Travel, transport, mobility and health

Ageing, the Environment and Sustainability
Lancaster University Centre for Ageing Research Town and Gown Event

Professor Charles Musselwhite
Chair in Psychology
Aberystwyth University
chm93@aber.ac.uk
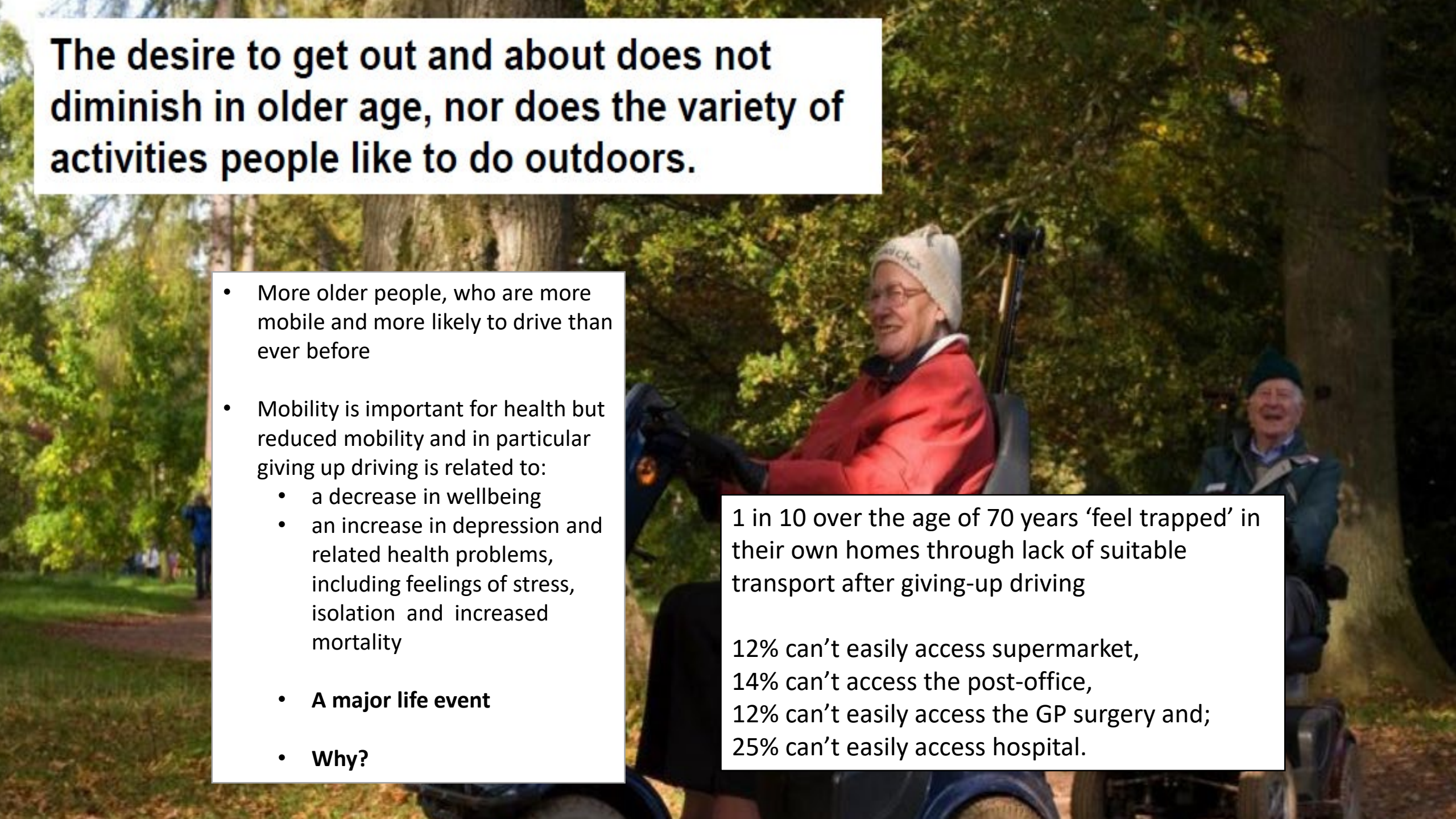**@charliemuss**

PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY
1872

The desire to get out and about does not diminish in older age, nor does the variety of activities people like to do outdoors.

