking between stops

I wish to travel via:

Station or stop in: Amersham  
 Post code  Address  Place of interest

**My mobility requirements**

- I cannot use stairs
- I cannot use escalators
- I cannot use lifts
- I use wheelchair accessible vehicles

**Search**

**Health services**

**Support groups**

**Transport services**

**Costs and payments**

**Phone:**  
0800 123 456  
(7am - 10pm)

**Textphone:**  
0800 789 123  
(7am - 10pm)

www.healthconnect.org/bucks

## HealthConnect

### Journey summary

**Departing:** Monday 12 February 2008 at 9:00  
**From:** 65B Albion Road, HS5 3SA

**To:** Wycombe Hospital, HP11 2TT  
**Mode:** Public Transport

Please note! Wycombe DIAL-A-RIDE is also available to you. Please call 01495 654 987

Time	Details	Average journey time:
9:00	<b>start</b> Albion Road (middle) Walk to bus stop N in Northwold Rd	10 mins
9:10	Northwold Rd Bus stop N Take the Route Bus 106 towards Princess Risborough Station	Buses every: 10-15 mins Max journey time: 25 mins
9:33	Princess Risborough Station Take the train on Platform 4 towards High Wycombe	Average journey time: 12 mins
9:45		
10:10	High Wycombe Station Walk down Queen Alexandra Road following the signs to Wycombe Hospital	Average journey time: 12 mins
10:22	<b>end</b> Wycombe Hospital	

Maximum journey time: 1h22mins  
Interchanges: 2

Print journey

**Health services**

**Support groups**

**Transport services**

**Costs and payments**

**Phone:**  
0800 123 456  
(7am - 10pm)

**Textphone:**  
0800 789 123  
(7am - 10pm)

# Online



“I have recently been referred for treatment at Amersham Hospital. By logging on to the HealthConnect website with my username and password I was able to change my appointment time. This way I could make the last bus back to my village and didn't have to take a taxi.”

www.healthconnect.org/bucks

**HealthConnect**

Bob Jones  
My account  
Log out

**Appointment manager**

Welcome Bob!

Please select what you want to do from the following options:

Referral details:

- Neoadjuvant chemotherapy [Book](#) [Change](#) [Cancel](#)
- Diabetes, Meglitinides [Book](#) [Change](#) [Cancel](#)

Referred by: Dr. Elisa Peter, Stratan Grove Surgery

**Health services**  
Support groups  
Transport services  
Costs and payments

**Phone:**  
0800 123 456  
(7am - 10pm)

**Textphone:**  
0800 789 123  
(7am - 10pm)

www.healthconnect.org/bucks

**HealthConnect**

Bob Jones  
My account  
Log out

**Appointment manager**

Choose your clinic [Next](#)

Please choose a clinic that you would like to book an appointment with from the list below. Click on 'Reviews' to find out more about the clinic and 'Transport' to find relevant travel information.

- Amersham Hospital**  
Approx waiting time: 28 days  
[Reviews](#) [Transport](#)  
2 miles from HR3 7LA  
1hr20mins
- Wycombe Hospital**  
Approx waiting time: 21 days  
[Reviews](#) [Transport](#)  
10 miles from HR3 7LA  
2hr45mins
- Stoke Mandeville Hospital**  
Approx waiting time: 31 days  
[Transport](#)  
3.5 miles from HR3 7LA

**Health services**  
Support groups  
Transport services  
Costs and payments

**Phone:**  
0800 123 456  
(7am - 10pm)

**Textphone:**  
0800 789 123  
(7am - 10pm)

www.healthconnect.org/bucks

**HealthConnect**

Bob Jones  
[My account](#)  
[Log out](#)

Appointment manager 01 02 03

**Option 1** **Transport**  
 Wycombe Hospital 10 miles from HR3 7LA  
 1hr22mins [Next](#)

**Choose your date and time:**

Time	08.02.08	09.02.08	10.02.08	11.02.08	12.02.08
9:00am	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked
9:30am	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked
10:00am	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked
10:30am	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked
11:00am	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked
11:30am	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked
12:00pm	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked	Booked

February 2008  
[Previous week](#)  
[Next week](#)

