

The Art of Community Transport

OVERVIEW

The VC Gallery is a registered charity based in Pembrokeshire, that uses art as a tool for social engagement, providing a creative space where individuals can come together, build confidence, and overcome challenges such as social isolation, mental health difficulties, and financial hardship. They work closely with veterans, vulnerable groups, and the broader community to promote inclusivity and provide a platform for expression.

Every week, hundreds of individuals through art programmes, workshops, and exhibitions, helping people develop new skills and form meaningful connections.

VC Gallery supports veterans and the wider community through various funding streams, primarily through NHS - Hywel Dda UHB, Pembrokeshire County Council and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. They support over 200 individuals weekly from their two hubs.

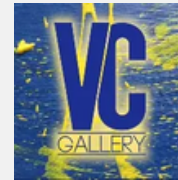
Within the framework of PACTO's Free-Lease Vehicle Programme, a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) has recently been placed with VC Gallery - a new Community Transport Operator (CTO) - under aforementioned free-lease initiative and Service Level Agreement (SLA). The VC Gallery as a new CTO, plays an important role in the community by delivering and providing activities, social groups, and wellbeing programmes designed to reduce isolation, improve mental health, and ease financial hardship.

The WAV car provides safe, comfortable, and fully accessible transport for both wheelchair users and passengers with mobility needs, ensuring equal access to attending the VC Centre, accessing essential services, appointments, and community events. It complements the wheelchair-accessible minibus the VC Gallery already owns, increasing capacity and flexibility within their community transport offer.






IMPACT

The Free Lease initiative enables the VC Gallery to reach individuals who might otherwise be excluded due to limited transport options, helping individuals stay connected, independent, and active in their communities. By removing physical and financial barriers, the service directly contributes to improved mental wellbeing, social participation, and inclusion.

The project strengthens the VC Gallery's ability to deliver community-focused activities and enhances its overall capacity to provide accessible, reliable transport that truly meets local needs.



Quick Facts: Oct 2024 - September 2025

- 932 Additional Passenger Trips * 
- 85% Passengers with mobility needs 
- ECT Social Value £102,261 
- 9 Volunteers supporting delivery 
- Volunteer Hours - 574
- Passenger Beneficiaries 184
- Mileage - 4763 



'PACTO has enabled us to get the fleet together and to be able to hit harder reaching areas having more impact where we can target hard to reach veterans and community members with mobility issues, mental health conditions and anxiety disorders being able to support and peer mentor them, transporting them to appointments but more importantly into services!'

Barry John MBE - VC Gallery Founder

INNOVATION

To support modern, efficient delivery, the VC Gallery is introducing digital systems to replace traditional paper-based processes. A data management platform will streamline bookings, journey records, and compliance reporting, ensuring a smoother, more transparent, and time-efficient approach.

In addition, a Volunteer Driver app is being piloted to simplify pre- and post-vehicle checks. Accessible via tablet or smartphone, it allows volunteers to complete safety inspections, record mileage, and report maintenance issues quickly and accurately. This improves safety, accountability, and volunteer experience while ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

FROM LEARNING TO IMPLEMENTATION

PACTO Accessible Vehicle Co-ordinator Damian Golden assisted and supported the VC Gallery Project Manager Stephanie Cross with accessible minibus procurement processes for the Galleries first ever accessible minibus purchase.

This support consisted of providing guidance across the following areas:

- Vehicle accessibility specifications and standards
- Sourcing of vehicle suppliers for Wheelchair accessible vehicles focusing on (seats, ramps, lifts, tracking, restraints, strapping, fixings)
- Maintenance, servicing and repairs scheduling, MOT, Insurance, Inspections, LOLER bi-annual checks, Permits S19
- VAT exemption process
- Service Level Agreement contracts
- Fleet management, telematics, data collection
- MiDAS accessible volunteer driver and vehicle training
- Volunteer driver recruitment and retention



KEY MESSAGES

 **This casestudy highlights what can be achieved when organisations unite around a shared purpose**

 **' It is important that we get people to VC Gallery because the NHS has limited resources with limited social care appointments in this area and if people are not attending that becomes more of a burden.**

If we are able to pick up those individuals who cannot attend for whatever reason, we can facilitate or close that gap which means less DNAs within the NHS which provides a better health service for everyone in the community.'

Gareth - Veteran - Volunteer Driver



This casestudy has been captured through a short film to illustrate the impact that Motability Foundation funding has had on the Transformation Team's ability to offer bespoke guidance and support to a new Community Transport operator. This film demonstrates how a collaborative partnership can deliver meaningful change and improve access to inclusive Community Transport.