- More older people, who are more mobile and more likely to drive than ever before

- Mobility is important for health but reduced mobility and in particular giving up driving is related to:
  - a decrease in wellbeing
  - an increase in depression and related health problems, including feelings of stress, isolation and increased mortality

  - **A major life event**

  - **Why?**

1 in 10 over the age of 70 years 'feel trapped' in their own homes through lack of suitable transport after giving-up driving

12% can't easily access supermarket,
14% can't access the post-office,
12% can't easily access the GP surgery and;
25% can't easily access hospital.

Why is mobility important in later life?

More than just A to B

- Psychosocial and aesthetic reasons
- Places are not just utilitarian, the journey and destination is important
- Infrastructure is important
- Beyond infrastructural provision
- Ageist transport environment?
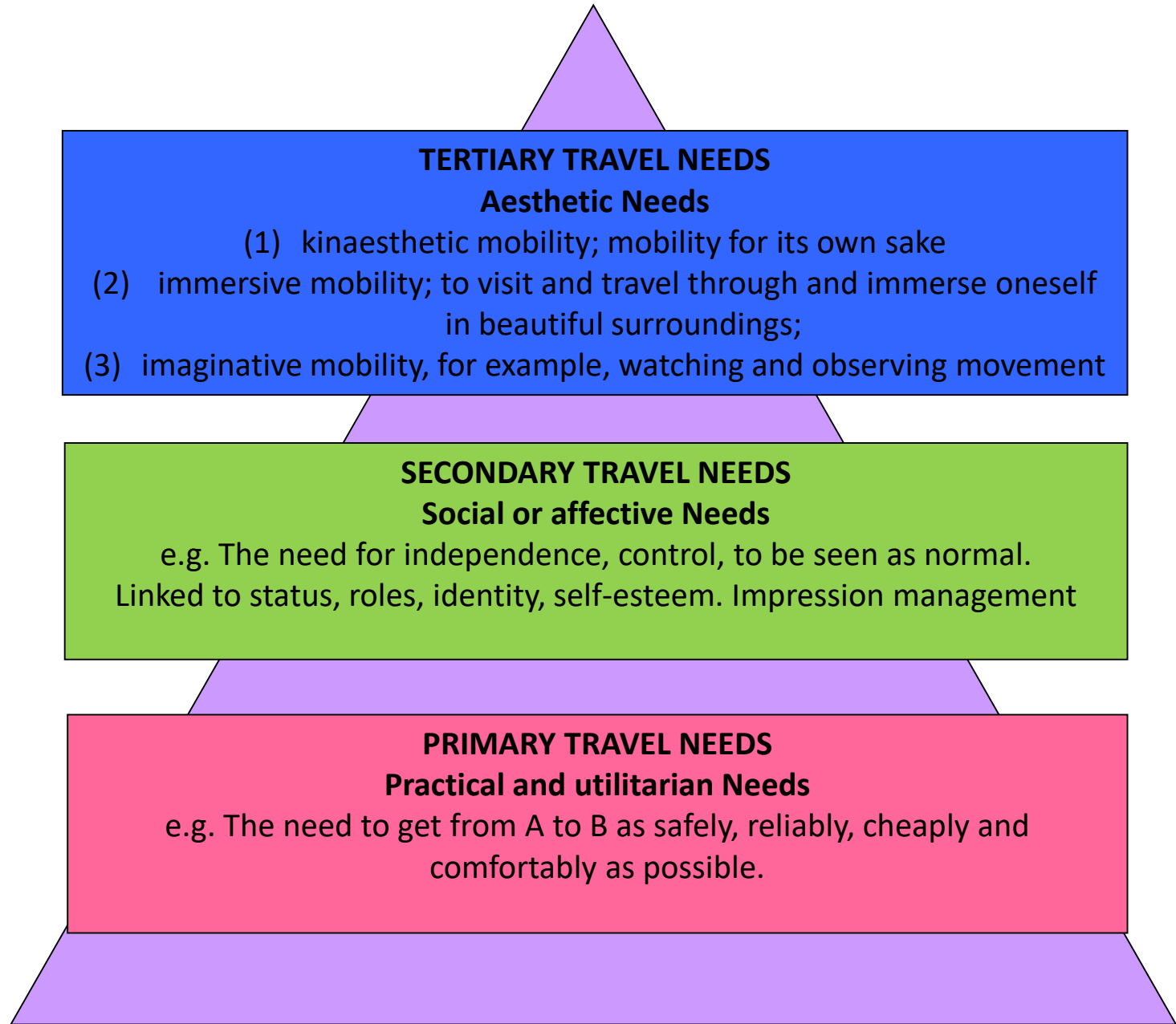- Is the journey really necessary?