Option 2 **Transport**

Health services  
 Support groups  
 Transport services  
 Costs and payments

Phone: 0800 123 456 (7am - 10pm)  
 Textphone: 0800 789 123 (7am - 10pm)

www.healthconnect.org/bucks

**HealthConnect**

Bob Jones  
[My account](#)  
[Log out](#)

Appointment manager 01 02 03

**Appointment confirmation**

**Date:** 12.02.2008  
**Time:** 10:30am  
**Clinic:** [Wycombe Hospital](#)  
 Queen Alexandra Rd, High Wycombe, HP11 2TT  
**Doctor:** Dr. Gerard Sanders

You will shortly receive an appointment reminder from your clinic by post. It will include your personal journey planner.

If you want to review or change any of your bookings, you can do that anytime at [www.healthconnect.org](http://www.healthconnect.org) or by calling our helpline.

Health services  
 Support groups  
 Transport services  
 Costs and payments

Phone: 0800 123 456 (7am - 10pm)  
 Textphone: 0800 789 123 (7am - 10pm)

# Via the hospital



“I just received a letter from Stoke Mandeville confirming my appointment. Usefully, the letter also included advice on how to get to the hospital using public transportation. It even helped me save money by alerting me to the reduced rate travel tokens offered by the council to people with disabilities!”

## Health Connect. Your local travel options

### Bus and Train



Bus: 104, 78, 149



Train: from Princess Risborough Station

Average journey time: 1h22mins

Approximate costs: £14.80

### Car scheme

You will need to register with your scheme by telephoning the appropriate number, as below. The cost is usually £5 payable annually.

#### Princess Risborough Dial-A-Ride

52a Edison Road, Princess Risborough, Bucks, HP19 8TE

Telephone: 01296 330088

Email: [bookings@dialaride.org.uk](mailto:bookings@dialaride.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.dialaride.org.uk>

Times: Monday - Friday from 8am to 6pm

#### Hazlemere & Widmer End Good Neighbours

28 Hayfield Drive, HAZLEMERE, Bucks, HP15 7BT

Telephone: 01494 472277

Type of Service: Shopmobility; available to hire

Times: Monday - Friday 10am to 4pm, Saturday 10am to 15pm

Notice: 24 hours; ring in event of an emergency

Area Covered: High Wycombe, Princes Risborough

Eligibility: Registered members (also guide dogs and companions/ care

Other: Manual wheelchairs may be hired

### Local Taxi

#### Neales Taxis

Crendon S, Princess Risborough, Bucks, HP19 8TE

Telephone: 01496 123456

Website: <http://www.nealestaxis.co.uk/>



Bob Jones  
65b Albion Rd  
Princess Risborough  
HR3 7LA

**Referral details:**  
Neoadjuvant chemotherapy

**Referred by:**  
Dr. Elisa Peters

**Date:**  
31.01.2008

Dear Mr. Jones,

Following a letter from your GP Dr Elisa Peters, Dr Brian Fuller would like  
outpatient appointment on :

**Friday 12 February 2008**  
**10:30 a.m.**  
**Wycombe Hospital**  
**Radiology Unit**

Please could you bring a list of your current medication with you.

We allot 30 minutes to the average appointment. Some routine follow-up  
time. If this is your first assessment, it may take slightly longer.

Please could you let me know if this is not convenient for you.  
We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Willis  
Secretary to Dr Fuller

## HealthConnect

To reach the Radiology Unit, turn into Entrance No. 4 of Wycombe Hospital  
roundabout and then first right and the Radiology Unit is on the right.

