SOCIAL IMPACTS AND SOCIAL EQUITY ISSUES IN TRANSPORT WORKSHOP SERIES

Workshop 1 Report:
Employment, Education and Training Perspectives

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LSE Housing and Communities

Report Contents

Acknowledgements

1.   Overview of the Workshop Series

Social issues form an important element of the transport policy challenge, but have been much less well explored and articulated than areas such as the economy and the environment. The social sciences have collectively carried out a wide range of research into social impacts and social equity, from a variety of different perspectives. Take up of this work in transport policy and research has been limited and patchy, however. Hence the priority under this theme is to expose and synthesise this diversity of work, and consider its applicability to contemporary policy and practice, by holding a series of linked Research into Practice events. Each one will have a different focus and be led by a different institution, with the overall project being led by Dr Karen Lucas at the TSU.

1.1   Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the series is to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and capacity building to better equip researchers, policymakers and practitioners to address the social challenges in transport now and in the future within the UK context. It will draw on state-of-the-art research and best practices across a wide range of disciplines both here and abroad, to identify gaps in knowledge and the appropriate methodologies and evidence base for addressing these.

1.2   The full programme of Events

1. Framing Event - University of Oxford, 14-15 September 2010
2. Employment and Training Workshop - Warwick University, 2 December 2010
3. Transport and Health Workshop - 17-18 March 2011
4. Housing and Sustainable Communities Workshop - London School of Economics, 21 June 2011
5. Rural Connectivity Workshop - Aberdeen University, 3-4 October 2011
6. Final Dissemination Event - central London, 2 November 2011

1.3   Research Outputs

Slides of all the workshop presentations and reports for the series can be found on the UKTRC website **www.uktrc.ac.uk**

1.4   This scope of this report

This report concerns the third workshop. The report and an accompanying policy briefing note are the two main outputs from workshop 3: housing and Sustainable Communities.

2. Workshop 1: Employment, Education and Training Perspectives

Workshop 1 was held at Scarman House, University of Warwick, on 2nd December 2010. Initially, 36 participants booked to attend, but unprecedented wintry weather for the time of year and associated travel problems (particularly facing those in north-east England, South Yorkshire and southern England), meant that several delegates were unable to attend. Even so, those who were able to attend came from a wide range of academic disciplines and policy sectors, including transport, employment, social policy, environment, urban planning, rural communities and regeneration (see Appendix 2).

2.1 Key aims and objectives

The workshop was designed to explore:

- Challenges of the changing geography of employment and new ways of working;
- The limits to travel-to-work;
- Immobility as a barrier to employment and access to jobs for workless people;
- Inequalities in access to training and implications for skills development; and
- Policy initiatives – including a practitioner perspective.

There were two discussion sessions – focusing on:

- Research themes and methodologies; and
- Issues for policy.

2.2 Key outputs from the event

Slides of all the workshop presentations for the event can be found on the UKTRC website **www.uktrc.ac.uk**.

This workshop report and an accompanying policy briefing note are the two main outputs from the workshop.

3. Researching the Issues

The Workshop was designed to bring together delegates from academic, policy and practice backgrounds. There was an introductory presentation to introduce the key themes for the Workshop. Six further presentations were commissioned of which five were from researchers from academic institutions and a sixth was a practitioner working at a transport authority in the West Midlands.

The presentations were designed to showcase different methodological approaches and also disciplinary perspectives – with presenters from backgrounds in geography, economics, sociology, political science and transport, but all with a key focus on employment, labour market, skills and training issues. Most did not have a primary research focus on transport, but had investigated related issues and were selected as having interesting perspectives to add to the debates on transport and social impacts and equity issues.

Presenters were drawn from all of the nations of the UK.

All presentations had a strong applied focus, such that implications for policy could be drawn out and discussed. Hence no strict distinction is made between academic and policy foci in the structure of this report. The day was organised so as to include two general discussion sessions – one focusing on research themes and methodologies, and the other on policy issues.

3.1 An overview of the key themes

In the first presentation **Anne Green**, who is a Professorial Fellow at the Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, provided an overview of the context for discussions of employment, education and training perspectives and identified associated key themes – most of which were picked up in subsequent presentations.

She began by outlining the challenges of **the *changing geography of employment and new ways of working***. In particular she highlighted:

- The Coalition Government's concern with 'rebalancing the economy' – both sectorally (i.e. to shift away from an over-dependence on the service sector) and spatially (i.e. to shift away from geographical concentration in London and the Greater South East);
- Sectoral and occupational change – notably the long-term shift from primary and manufacturing sectors to service employment and the growth of higher level non-manual managerial, professional and associate professional occupations;
- The growth over the medium-term in part-time work vis-à-vis full-time work and, since the recession, the increase in the share of people working part-time because they could not find a full-time job;
- The changing nature of contemporary workplaces – raising the question (explored later by Alan Felstead [see section 4.2]) of whether the rise of home working signalled the demise of fixed workplaces;
- Household location decisions amongst those able to exercise choice in such matters – including a tendency for some dual career households to maximise job opportunities by locating close to motorway junctions and rail stations.

She indicated that some of these changes, including part-time and 24/7 working, suggested a need for workers to live close to, or in locations with easy access to, their workplaces, while the growth in professional and associate professional occupations pointed towards more extensive travel-to-work patterns. An underlying key question is:

- '*Does the transport infrastructure match the economic geography of the 21st century?*'

She then introduced a topic of central importance to employment and social exclusion – addressed in presentations by Martin Rivas-Perez (section 4.3), Ron McQuaid (section 4.4) and Ian Shuttleworth (section 4.5)):

- The dynamics of access and the limits of travel-to-work.

She outlined the changing nature of job search – particularly increased use of the Internet to search for jobs, both locally and further afield. This has the potential for job seekers to access information concerning a greater volume and variety of jobs than formerly (Green et al., 2011). However, it remains the case – especially in difficult economic circumstances – that social networks continue to be important in accessing employment. Employers' recruitment policies are also an important factor here. There is evidence that some employers favour local workers, at least for some jobs, on the basis that they are more likely to respond positively to demands for flexibility – including working at short notice – than those living further afield (Nunn et al., 2010). Workers themselves need to weigh up how far it is worth travelling to work, given the financial and non-financial costs and benefits involved (as highlighted in sections 4.2 and 4.3). Previous research has pointed to important variations by sub-group in how far different sub-groups of workers travel (for example, Coombes et al., 1988), with part-time workers and those with poor skills and/or working in less skilled (and lower paid jobs) exhibiting the shortest journeys-to-work (Green and Owen, 2006). However, even within sub-groups of the population with similar characteristics there may be important differences between who is willing to travel beyond the immediate locality for work and who is not. Care and other household responsibilities are one important factor constraining journeys for some individuals. Such responsibilities need to be negotiated at household level and their fulfilment may involve a complex choreography of trip chaining. Access to private transport and public transport provision is an important consideration also.

Given the uneven spatial distribution of jobs and the geographically uneven nature of non-employment, from an economic development policy perspective there is ongoing debate about the relative merits of 'moving jobs to workers' versus 'moving workers to jobs'[1] (Shuttleworth and Green, 2009) (see also section 5.4.4). Given concerns about the longer-term sustainability of the former policy, there is a trend towards increasing focus on the latter. Especially at times of recession, Government ministers have exhorted people without jobs to travel/move further afield in the search for work. In 1981 Norman Tebbit famously suggested the need to 'Get on your bike' – saying:

> *"We cannot ignore the price that unemployment today is exacting. I know the problems. I grew up in the 1930s with an unemployed father. He didn't riot. He got on his bike and looked for work and kept looking until he found it."*
>
> (Norman Tebbit, 1981)

In echoes of this speech, in 2010, Iain Duncan Smith advocated that job seekers should 'Get on the bus' – asserting:

> *"There is a tendency of people to say there are no jobs – they may not be absolutely in the town you are living in … they may be in a neighbouring town."* Referring to Merthyr Tydfil in the South Wales Valleys, he claimed: *"Many did not know that there were jobs in Cardiff; they did not know that if they got on the bus in an hour's time they would be in Cardiff."*
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> (Iain Duncan Smith, 2010)

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[1] 'Moving people to jobs' encompasses both relocation (through residential migration) and commuting. The emphasis here is on commuting.