Towards a solution

- Remembering transport is about people

Conclusion

Mobility is about getting from A to B but **it's also about psychosocial and aesthetic purposes**
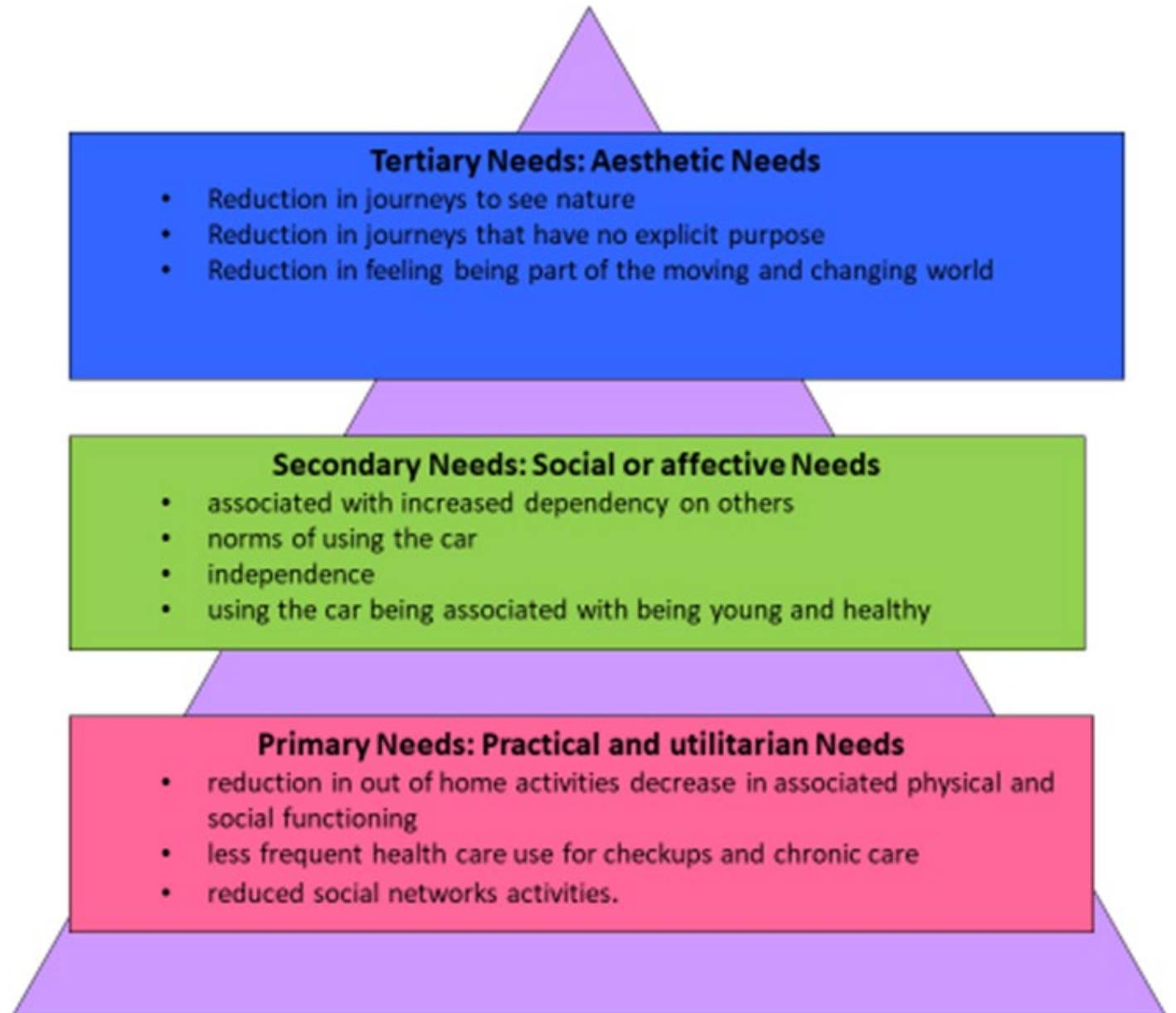
Hierarchy of mobility needs