**For more info, please turn the page for your full journey plan**

**Wycombe Hospital**  
Queen Alexandra Road  
High Wycombe  
HP11 2TT  
Tel: 01495 643 211

## HealthConnect

### Journey summary

**Appointment time:** Friday 12 February 2008  
**From:** 65B Albion Road, HR3 7LA  
**To:** Wycombe Hospital, HP11 2TT  
**Mode:** Public Transport  
**Please note!**  
The journey planner is subject to change. Please  
**Wycombe DIAL-A-RIDE** is also available to you

Time	Details
9:00	<b>start</b> Albion Road (mid) Walk to bus stop N
9:10	Northwold Rd Bus stop N Take the Route Bus 10 Risborough Station
9:33	Princess Risborough Sta Take the train on Platform Wycombe
9:45	High Wycombe Station Walk down Queen Alexandra following the signs to Wycombe Hospital
10:10	
10:22	<b>end</b> Wycombe Hospital

9:00



**start**

Albion Road (mid)  
Walk to bus stop N

9:10



Northwold Rd  
Bus stop N  
Take the Route Bus 10  
Risborough Station

9:33



Princess Risborough Sta  
Take the train on Platform  
Wycombe

9:45

10:10



High Wycombe Station  
Walk down Queen Alexandra  
following the signs to Wycombe  
Hospital

10:22

**end**

Wycombe Hospital

Maximum journey time: 1h22mins  
Interchanges: 2

**For more information, ticket options, payment recovery**  
please go to [www.healthconnect.org/bucks/transport](http://www.healthconnect.org/bucks/transport)  
123 456.

# Next steps

As members of our society grow older they want to be able to continue to participate and engage fully as active and responsible citizens. Wider government policy is addressing the issue of citizenship and wellbeing from a number of perspectives. The common thread which runs throughout government policy is supporting the wellbeing of older people by providing the right services, in the right way, to meet their needs and aspirations. However, for this to be a reality, service providers have to truly engage with the community they serve and empower them as equal partners in knowing what these services should look like.

**To this end, the next steps following the report of the MKOB Shape 50+ project are that County and District Chief Executives (CADEX) and the Older People's Partnership Board (OPPB) enshrine the following:**

- 1)** People-centered service development should be adopted by all members when reviewing services, policy and strategy.
- 2)** To adopt the Good Practice Standards for Involving Older People, by all services providers.
- 3)** That all service providers should accept responsibility for incorporating accessibility planning in to all service, policy and strategy design.
- 4)** That all service providers contribute to the development of a staged County Travel Planning Service by:
  - a) incorporating the travel planning website on all communications
  - b) developing a county database of transport options that encompasses the statutory, commercial and voluntary sectors that is maintained
  - c) developing a telephone support service to provide travel planning for those in greatest need

# The Good Practice Standards for Involving Older People\*

## 1. Involvement

Involvement is *not* about:

- a token representative
- consultation after decisions have been made
- one-off meetings
- an agenda set by officers
- set-piece committee meetings
- older people being unsupported or unprepared
- management-centred engagement
- giving information out
- market research

Involvement *is* about:

- older people being involved from start to finish
- older people having a say in setting the agenda
- older people represented in sufficient numbers
- older people being resourced to take part
- the potential for action as a result of involving older people
- involving older people in decisions about their own lives

## 2. Messages for policy and practice

- It is important to be as clear as possible about who holds the power and which decisions older people can influence. Older people do not value meaningless consultation.
- It is important to ensure there are sufficient older people in a meeting – at least one-third – to be truly representative and feel supported. Otherwise they risk being isolated or the meeting may be dominated by one older person's views.
- Involve older people before defining the project's remit, otherwise they may be left behind.
- Don't worry too much about representative involvement. People are at the table because of their skills and knowledge, and focusing on being totally representative can risk excluding people.
- Don't try to reinvent the wheel and don't be afraid to make mistakes.
- Try to imagine how you would want to be treated if it were your life.

## 3. Messages for older people

- Ask why you are being involved in this process. How will it make a difference to older people's lives? Is there adequate funding available to enable older people to be involved in the project? Will older people influence what it does? Will older people have a say in the conclusions?
- Involvement in projects implies you also have a responsibility to try and include other older people – particularly the 'non-joiners' and those whose voices might otherwise not be heard.
- Not everyone wants to be involved in the same way; some want to plan, some want to campaign and some want to make the tea.
- Involvement doesn't mean you have to do everything; managers, for example, don't do everything but they do have some control over the process.
- It is about what older people want, not just what services can offer.
- It is reasonable for you to request help, support, training, time and money.

\* From Involving OP – What standards should we expect (2005) York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk))



## Engine

Project facilitation, design and content:  
Engine Service Design

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