The explicit implication of the statements above is that immobility is a barrier to employment for workless people. Hence, to overcome this, the onus is on policies to enhance mobility. Both objective and subjective opportunity structures are of relevance here: whether it is possible to physically access suitable jobs using available transport is one important aspect, but perceptual factors and constrained travel horizons are significant also. The academic and policy challenge is to enhance understanding of the nexus of the geography of jobs, skills, health and well-being, caring responsibilities, access to transport and other factors that underlie the rationale of immobility and act to constrain entry to, and progression in, employment. The range of factors outlined above highlights the imperative of linking transport with other policy domains.

Key employment and skills policy questions identified by Anne Green were:

- How can low skilled individuals be encouraged to widen their work search areas?
- How significant a constraining factor is transport, and transport costs, in this regard? (Are 'transport problems', at least to some extent, a 'convenient excuse'?)
- Are other factors at play, and how might they be overcome?
- How does this differ across different types of geography? (i.e. urban and rural areas, different sub-regions, etc)
- Can work location be re-organised to mitigate access problems?

Transport also plays an important role in inequalities in access to training and skills development. Here it is important to note that the decisions of employers and (potential) workers are intimately connected with the conditions that prevail in local labour markets. There are important variations in opportunities to access training and skills development and the costs of training provision (from the perspective of providers) and of accessing training (from the trainee's perspective) vary geographically. In large urban areas there is a greater volume and also more variety available to learners than in more sparsely populated areas. In peripheral rural areas a key question for those concerned with local economic development and skills policy is whether poor transport exacerbates the low skills equilibrium and limits opportunities to enhance productivity. This question was explored in a presentation by Terence Hogarth and David Owen (see section 4.7).

Finally, she outlined the range of methodological approaches referred to in subsequent research presentations, including the Census of Population, surveys, administrative data sources, longitudinal data, focus groups and narratives.

3.2   Changing places of work

The second presentation was from **Alan Felstead**, who is Professor at the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University. In his presentation entitled ***Rapid Change or Slow Evolution? Changing Places of Work*** he addressed:

- The hype around changing places of work
- The reality of changing places of work
- The consequences of these changes – with particular emphasis on implications for learning at work.

He noted that work can be thought of:

- As an *activity* –mental or physical, as illustrated by the phrase: "I'm working";
- As a *place* – e.g. an office or a factory, illustrated by the phrase: "I'm going to work".

For many years these notions have been unified – with activities being carried out in a place of work – the *workplace*; note that this is a 'singular' word that is not hyphenated. But this singularity is increasingly being challenged by technology. He pointed out that technology has potentially untethered some activities from these places, as indicated by the notion of teleworking. Teleworking means that it is possible to work in a different way – and in a variety of places and at a variety of times. Work is changing, since it is possible to: (i) work *without* travelling; (ii) work *while* travelling between places; and (iii) to work in places and times *previously regarded* as being beyond the boundaries of work. As work 'spills over' into non-work life, so the divisions between 'work' and 'non-work' that have been apparent for centuries are being challenged by technologies. As a result there is less 'dead time' – and people are 'never off' work. But this may not be an inexorable trend: there are signs of 'resistance' to pervasiveness of mobile ways of working, with 'mobile free' areas in trains, some parts of public buildings, etc.

There is a good deal of *hype* about technology and work – as illustrated by adverts for mobile phones, PCs, etc. In his presentation Alan Felstead sought to get beneath the hype to ask: *What is the reality from the data?* In particular he focused on the following questions:

1) How extensive is the change or is it just media hype?
2) If there has been change, where has it been most rapid?
3) Who has been most affected?
4) Have conventional workplaces changed in response?

He pointed out that data sources on *work location* are rather patchy. A relevant question in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) started in 1981, stopped for 11 years, started again in 1992 and more information was added in 1997. Less frequently conducted surveys of individuals focusing primarily on other topics include some relevant material (e.g. Skills Surveys). From an employer perspective, some occasional employer surveys also carry work location questions (e.g. Future of Work Surveys and the Workplace Employment Relations Survey [WERS]).

Utilising available data he showed that working at home and on the move have become more prevalent in the UK. Data from the LFS reveal that the percentage of workers *working mainly at home* increased from 1.5% in 1981 to 2.9% in 2010. In absolute terms the numbers *working mainly 'in own home'* increased from 346,000 in 1981, to 661,000 in 1992, 629,000 in 1996, 673,000 in 2002, 749,000 in 2006 and 820,000 in 2010. The percentage of workers *working mainly from home* increased from 2.8% in 1981 to 8.4% in 2010. The numbers *working mainly 'in different places using home as a base'* increased from 642,000 in 1981, to 1,201,000 in 1992, 1,566,000 in 1996, 2,130,000 in 2002, 2,410,000 in 2006 and 2,395,000 in 2010. These figures illustrate that the main change has taken place in the share of people working *from* home, rather than the number working *at* home. So, there is something in the hype about changing places of work, but that the upward trajectory is perhaps not as evident as the hype suggests. However, it is clear that technology is an important driver of activity. The numbers and proportion *working at least one day a week at or from home* (according to LFS data) increased from 2,987,000 (11.3%) in 1997, to 3,566,000 (13.4%) in 2001, to 4,201,000 (14.9%) in 2006 and 4,384,000 (15.3%) in 2010. Of these people, the proportion indicating reliance on the telephone and computer to work at or from home rose from 33.1% in 1997, to 47.0% in 2001, to 52.1% in 2006 and 58.7% in 2010.

In terms of *who* has been most affected by these trends it is evident from LFS data that sizeable proportions using their home as a workplace are from groups who have a long history of working in this way. However, the rise has affected groups with weaker traditions of doing so. Two-thirds of the rise of at least one day a week working from home is accounted for by employees. Up to two-thirds of the rise in the use of the home

as a workplace comes from office workers. This highlights that it is non-manual workers that have been in the lead on this trend.

Data from Skills Surveys on *changing patterns of work between 2001 and 2006* indicates a statistically significant decline in those who are 'mainly office, factory or shop-based' from 74.5% in 2001 to 71.9% in 2006, and a statistically significant rise in the 'use of other places for work from 35.9% in 2001 to 37.8% in 2006. This raises the question: *What consequences does this have for offices?* It seems that offices have changed 'to some degree', with personalised space is being challenged. Evidence from an ESRC Future of Work supported survey of HR managers of 128 of the largest UK organisations showed growing use of 'hot desks' (bookable shared office space) and 'touchdown desks' (available on a first-come-first-served basis) (Felstead et al., 2005). Such working practices result in a more intensive use of office space and allow employers to save on office costs. The same data source suggests that Senior Managers and Professionals, followed by Associate Professional, Administrative staff and Sales staff, are the largest proportion of users of 'devices to untether work from inside the office'. Importantly, this suggests that there is *work that can be, and work that cannot be, untethered from place.*

These trends in changing places of work have implications for learning; since they imply some learning conventionally associated with being 'on site' at workplaces becomes '*learning at a distance'* (see Felstead et al., 2009). Physical distance (and the consequent reduction of face-to-face contact) makes participative learning more difficult. Moreover, it is more difficult in some spatial circumstance than in others since the 'opportunities for individuals to participate in activities and interactions' (learning affordances) differ according to the spatial arrangements of work. Changing places of work mean that it is necessary to *learn how to work at a distance*. For individual workers this means balancing physical *distance from* colleagues and clients with *physical closeness* to family, friends and strangers. In 'collective offices' informality, uncertainty and mobility emphasised over the formality, certainty and static nature of 'personal offices', so changing the environment for working. 'Working on the move' involves occupation of transitional spaces shared with strangers, so it is important for individuals to get to know what can be done most effectively where and how. Those individuals 'working at home' need to manage the twin pressures of isolation from colleagues with the need to fend off interruptions from family and friends when 'work' and 'home' are brought into close proximity. It was noted that there may also be health and well-being issues associated with working from home, but there is a lack of data in the LFS and other surveys to address this.

In conclusion it was noted that attention-grabbing headlines about changing places of work are exaggerated. Yet work is being de-centred, albeit gradually, in a process facilitated by information and communications technologies. In terms of social inequalities, it is office workers and the relatively privileged are benefiting most from these trends. Individuals involved in a range of different working arrangements need to find out what works best, where and how, and for organisations, as well as the individuals concerned, the fact that it is difficult to learn from others given spatial separation needs to be addressed.