TERTIARY TRAVEL NEEDS
Aesthetic Needs
(1) kinaesthetic mobility; mobility for its own sake
(2) immersive mobility; to visit and travel through and immerse oneself in beautiful surroundings;
(3) imaginative mobility, for example, watching and observing movement

SECONDARY TRAVEL NEEDS
Social or affective Needs
e.g. The need for independence, control, to be seen as normal. Linked to status, roles, identity, self-esteem. Impression management

PRIMARY TRAVEL NEEDS
Practical and utilitarian Needs
e.g. The need to get from A to B as safely, reliably, cheaply and comfortably as possible.

Musselwhite, C. and Haddad, H. (2010). Mobility, accessibility and quality of later life. *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults*. **11(1),** 25-37.

Musselwhite, C.B.A. and Haddad, H. (2018). Older people's travel and mobility needs. A reflection of a hierarchical model 10 years on. *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults,* 19(2), 87-105.

Hierarchy of mobility needs

Tertiary Needs: Aesthetic Needs
- Reduction in journeys to see nature
- Reduction in journeys that have no explicit purpose
- Reduction in feeling being part of the moving and changing world

Secondary Needs: Social or affective Needs
- associated with increased dependency on others
- norms of using the car
- independence
- using the car being associated with being young and healthy

Primary Needs: Practical and utilitarian Needs
- reduction in out of home activities decrease in associated physical and social functioning
- less frequent health care use for checkups and chronic care
- reduced social networks activities.

Musselwhite, C. and Haddad, H. (2010). Mobility, accessibility and quality of later life. *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults*. **11(1),** 25-37.

Musselwhite, C.B.A. and Haddad, H. (2018). Older people's travel and mobility needs. A reflection of a hierarchical model 10 years on. *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults,* 19(2), 87-105.

Mobility is about getting from A to B but **B is not just utilitarian in nature**

Tertiary mobility: The need for discretionary travel

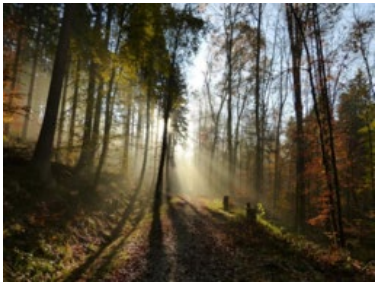**End product is discretionary and**

The journey itself is discretionary

View

Intrinsic

Third space

"Sometimes I take the long way round to **drive past the forest and see the trees**, especially in Autumn" (Male, driver, aged 75) (Musselwhite and Haddad, 2008; 2010)

"That's what the car does you see. **Takes you where you don't need to go, you see. And for me that's life**". (male, driver, interview)

(Musselwhite & Haddad, 2010)

"I enjoy going on the bus to the shops. They are fun. You get to go out, **see people, chat to people, see the world going round**" (female, gave-up driving at 72)