3.3   Dynamics of access to work

The third presentation was from **Martin Rivas Perez**, who is a PhD student at the Institute of Transport Studies, University of Leeds. His presentation, entitled ***Dynamics of access: exclusions and resiliencies in the search for work***, co-authored with Frances Hodgson, was based on ongoing research undertaken for his PhD. The presentation focused on transport, travel and economic development, with reference to experience in Tyne & Wear in north-east England. It made reference to a mixed portfolio of methodological approaches, both quantitative and qualitative, to highlight the geographies of deprivation, transport inequalities and spatial structures of employment

in Tyne & Wear. Specifically, it encompassed spatial analyses of the Annual Travel Census data (from the Tyne & Wear Household Travel Survey 2009) and of area based socio-economic data (from the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007) showing geographies of deprivation, in order to demonstrate variations in the geographies of mobility by households in different socio-economic groups. These quantitative approaches were supplemented by the use of focus groups to explore issues of barriers to mobility, and strategies and resources used to be mobile, in order to address questions such as 'how do households cope with *changes* to their mobility?' and 'how does current transport provision meet the needs of households in maintaining an effective level of mobility?'

Using these different methods and data sources the *aim* of the presentation was to understand the significance of everyday mobilities in processes of exclusion from employment opportunities. It was concerned with the resources that households use to make them more mobile, including how they gathered knowledge about opportunities and the transport network. This involved interweaving:

- Household resiliencies (and skills and resources) in maintaining and improving accessibilities.
- Land use development and patterns of employment opportunity in Gateshead and around the MetroCentre.
- Household resources and practices that enable them to cope and thrive – including social and familial networks, time, information, skills, strategies and competencies.
- Gender-aware analysis informed by time-use research which argues women are more likely to be time poor.

He introduced Gateshead as the focus for the study, indicating that it is typical of industrial areas in the UK in that it is fairly deprived (58th out of 354 in list of most deprived local authorities in England), has an unemployment rate of 9.2% and an economic inactivity rate of 25.4% (July-September 2010 figures). It has geographical concentrations of deprivation and social exclusion. The main employment centres for Gateshead residents are the Team Valley, the Metro Centre and MetroGreen and Newcastle and Gateshead centres. There is a particular focus from a development perspective on the Metro Centre/MetroGreen site: a brownfield site that needs to be cleaned up. Gateshead Borough Council is committed to raising skill and wage levels through attracting 'high-value' employment to the site, but congestion on the A1 limits further development. Hence, Martin argued, Gateshead and the Metro Centre/MetroGreen site is a microcosm of the challenges posed by the changing geographies of employment and service provision generally, and how transport and mobility are key components of economic (re)development. How can/does the Borough Council get more high value work in a congested site when it is committed to being a carbon-neutral area?

Turning to the mobility of residents, evidence from the Tyne & Wear Household Travel Survey shows that there is little difference in the *number* of trips per day by deprivation score of neighbourhoods. It is clear that majority of trips are *short* – especially in the most deprived areas. For the 10% most deprived LSOAs only 13.4% of trips are over 5 kms, compared with the 30% least deprived LSOAs in Gateshead. Destination density mapping techniques demonstrate that:

- 16% of trips from the *10% most deprived neighbourhoods* were for employment/business purposes. Most such trips are very local: the average length of trip is 0.7 km. Interestingly, some of these trips are focused on primary schools (where there are teaching assistant roles). Relatively few employment trips are to large employment centres (e.g. Team Valley, Metro Centre).
- For households in *deciles 3 and 4 of deprived neighbourhoods* in England the average length of trip is somewhat longer at 0.9 km. Here, the relative

importance of retail centres of employment emerges, with some residents travelling to the Metro Centre and Team Valley.

- For households in the *30% least deprived neighbourhoods* 23% of trips were for employment/business purposes. The average length of trip was slightly longer at 1.1 km. Local employment trips concentrated on schools and health care centres, but there are also concentration of trips to central Newcastle and to public sector jobs.

The main issues emerging from focus groups in relation to access to work were *inadequate public transport services* and *temporal mismatch* of public transport services and shift patterns (start and finish times) and the infrequency of services. This was a particular issue for people becoming agency workers – a group characterised by a high degree of 'churn' (which seemingly contributes to the transport service issue not being addressed, since workforce turnover is such that different workers are involved all the time). It was noted that this highlights the issue of bus routing. The cost of journeys by public transport was another important feature emerging from focus groups. There is a *mismatch in work search and public transport fares administration.* Travelling across the Tyne & Wear boundary led to a huge increase in fares. There were instances of resulting high costs of travel meaning that people refused job opportunities and so were excluded from benefit. The policy implication is that greater consideration should be given to the cost of local job searches. It was suggested that a 'quick win' for Tyne & Wear would be to improve the temporal pattern of bus services to take account of the geographies and costs of local job searches.

He considered how resiliencies to the challenges to temporal, spatial and financial processes of exclusion that he had identified could be improved:

- To some extent *resilience* to costs of travel and the mismatch between travel services and the times when they were needed could be *increased through social networks*. This illustrates the importance of being 'connected' – and the extra problems for people who do not have a social network to draw upon. People with access to social networks might be able to use them to travel longer distances and/or to destinations that would otherwise be inaccessible.
- Challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities could be addressed by *increasing resilience through managing time and space*. This involved a skill of juggling to coordinate one's own and dependents' schedules across time and space – active patterns of juggling time and keeping appointments. Once again, problems were noted for people who did not have a social network to draw upon.
- *Increasing resilience through cars* recognises that having a car enhances individuals' abilities to access work through greater mobility, since cars provide greater flexibility in time and space compared with public transport.
- *Increasing resilience through saving* emerged as important also. This refers to the need to manage financial capital across time. For individuals moving from benefits into work there are issues of going into debt when entering work, since it is often necessary to have to wait 4 weeks to get paid, instead of receiving benefits every 2 weeks. In some instances people have to borrow money to 'bridge the gap' relating to the disruption in income consequent upon obtaining employment. It was noted that those individuals wanting/needing a car to enhance their travel-to-work range would also need to save for a car.

3.4 A model of travel to work limits of parents

A presentation showcasing a **model of travel-to-work limits of parents** by **Ron McQuaid**, who is Professor and Director of the Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University, addressed issues of *employability* and *travel-to-work.* He introduced his presentation by noting that the further a person (worker or job seeker) is willing to travel the greater the number of job opportunities available to them. Hence,

differences in the willingness or ability to travel longer (in terms of time and distance) to work, and in the accessibility of suitable work opportunities, will influence the employment outcomes between people.

Previous research on employability and travel-to-work (see McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005) has shown that key influences are:

- The characteristics of the person concerned and type of work being sought – key *individual factors* include age, literacy, health, skills and confidence;
- Influences on ability to travel – relevant *personal circumstances* include caring roles, household circumstances ('chaotic lifestyles' play a role here), debt and social capital; and
- Attraction of *jobs* – key *external factors* here are jobs (including pay/ conditions/ speciality), transport characteristics to reach those jobs, and alternatives to work income (i.e. benefits).

He demonstrated insights into some of these issues for one particular sub-group of people – parents - through the use of data from the Scottish Government's Working for Families programme. The Working for Families Fund was available in Scotland from 2004-08, latterly in 20 local authority areas covering 79% of Scotland's population (in both urban and rural areas). The fund invested in initiatives to improve the employability of disadvantaged parents facing barriers - particularly childcare barriers - to participating in the labour market. Initiatives also included help with driving lessons, provision of taxis and mobile crèches (see also McQuaid et al., 2009; Bond et al., 2010). Activity focused particularly on people in the lowest 10% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Using a rich data source on 12,565 disadvantaged parents who participated in Working for Families, he presented results from logistic regression modelling of parents' willingness to travel less than and more than 60 minutes to work. The results showed that the probability of being willing to travel further (more than 60 minutes) to work is dependent upon a range of independent variables/factors (relating to individual, personal circumstances, and external factors) (McQuaid, 2009).

Individual characteristics associated with parents being more likely to travel further to work were:

- Gender – the probability of women being willing to commute for over 60 minutes was only a third that of men;
- Non-white ethnic group;
- Those in full-time work - were willing to travel the longest, compared to those in part-time work or those who had been out of work up to 6 months or 1-5 years.

In terms of *personal circumstances*:

- Lone parents were less willing to travel longer than others – most likely reflecting their sole responsibility for their children;
- Those with a youngest child over 5 years old were slightly likely to travel further;
- Use of formal child care reduces willingness to travel further to work – probably through lack of flexibility and the need to get back to collect children at a certain time, while informal arrangements afford greater flexibility
- Surprisingly, qualifications were *not* significant.

In terms of *external circumstances*:
- Availability of public transport enhances willingness to travel more;
- The cost of public transport was not significant (but negative);
- Availability of private transport was not significant (but positive).

Other results emerging from the modelling included:

- Professionals travel longer than all other occupations;
- People perceiving discrimination are prepared to travel for longer;
- In small towns and remote rural areas there is greater willingness to travel – reflecting the smaller volume and sparsity of job opportunities.

In conclusion, individual characteristics, personal circumstances and external factors are all important in the travel-to-work limits of parents – the type of job, childcare and the age of children, perceived discrimination and where people live are all influential in understanding travel to work limits of parents.

3.5   Making mobility: individuals, perceptions and places

The fifth presentation by **Ian Shuttleworth**, who is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queens University Belfast, addressed the challenge of making immobile groups of the population more mobile in his presentation entitled **Making mobility: individuals, perceptions and places**. He noted that spatial mobility is cited as a policy prescription in a range of domains. For example, in addressing worklessness, benefit claimants are exhorted to move to work (as outlined in 4.1). Likewise, in relation to housing, there are concerns that tenants in socially rented housing are relatively spatially immobile and can become trapped in certain places in public housing. He noted that cumulative disadvantage means that there is likely to be considerable overlap in the membership of these groups in terms of work and housing, and suggested that it is probably true to say that the difficulty of mobilising the least mobile (assuming this is desirable) has been underestimated.

This think piece explored the processes which make immobile people more mobile – and suggested that the question of making them mobile is highly intractable. Hence the rationale for the presentation was that:

- Spatial mobility in the labour market is an element in employability;
- Spatial mobility (actual and intended) is related to future, current and cumulative social and labour market disadvantage.
- Actual and intended spatial mobility is shaped by individual factors (e.g. health, pay) as well as neighbourhood type factors (e.g. urban, 'isolate' [see Robson et al., 2009]);
- Government welfare proposals across various policy domains are starting to focus on spatial mobility (as a 'bridging' topic); and that
- Longitudinal approaches are needed to understand social disadvantage and the interaction of housing and labour market mobility through time.

He suggested that the direction of causality between employability and mobility is questionable, but there are suggestive findings from recent research conducted in Northern Ireland. For example, a study of redundant Harland and Wolff workers showed that they were more likely to find work if they could drive and had experience of commuting longer distances (i.e. travelled more than 5 miles per day when working at Harland and Wolff) (Shuttleworth et al., 2005). This implies that people who drive are prepared to travel longer distances and display greater employability than those who do not. Likewise, evidence from a survey of Incapacity Benefit claimants in Northern Ireland indicates that a willingness to be mobile in search of work increased the chances of stating that 'work was valued highly' and of 'expecting to find work within the next 2 years' (Shuttleworth and Green, 2011).

These research findings raise the question: '*Does spatial mobility increase positive attitudes to the labour market? Or vice versa?*'. Again, referring to research on Incapacity Benefit claimants in Northern Ireland, spatial mobility intentions had a:

- *Negative relationship* with increasing age, low pay in previous job, no qualifications, urban location, physical health problems; and a
- *Positive relationship* with being male, ability to drive, valuing work highly, being an owner occupier, and rural locations.

It appears from the evidence cited above that, at least to some extent work experience is carried forward into out of work experience – with spatial immobility appearing to be linked to current and cumulative labour market disadvantage. This raises the question:

- *Is experience of low spatial mobility constructed over the life course, and if so, is it likely to be amenable to a quick fix?*

Labour market spatial mobility is a difficult topic to address because as well as physical barriers (e.g. lack of a car, poor public transport) which may be understood, and for which responses are fairly clear (e.g. get a car, improve public transport) even if not always feasible to deal with; it also involves intangible phenomena such as perceptions, social customs, family spatial practices, fear, etc. The example of young people in Belfast having out-of-date perceptions of job availability and job locations in Belfast – for example wanting to work in shipyards that no longer existed - was cited in this respect (Green et al., 2005). The strong inward looking social networks of family history and practices may play a role here. So there are both 'real' and 'attitudinal' barriers to address; (see also Green and White [2007]). Though not tangible, these obstacles are real and are additional to physical obstacles. They add to wider social exclusion, but responses to these problems are less clear because they involve cross-departmental working and attempts to change perceptions and attitudes. Enhancing mobility of those who tend to be immobile is likely to be difficult.

Given that the correlates of labour market mobility are similar to residential mobility, Ian Shuttleworth concluded with the speculation that the agenda for research should look at labour market mobility in the broader context of residential mobility/immobility and its relationships to other factors over time, in order to explore the relationship between housing and work-related mobility, through longitudinal analysis. Large scale data collection to examine these issues is likely to be prohibitively expensive, but the use of secondary data might offer a way forward to approach these themes. He set out plans to use the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Survey (NILS) to look at the residential moves of long-term ill people who are likely to be/who have characteristics similar to IB claimants, and indicated that these could be contrasted with other groups. He could look at the commutes of longer-term ill people in employment and compare them with those with no health problems in employment and also look at their housing moves. In this way insights could be gathered into the relationship between work-related mobility and housing moves.

3.6 From policy to delivery: the role of transport in access to employment

A perspective from practice was provided by **Maria Pilar Machancoses**, who is Regeneration and Planning Manager at Centro, which develops public transport policy for the West Midlands metropolitan area where there are 63 bus operators. This area covers seven local authorities (including Birmingham) and has a population of 2.6 million. She provided some pertinent key statistics on the area, including the fact that 24% of the population are over 60 years of age and 25% are aged 0-19 years. 34% of households have no car – this was noted as a massive challenge. Centro plans and co-ordinates West Midlands public transport improvements in partnership with stakeholders. Crucially, the fact that there is a deregulated market in England (outside London) means that bus operators can create and stop services without consulting Centro.

She contended that the political discourse about transport and access to work is all about physical infrastructure – not about costs, spatial characteristics and access. She quoted Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Transport, who said in 2010:

> *"Social mobility and, in particular, moving people off welfare and into work, often depends on transport infrastructure. If people on isolated and deprived estates cannot get a bus or a train to the nearest city or town they may be stranded without work and without hope."*

> (Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Transport, 2010)

She noted that research suggests that lack of transport is a barrier to work for two out of five jobseekers and that the cost of transport is prohibitive for a quarter of them. She stated that 14% of weekly household expenditure is spent on transport. Monthly bus passes in the West Midlands are about £42, but most people working on a part-time basis get paid on a weekly basis – and weekly tickets are more expensive. Relevant previous policy documents cited include:

- Making the Connexions: Transport and Social Exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003)
- Accessibility Planning – LPT2
- Transforming places, changing lives: A Framework for regeneration (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008)
- The UK National Action Plan (NAP) on Social Inclusion 2008-2011
- Developing a Sustainable Transport System (DASTS) (Department for Transport, 2008) – one of the five principles of DASTS was to promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society
- Department for Transport LTP3 Guidance, which talks about the need to "enhance social inclusion by enabling disadvantaged people to connect with employment opportunities, key services, social networks and goods through improving accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability".
- Universal Credit: welfare that works (Department for Work and Pensions, 2010)– which merges out-of-work benefits with in-work support – it will support people both in and out of work, replacing Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based JSA and income-related Employment and Support Allowance; (tellingly, no specific reference is made to transport as a barrier in the report – although to move into work people may need to travel further afield and feel comfortable about doing so)
- Citizens Advice Bureau and Campaign for Better Transport report (2010) – report on 'Transport, social equity and welfare to work'

She indicated that the UK is leading the debate on transport and social exclusion at the European level, noting that it was UK practitioners who highlighted a gap between strategic policy on social inclusion issues and explicit policy in transport terms. However, she contended that while much good work is being done on local transport plans, bringing the public transport and social inclusion agendas together requires greater dialogue and awareness between EU policy directorates, and synergy between national public transport and social inclusion policies.

Planners are doing much to ensure that employment is in accessible areas – but the issue remains as to whether enough is being done to create social inclusion. She noted that between 1985/6 and 2008/09 the increase in the cost of bus fares (in real terms) was 51% in England, 46% in London and 95% in PTEs.

In the second part of her presentation, Maria Machancoses outlined two examples of practical measures that Centro had developed to help people access transport to access employment. The first example from Centro of bringing together policy and delivery is

provided by *WorkWise*, which was introduced in 2003, addresses transport barriers to employment through travel costs, access to information and widening travel horizons. WorkWise measures include:

- Personalised door-to-door travel plan information
- Free 'Day Rider' bus ticket
- Free monthly bus pass for up to 3 months (while moving into employment)

These measures are designed to help to promote sustainable travel habits by the individual, but also, in systems terms, to support the integration of the transport system with the needs of Jobcentres and support the local economy by ensuring access to employment sites. In particular, the measures reflect the recognition that travel costs are important when accessing job interviews and also for easing the transition period from being on benefit into employment (as highlighted by Martin Rivas Perez in his presentation [see section 4.2]). Free tickets and passes help people become more familiar with the public transport network. Some WorkWise officers providing personalised door-to-door travel information for job seekers are based at Jobcentres. This helps to improve the common understanding of worklessness, employment and transport issues by Jobcentre staff and transport staff. It was noted that Centro has become expert in obtaining funding (from local, national and European sources) for WorkWise, but DWP provides no guidance on how the initiative may be made sustainable.

WorkWise has been highly successful in the West Midlands and elsewhere, with performance targets being exceeded. Value for money has been high. Scheme users have proceeded to sustained employment, with help from free tickets to work for the first three months. WorkWise has promoted cross-domain working (between 'employment' and 'transport') but is transferable to aspects of deprivation in other policy domains. Indeed, WorkWise officers can and do play a role in wider regeneration and social inclusion.

It was noted that there is best practice from other Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) (as outlined in PTEG, 2010). These include 'Let's Get Moving' (WorkWise Travelcard, WorkWise Wheels/scooter commuter and travel information) from Merseytravel PTE and South Yorkshire PTE's 'Into work scheme' – in which local operators provide discounted tickets and promotion of green travel to local business and employment agencies.

The second practical example from Centro relates to policy change by the Coalition Government. A key change in policy to address worklessness being introduced in summer 2011 by the Coalition Government is the *Work Programme*, which is the centrepiece of plans to reform welfare-to-work provision in the UK. The Work Programme is intended to replace an array of different welfare-to-work programmes with a single flexible programme supporting a wide variety of customers. Work Programme prime contractors have bid in regional lots to design support based on customers' needs. They will be rewarded for keeping people in work through a 'payment by results' system (Department for Work and Pensions, 2010). They are being encouraged to put together supply chains that deal credibly with all aspects of disadvantage for the customer groups and locality concerned. Centro has developed a Worklessness Support Prospectus for local delivery of the Work Programme and has persuaded Birmingham City Council to make their services available to all Work Programme providers, based on a Brokerage system with the following key strengths:

- An excellent employer engagement service, directly linked to physical development and the planning process
- Presence and profile in every deprived area across the city
- Excellent range of services to tackle hard to support clients
- An established route into dealing with the voluntary and community sector

Birmingham City Council is uniquely placed to pull together and co-ordinate a width of services (either delivered across the range of Council Directorates or through relationships with key local partners) which can be flexibly tailored to the needs of individual residents, and which can provide an holistic raft of support upon which successful employment and skills support can be built.

There is *best practice in other PTEs* – see:

- PTEG Transport & Social Exclusion Report (May 2010)
- Merseytravel PTE – Let's Get Moving (WorkWise Travelcard, WorkWise Wheels/scooter commuter and travel information
- South Yorkshire PTE: "Into work scheme" – local operators provide discounted tickets and promotion of green travel to local business and employment agencies

Finally, Maria Machancoses emphasised that there are wider benefits to society and economy from providing individuals with access to a travel ticket. But crucially, these benefits are difficult to quantify.

3.7 Geographical accessibility to training and implications for skills and economic development: a case study of East Lindsey

Shifting the emphasis from travel to work, **Terence Hogarth** and **David Owen**, who are Principal Research Fellows at the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick, examined the geographical pattern of training provision in East Lindsey (a peripheral rural area in Lincolnshire) and the patterns of journey to learn for different age groups and types of training. They highlighted the implications for economic development in a geographically peripheral area characterised by poor skills.

The concept of a low skill equilibrium (LSEq) was introduced. A LSEq is "a self-reinforcing network of societal and state institutions which interact to stifle the demand for improvement in skills levels" … "in which the majority of enterprises staffed by poorly trained managers and workers produce low quality goods and services" (Finegold and Soskice, 1988). A key aspect of the LSEq is the limited demand for skills. A particular form of the LSEq is apparent in rural economies, because low value-added, low skill product market trajectories are exacerbated by:

- Relatively poor infrastructure (in terms of transport and skills provision);
- A dispersed population; and
- Outward migration.

In this context, they explained how in peripheral rural areas such as East Lindsey, tight labour markets result in relatively weak overall labour demand interspersed with key skill shortages:

- A limited labour supply, leads to
- Skill shortages, which
- Constrain employers capacities to expand or develop new markets, which
- Limits the demand for labour and skills, so
- Reducing the market for training, leading to
- Out-migration of people of working age, which in turn
- Limiting labour supply – and so the circle continues.

They outlined the key features of East Lindsey, identifying Skegness and Louth as the major centres of economic activity. They pointed out how there are weak east-west commuting links in Lincolnshire and how the area is isolated from job opportunities elsewhere in the East Midlands. From a policy perspective there is particular interest in the Coastal Action Zone – an area of relatively high deprivation and seasonal

16

unemployment. It is classified (by DEFRA) as a low productivity district. The area is characterised by an older than average age profile and by immigration, particularly in the older working age and retirement age groups. This has fuelled employment growth in recent years. Major economic activities are distribution and hotels & government and other services (tourism and social care). These are projected to gain employment, while agriculture and manufacturing are projected to see declines. There is a low representation of jobs in professional and financial services, particularly in the coastal zone. The coastal zone has a well above average percentage of jobs in low skilled occupations.

Businesses in rural areas often find it hard to recruit staff with suitable skills from the limited pool of recruits and transport difficulties (which were often mentioned in employer interviews spontaneously) intensify this problem, which can lead them to employ less-qualified staff who are able to travel to the job. Poor transport links are a major problem for part-time workers, who will not travel far to take up such opportunities. The fact that the occupational structure is biased towards less skilled jobs is reflected in low pay, which further constrains the ability to travel far to work. The 2006 Lincolnshire Household Survey found the percentage of people working within 5 miles of home was 71% for part-time workers, 79% for those working in hotels & restaurants and 76% for people in sales & customer service occupations.

While relative geographical isolation can reduce staff turnover, due to the lack of alternative employment opportunities within commuting distance it is also apparent that transport places constraints on the demand for skills from the employers' perspective. This is because:

- Wage levels in some industries limit travel-to-work distances to immediate vicinity – especially where shift working is involved; and this can
- Result in recruitment difficulties; which in turn can lead to
- Latent skill shortages; leading to
- Constrained product market strategies.

This suggests a need for training in order to enhance skill levels. But employers report constraints on capacity to provide training – as exemplified by quotes from two employers interviewed:

> *"Distance affects us a great deal – we can't afford to send them and the travel links are so poor they need a car."*

(Hospitality employer, fewer than 10 employees)

> *"If the staff have to travel it's more difficult. Some of our staff work part time and they don't want to spend time travelling and paying for petrol. There is an attitude amongst staff that if we want them to be good at what they do, then we should provide it on site."*

(Social Care employer, 10-49 employees)

It is difficult to organise training in-house – and the consequence is that a lot of companies 'muddle through'.

In terms of *initial vocational training of young people,* the government is ratcheting up policy. In East Lindsey Year 11 (i.e. 15/16 year old pupils) tend to have high aspirations (reflected in a tendency to want to work in professional type jobs), but there is limited training supply outside of the secondary school system. Outside the school system there is reliance upon subsidised transport to centres outside East Lindsey – i.e. Boston, Grimsby and Lincoln. Adults tend to be less likely to have undertaken job-related training in the previous month in East Lindsey than is the case regionally or nationally.

Analysis of data from the Individual Learner Record (covering post-compulsory education and training, excluding higher education) for East Lindsey shows that rates of participation in learning decline more quickly with age in East Lindsey than they do elsewhere. It is likely that this is, at least in part, a function of poor accessibility to further education (FE) opportunities for people living away from the main urban areas of East Lindsey. The coastal zone is particularly poorly served. Training delivered by employers takes place in a wider range of locations – sometimes on their own premises or in towns within East Lindsey (such as Skegness, Mablethorpe and Louth).

The sparsity of population and the limited nature of learning and training provision is reflected in much higher travel to learn distances in East Lindsey (median of 21.7 kilometres) than in peripheral rural areas elsewhere in England (median of 12.6 kilometres). This demonstrates that residents in peripheral rural areas, and particularly those in East Lindsey, face limited learning and training options, since many are confined to courses available at only one college. While e-learning may have a role to play for some courses, it cannot substitute for all types of learning. There is evidence that distance travelled to training tends to increase with level of training.

Young people are likely to be particularly compromised in terms of choice of opportunities for training in peripheral rural areas. Here it should be noted that although adults might make decisions to move to a peripheral area, children and young people do not make those decisions, but are affected by them. They stand to be particularly hard hit by reductions in grants for public transport as well as by the withdrawal of the Education Maintenance Allowance which provided financial assistance to young people from low income households.

They concluded that the experience of East Lindsey shows that the transport infrastructure plays a role in exacerbating labour and skill shortages, which in turn constrain firm growth. The paucity of transport links also constrain skills supply since, at least for some residents, ease of access to training is dependent upon subsidised public transport. Transport links also affect employers' capacity to fund off-site training. In turn, this results in product market strategies being oriented toward relatively low skill/low value activities, which in turn has implications for local economic development.

4. Discussion: themes, methods, gaps and priorities

This section of the Workshop report brings together discussion from two general discussion sessions (as outlined in section 3):

- research themes and methodologies; and
- issues for policy.

The first discussion was led by **Sophie Bowlby** (from the University of Reading) and the second was led by **Karen Lucas**. Key points from short specific discussions following each of the presentations outlined in section 4 are also drawn upon here. In keeping with the other sections of the report, observations from academia, policy and practice are integrated here.

4.1   Themes for research and policy

Discussion focused around ten key themes relevant to research and policy. Each of these is considered in turn below, and cross-references between themes are identified.

4.1.1 The changing nature of paid work … and non-paid work

Key features of the changing nature of paid work over the medium-term (as identified in section 4.1) are the shift from the primary sector (i.e. agriculture and mining) and manufacturing to services and an occupational shift towards higher level non-manual professional, associate professional and managerial occupations (Wilson et al., 2008). Much research attention is focused on 'expansion demand' (i.e. net change) in such occupations. However, there has also been a growth in employment over the medium-term in less skilled personal service and sales occupations. Some of these latter jobs are characterised by a high degree of '*replacement demand'* as people 'churn' between jobs. At the lower end of the labour market the '*no pay, low pay' cycle* is well established (see Goulden, 2010) and it is here, in particular, that policy attention needs to be focused in relation to social equity considerations in the context of hard-to-fill vacancies and job turnover. This raises the important issue of the *quality* of jobs. Some local areas may be characterised by a paucity of high quality jobs and a surfeit of poor quality jobs. *Transport-related initiatives such as WorkWise can help provide access to a wider range of jobs for local residents in such areas through provision of free travel* – at least in the first instance.

Of course paid work is not the only sort of work. Of particular note here is the growing interest in academic and policy circles in *voluntary work.* Voluntary work is heralded as a way to gain work experience and a possible avenue into paid employment. It also lies at the heart of the 'Big Society' where people, neighbourhoods and communities have more power and responsibility. *For the 'Big Society' to function the temporal patterns of public transport services may need to change* in order for people to perform non-paid work (whether or not alongside paid work). In discussion the question also arose as to whether there was a case for providing payment for voluntary work – given the costs and time involved in performing such work.

4.1.2 The changing nature of the workplace

Trends in 'changing places of work' suggest that rather than focusing solely on the 'workplace' as a 'site' for work, it is important to think more broadly about an '*activity space for work'*. An 'activity space' binds together paid work and non-paid work activities. Transport has to fit these paid work and non-paid work activities together – and may itself serve as a 'place of work' as workers travel between nodes in their

activity space. This places greater onus on transport serving a greater range of functions – i.e. as place of work and as means of travel – than was conventionally the case.

It is important to note that while the 'untethering' of work and place/space is a reality for some individuals and sub-groups of workers – at least for some of the time, it is not so for others. In particular, it is those workers in more highly paid non-manual segments of the labour market who have the greatest opportunity to exercise such flexibility, at least at their own discretion, in work place practices. The impact on well-being of such working practices on workers remains under-researched.

The changing nature of the workplace also has implications for statistics on travel-to-work. Conventionally commuting statistics assume regular travel at fixed times between a fixed residence and a fixed workplace. Activity spaces for work are likely to be far more amorphous, flexible and subject to change – both spatially and temporally. This in turn poses challenges for public transport providers, as well as for data collection.

4.1.3 The changing nature of learning and access to training

A theme linked to the changing nature of the workplace is the need to learn to work in new ways and the changing nature of learning. If workers are not co-located in space and time the opportunities for on-the-job face-to-face learning and for socialisation at work are reduced. While e-learning provides opportunities for learning and job-related training, it is not a perfect substitute for all types of work-related learning.

A similar issue was raised in relation to opportunities for learning in peripheral rural areas, where sparse training provision at particular locations and transport difficulties place constraints on the choice of courses that learners can follow (see section 4.7). This is a particularly important issue for young people wanting to access post-compulsory further education, as well as for learners (whether or not in work) who wish to top up existing skills or learn new skills. It is clear that in terms of access to training some people are disadvantaged by where they live. They face a reduced set of options and are likely to have to pay more for transport than similar people living elsewhere to access learning. The question was raised as to whether, from a government perspective, rural lifestyles are so expensive that poor people should not be there. To generate wealth and value-added there is a need to up-skill and increase productivity, yet the evidence presented suggests that transport plays a role in locking some areas into a low skill equilibrium.

4.1.4 The changing nature of welfare-to-work

Moving people off benefits into paid work has been a policy objective for many years and is a key strategy in poverty reduction. Yet levels of worklessness remain high – particularly in the aftermath of recession and fragile economic circumstances. New Labour Governments over the period from 1997 to 2010 invested heavily in the New Deals and in other interventions to combat worklessness. Successes were more marked for some sub-groups, including lone parents, than for others. The Coalition Government is placing emphasis on the need for those on workless benefits to move from the Work Programme.

A representative from Jobcentre Plus highlighted in discussion that transport issues are often in the 'top 3' issues cited by jobseekers as barriers to work. It is possible that for some unemployed people transport problems are a 'convenient excuse' to hide behind, when confidence, lack of skills, health issues and concerns about whether a job will last, etc, are more pressing issues. Nevertheless, the Workshop presentations (see in particular sections 4.3 and 4.6) demonstrate that for some people in some places transport does pose a barrier to work. A key challenge for practitioners is to communicate to the unemployed (and to employers) about transport that is available,

since there are issues of awareness. Affordability is also a problem, especially where journeys cross 'operator zone' boundaries. In some places information provision to enhance awareness and help with fares (for job search and in the first months of employment) can play an important role in facilitating a move from welfare to work. However, in more isolated neighbourhoods and local areas transport problems may be more intractable and pose greater restrictions on job search and feasible employment locations.

Unemployed claimants can face sanctions if they refuse to take up a job that is offered to them within a reasonable distance. However, a point raised in discussion was that there may be an expectation that job seekers will undertake longer and more difficult journeys than other people. This begs the question: *'Are expectations about travel-to-work unreasonable?'* It was considered that the answer to this question may depend on individual circumstances and context. What is clear is that a greater range of issues than merely transport are involved in moving from welfare to work.

'Individualisation' is a key feature of the new Work Programme, with the central rationale being to tailor support to the needs of each customer. As noted in section 4.6, there is scope for transport operators to develop packages of support services to Work Programme providers, so ensuring that transport information is available as part of the 'employability mix'.

Transport costs are an important factor in the capability of the unemployed to enter, and the in-work poor to maintain, employment. The abolition of working tax credits (as part of welfare reform associated with the introduction of Universal Credit) may compromise the ability of people to travel to low-paid jobs.

4.1.5 *The role of employers*

There was general agreement that the role of employers tends not to be taken into account sufficiently in debates on transport and employment. Employers, as well as (potential) workers, are affected by poor transport. The case of East Lindsey (see section 4.7) demonstrated how some employers were thwarted in their attempts to upskill their workforce and introduce higher value products and services by transport deficiencies.

In the face of transport difficulties and labour shortages and/or unsocial hours (as at major employment sites such as airports) examples were cited in discussion of large employers laying on transport to take workers to and from work. There is the issue of the cost for the employer of providing a service, but this may be recouped through reduced turnover of staff, since provision of transport may generate 'buy in' from employees and result in lower turnover. This demonstrates that there is a role for the private sector in providing transport to work. However, at a time of cost savings to maintain overall profitability, such transport provision may be vulnerable to cuts.

Transport difficulties may lead to some employers favouring 'local workers'. In such circumstances recruitment and selection procedures may discriminate positively in favour of people living close by on the basis of reliability and/or ease of being called upon at short notice. Likewise, applicants with access to private transport may be favoured over those without a car (see section 5.1.8).

As cited in the case of Harland and Wolff in Belfast (see section 4.5), previous iconic employers and employment sites and historical patterns of travel-to-work associated with particular neighbourhoods may cast a shadow into the present and future by shaping expectations about where residents want to, or think it reasonable to travel for work. This underscores the need to counter outdated perceptions about the geography of employment opportunities and also to provide information that will enable people to broaden their job search and travel-to-work horizons.

4.1.6 The role of labour market intermediaries and local labour market dynamics

As well as employers on the demand side and workers on the supply side, labour market intermediaries play an important role in the operation of labour markets. Intermediaries include the public employment service, private sector contractors involved in the delivery of interventions to address worklessness (as outlined in section 5.1.4) and agencies, etc. The latter play an important role in matching supply and demand – particularly in some occupations (e.g. operatives) and in some sectors (e.g. parts of manufacturing and distribution).

In stringent economic circumstances especially, some employers may rely on agency workers to fulfil their staffing requirements (Peck and Theodore, 2007). This has implications for access to work and for transport. In such circumstances of numerical flexibility in the size of the workforce and churn in individuals employed as agency workers, it is very unlikely that employers will get involved in provision of transport for their workers. Neither are such circumstances conducive to the setting up of new transport routes by transport operators. This means that to physically access such jobs people are likely to need access to private transport or to use public transport services.

An understanding of local labour market dynamics is important in understanding patterns of social inequality in local areas. While for those people with poor skills in low paid jobs the labour market may seem inherently local in character, in reality labour markets are more complex and dynamic, since they are "actively produced through social processes and constantly reconfigured with the changing strategies of capital in relation to labour and regulation" (Weller, 2008: 2220).

4.1.7 The role of information and communications technologies

It was noted that information and communications technologies were an important 'enabler' in facilitating the untethering of work from place (see section 4.2), allowing some workers to work from home or while travelling – at least for part of the time. Reference was also made to the potentially greater role for distance learning (i.e. e-learning) in the context of difficulties in access to training in peripheral rural areas.

Part of the Coalition Government's agenda is to expand digital services. For example, one of the stated priorities for Jobcentre Plus in 2011/12 is to work towards delivering more of its services online and in formats that enable customers to access them by a range of means (Whitfield et al., 2010). As part of a wider government strategy there have been a number of initiatives to help the population increase their skills and confidence in using digital services. A formative evaluation of UK Online suggests that reaching those from disadvantaged groups remains a challenge (Klecun, 2008).

In some neighbourhoods literacy levels can be very low and this can be a massive barrier to *accessing* and *understanding* information. The notion of 'understanding' is of crucial importance: it is not necessarily sufficient for transport providers/others to put information on the Internet – people need also to be able to understand it; 'access to the Internet' does not necessarily mean 'access to information'. There was discussion of whether and how more information can be made available to people with low literacy and greater use of 'visual information' was one approach discussed.

4.1.8 The role of the car

A recurring theme from the research and policy discussion was the importance of the car in terms of opening up opportunities for travel to work and to train. Those individuals reliant on public transport, which operates in a deregulated private market, are more

restricted in their job search areas and in the potential areas in which they can work, and in the amount of flexibility in a job that they can contemplate. In discussion it was observed that the importance of the car is underlined by the fact that even in the most deprived areas the majority of employment trips are made by car. Learning to drive and having a car may, for some people in some places, be significant in enhancing employability.

Concerns were raised about the affordability of running a car, particularly for those on low incomes in rural areas. In discussion it was noted that in urban areas many households could meet transport needs with the bus and with taxis, but in rural areas (except those in rural towns) a car (and two cars for many households) is essential – particularly for getting to work. The issue of higher transport costs for rural residents was raised.[2]

4.1.9 The importance of social networks

Underlying many of the issues covered in the presentations was the importance of social networks. As well as their transport-related role in *facilitating mobilities* – through sharing lifts (and so reducing costs of travel), etc, they were identified as being of importance in:

- Getting into work
- Sustaining work – including learning at work
- Progressing in work
- Surviving out of work

Despite the increasing use of the Internet in job search, social networks remain important in successful job search (Green et al., 2011). Indeed, at time of austerity social networks may have added importance as employers may increasingly turn to existing staff for recommendations to fill vacancies. In turn, this raises issues about the *quality* of social networks and the way in which such networks are used. Granovetter (1974) has emphasised the 'strength of weak ties' in getting a job. This suggests that outward-facing 'bridging social capital' is important in terms of accessing information about employment opportunities. Such social networks can also play an important role in sustaining work – either with the same employer or if it necessary to move between employers. Conversely, the 'strong ties' of 'bonding social capital are likely to be of foremost importance in 'surviving out of work'. They are also important in facilitating 'everyday mobilities' (see 5.1.10).

The policy challenge is to lubricate helpful social networks, but to mitigate the negative effects of more damaging social networks. It is clear that social networks are a powerful means of reinforcing advantage and disadvantage.

4.1.10 Links between 'everyday mobilities' and 'longer-term mobilities'

There is often a tendency to focus on the 'here and now' and in terms of addressing social exclusion a foremost concern is with the challenges of 'everyday mobilities' – e.g. how to get from residence A to job B, how to combine such a journey with caring responsibilities, etc. Yet given that spatial mobility is emerging as an important component of employability a key theme is how 'everyday mobilities' are connected with 'longer-term mobilities' – perhaps through residential mobility. The expectation might be that people who tend to be residentially mobile (i.e. who have experience of relocating over relatively long distances) may also tend to be more mobile in terms of commuting to work and other aspects of their everyday lives. The issue for policy is: *'Do people*

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[2] See www.minimumincomestandard.org and, specifically for work on costs in rural areas, see
http://www.minimumincomestandard.org/downloads/MIS_rural_launch/findings_mis_for_rural_areas.pdf

learn to become immobile?' If so, does this have negative implications for the individuals concerned – at least as far as access to employment, education and training is concerned? And, if appropriate, how can people learn to become more mobile?

4.2 Methodologies

The discussion did not focus in detail on the relative merits of particular methodologies for examining transport and social equity issues in relation to transport, employment, education and training. The presentations made use of secondary data sources – including the census, national and local surveys and administrative records. In some instances these sources had been used in tandem with GIS techniques. Reference was also made to more qualitative insights from focus groups and face-to-face interviews. There was general agreement about the **value of a range of methods** – quantitative and qualitative. The value of *linking* quantitative and qualitative methods was noted also.

The balance of the presentations was on *cross-sectional insights*. Where the focus was on trends over time this tended to be by means of examination of repeated cross-sections. There was seen to be merit in **longitudinal approaches** (see section 4.5 and 5.3 and 5.4.5 below).

There was some discussion about the use of **visual research methods**. One way of capturing the 'activity space for work' might be to ask people to take photographs of their work places – i.e. giving people a digital camera so that they can 'talk about'/'depict' their social space. The role of film-making was mentioned also. The value of such methods was that they allowed participants to feel that they are 'in the driving seat'. It was also noted that such methods could be of value with research participants with poor basic skills.

4.3 Gaps in knowledge

There was not a comprehensive discussion of gaps in knowledge at the workshop, but three particular gaps emerged from discussion at the Workshop:

a) A **tendency to focus on the 'average'** means that there is a lack of knowledge of how ***complexity*, *variability* and *diversity*** in characteristics and circumstances (of particular individuals/households/sub-groups in particular places) exacerbate existing patterns of inequality. This implies a need to develop rich and deep insights into the nexus of issues that come together to generate inequality and that need to be understood to formulate appropriate solutions to problems.

b) In terms of *methodologies*, one gap noted is the relative ***absence of longitudinal approaches*** (see 5.4.5 for further discussion). (It is pertinent to note here that the *ESRC Delivery Plan 2011-2015*[3] highlights the investments that have been made in large-scale longitudinal datasets and the value that their analysis can offer in understanding a range of related issues – such as mobility and changing economic circumstances.

c) ***New ways of working*** and the ***role of information and communications technologies*** in facilitating new work patterns, activity spaces and access to jobs, learning and other services are of considerable interest and yet remain relatively unexplored.

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[3] http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/ESRC%20Delivery%20Plan%202011-15_tcm8-13455.pdf

4.4 Future priorities

Five future priorities[4] have been identified based on the presentations and discussion at the workshop.

4.4.1 Social networks

Social networks emerge as a cross-cutting theme across many of the presentations (as discussed in 5.1.9). They are important in understanding resiliencies to change at individual, household and local area levels. They play a key role in facilitating mobility and accessing work and learning. A priority for the future is to gain greater understanding about how social networks operate and changes in their operation over time and how their quality and efficiency may be improved – especially for those individuals and areas suffering greatest disadvantage.

4.4.2 Understanding immobility

The *cumulative impact of immobility* is an issue exciting research and policy interest. Do people learn to become immobile - just as they can learn to become mobile? Conventionally the focus of research has been on mobility rather than immobility and 'mobility' has been interpreted as a feature of a healthy labour market and spatial mobility is increasingly seen as a key ingredient in employability.

But is there a possible conflict between the Big Society and spending more time travelling? So, is mobility necessarily a good thing? It was noted in discussion that people tend not to be congratulated for having good social capital/sustainability – rather they are criticised for not travelling. Key questions worthy of further investigation include: Are immobile communities resilient? Are they in the vanguard of the future (especially taking account of the socio-economic implications of peak oil)? Or are they a relic of the past? What do they mean for participation in employment?

4.4.3 Activity spaces of work and non-work

The notion of 'activity spaces of work' arose from the discussion of the untethering of 'work' from 'place' (see also section 5.1.2). How the activity spaces of work and non-work intersect (or do not intersect) is a topic of interest to scholars from a variety of disciplines and has implications for well-being in both work and non-work spheres. This is also a concern pertinent to the 'Big Society'.

4.4.4 Promoting work: 'work to workers' and/or 'workers to work'?

One of the Government's main aim is to get people off benefits and into work. Given the uneven geography of employment opportunities, adjustment processes have typically been couched in terms of 'work to workers' or 'workers to work'. Previous attempts to help revitalise older industrial areas and raise employment rates have involved policies of encouraging foreign direct investment and/or diversion of industry from core to peripheral areas (i.e. 'moving work to workers') – to provide new local jobs in areas where the traditional employment base had disappeared. Subsequently, the recipient local economies have been vulnerable to the closure/offshoring of branch plant activity. The policy emphasis has shifted towards stimulating local enterprise in - situ and ensuring that local people have the skills (to overcome potential 'skills mismatch'), flexibility and mobility to move/travel to jobs (to overcome potential 'spatial mismatch'). This implies a greater emphasis on 'workers to work' – through processes of migration and/or commuting.

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[4] Of course this does not mean that there are not other priorities worthy of attention.

Focusing on commuting as an adjustment process, it is important to know from a regeneration policy perspective, where jobs are available and how, and where, transport permits access to employment. It is difficult for people to travel if there are not jobs within reasonable distance by public transport. In the context of localism and greater freedoms for local authorities to work together, different policy objectives may be appropriate in different parts of the country: in some places where there are few jobs transport is less of a solution than it may be elsewhere. Hence, context matters.

4.4.5 Longitudinal perspectives

A relative lack of emphasis on longitudinal research was identified as a gap in section 5.3. A priority for the future is to undertake more *longitudinal research*. There is scope for longitudinal research to provide research and policy insights in relation to:

- 'coping strategies' over the relatively short-term (especially in the context of austerity and spending cuts);
- dealing with change over the longer-term – over a lifetime (here the issues of 'learning (im)mobility' are pertinent).

5.   Further information

Slides of the presentations from the Framing event and from this Workshop can be downloaded from the UKTRC website at www.uktrc.ac.uk

If you are interested in finding out more about the topics covered at this workshop relating to employment, education and training issues with regard to transport and social exclusion please contact Anne Green at anne.green@warwick.ac.uk

For further details of the workshop series and general queries about the programme please contact Karen Lucas at karen.lucas@ouce.ac.uk

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Appendix 1: Workshop Programme

10.45   Introductions and Welcome
Anne Green, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick

The Workshop Series
Karen Lucas, Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford

11.00   'Overview of Key Themes'
Anne Green, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick

11.15   'Rapid Change or Slow Evolution? Changing places of work and its consequences'
Alan Felstead, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University

In a world of hyperbole and exaggeration, nothing seems to excite journalists and headline writers more than the idea that working for eight hours a day in a *fixed place* is a thing of the past. Using government-sponsored surveys, this paper provides a sober account of the extent to which work is being dislocated from place, and identifies which types of people and jobs are being affected most. It also discusses the consequences these changes are having for how and what individuals learn at work.

11.45   'Dynamics of access: exclusions and resiliencies in the search for work'
Martin Rivas Perez and Frances Hodgson, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds

This analysis provides insight into the fundamental relationship of transport provision, travel and economic development. It focuses on understanding the significance of mobilities in processes of exclusion from employment opportunities and the household resiliencies in maintaining and improving accessibilities. Focusing on Gateshead and possible MetroCentre development, it brings together area wide narratives of employment activities offered by large scale spatial surveys, (Census and Tyne and Wear Household Travel Survey) and qualitative focus group narratives of household strategies to overcome immobilities and search for work.

12.15   Discussion: Research Themes and Methodologies
Led by *Sophie Bowlby, University of Reading*

12.45   LUNCH

13.30   'The limits of travel to work and disadvantaged parents'

Ron McQuaid, Employment Research Unit, Edinburgh Napier University

This paper considers the length of time that disadvantaged (in terms of income, location or lone parenthood) parents are willing to travel to an existing or new job. Using data for over 12,000 parents it finds that many characteristics were associated with being less likely to be willing to travel to work for at least an hour (roundtrip).

14.00   'Making mobility: individuals, perceptions and places'
Ian Shuttleworth, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queens University Belfast

Those whom policy makers are most likely to wish to persuade to be mobile in search of work are amongst the least mobile. Spatial mobility is a difficult area for intervention: it is shaped by physical opportunities and a nexus of personal and perceptual factors. The ideal of mobility is contrasted with the reality with reference to daily work commutes and possibilities for labour market adjustment through housing moves. The immobility of people with poor health is considered in the light of multiple disadvantages and causes of immobility. A rationale is set out for examining the commuting of people with limiting long-term illnesses

14.30	'From policy to delivery: the role of transport'
	Maria Pilar Machancoses, Centro

One of the challenges facing transport authorities is about recognising and ensuring that their various policies and initiatives are embedded in other domains. The presentation will give an overview of Centro's experience in achieving this, especially in relation to employment.

15.00	BREAK AND REFRESHMENTS

15.15	**'**Geographical accessibility to training and implications for skills and economic development: a case study of East Lindsey'
	Terence Hogarth and David Owen, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick

This paper examines the geographical pattern of training provision in East Lindsey and the patterns of journey-to-learn for different age groups and types of training. Training provided by employers and by colleges is contrasted. The implications for economic development in a geographically peripheral area, characterised by poor skills, are considered.

15.45	Discussion: Issues for Policy and more General Discussion
	Led by *Karen Lucas, Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford wick*

16.45	CLOSE

Appendix 2: List of Participants

Shanara Begum	Economic Regeneration an Skills Division, Sandwell Borough Council
Sophie Bowlby	University of Reading
Paula Coppel	Merseytravel
Kate Corr	Steps to Work
Alan Felstead	School of Social Sciences, University of Cardiff
Anne Green	Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick
Sarah Harper	Merseytravel
Tony Higgs	Jobcentre Plus
Terence Hogarth	Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick
Sara Kearney	Merseytravel
Amanda Kerry	Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick
Neil Lindsey	CPR Regeneration, Cornwall
Karen Lucas	Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford
Maria P Machancoses	Centro
Ron McQuaid	Employment Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University
Verity Morgan	Economic Development, Decentralisation and Neighbourhoods Analysis Division, Department of Communities and Local Government
David Owen	Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick
Kate Pangbourne	Centre for Transport Research, Geography & Environment, Aberdeen University Business School
Tony Patten	Transportation Development, Wolverhampton City Council
Martin Rivas Perez	Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds
Ian Shergold	Centre for Transport & society, Department of Planning and Architecture, Faculty of Environment & Technology, University of the West of England
Ian Shuttleworth	School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queens University Belfast
John Smith	Merseytravel
Noel Smith	Centre for Research in Social Policy. Loughborough University
Gordon Stokes	Commission for Rural Communities / Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford
Sally Thatcher	Child Poverty Unit, Cabinet Office
Sarah Wixey	JMP Consulting

Those booked to attend who were unable to do so

Elizabeth Box	RAC Foundation of Motoring
Joe Clease	Department for Work and Pensions
Adam Davies	Transport Research Laboratory
Stephen Davison	UK Commission for Employment and Skills
Nigel Dotchin	Department for Transport
Rebecca Fuller	pteg Support Unit
Frances Hodgson	Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds
Kelly Perkins	Directorate of the Urban Environment, Dudley Borough Council
Derek Quinn	Independent Consultant