(Musselwhite & Shergold, 2013

A-B outside of a car is poorly constructed

Musselwhite, C.B.A. (2015). Environment-person interactions enabling walking in later life. *Transport Planning & Technology* **38(1),** 44-61
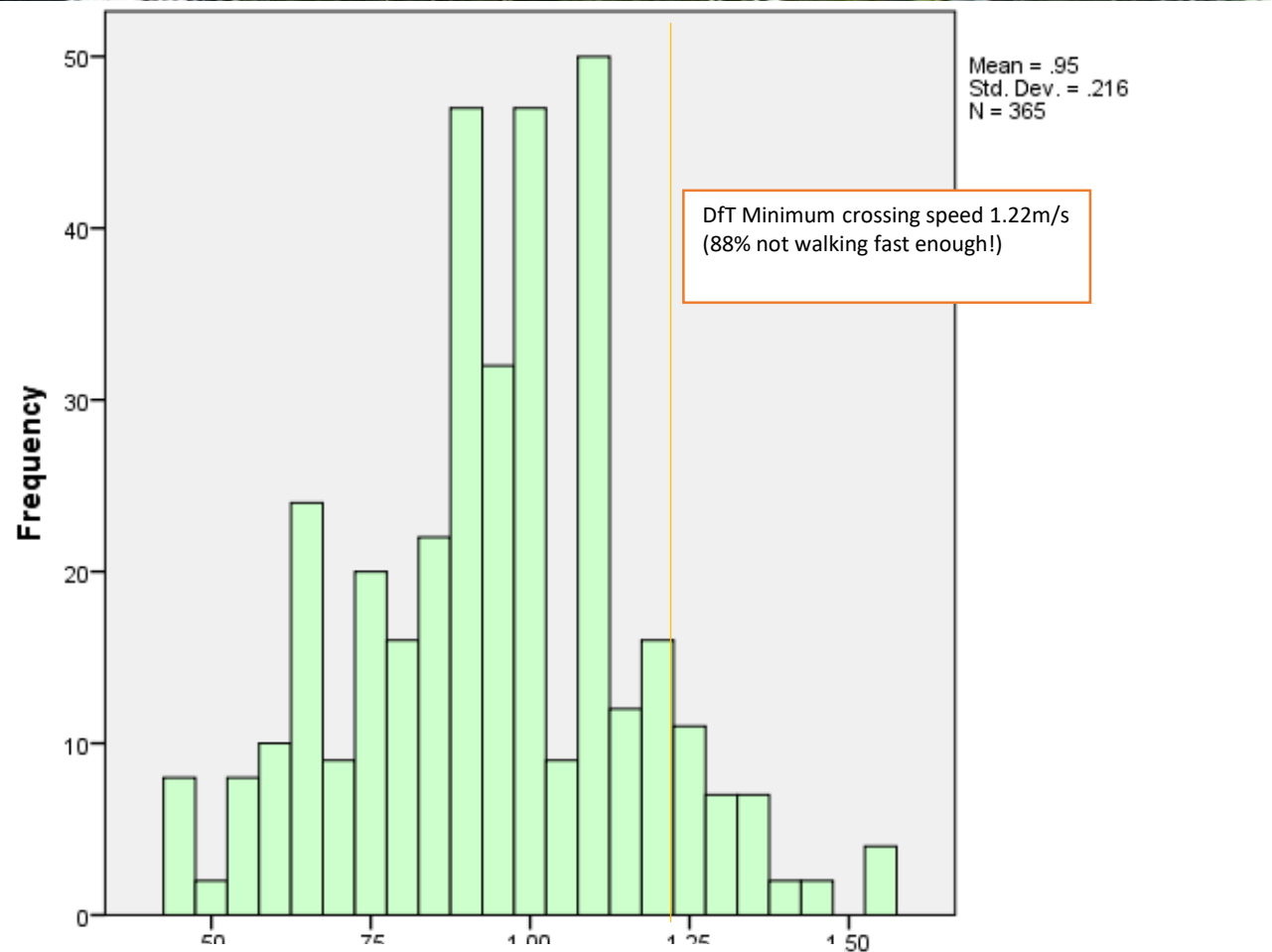
Musselwhite, C. (2014). Designing public space for older people. *Generations Review,* 24(3), 25-27.

Lack of benches and toilets

For crossing the road participants preferred controlled crossings such as a **pelican crossing**

Pedestrians take their cues from the 'red' or 'green man' on the opposite side of the street.

Mean = .95
Std. Dev. = .216
N = 365

DfT Minimum crossing speed 1.22m/s
(88% not walking fast enough!)

Only 12% walk as fast or faster than DfT recommendations for pedestrian crossing time
    Only 6% of females
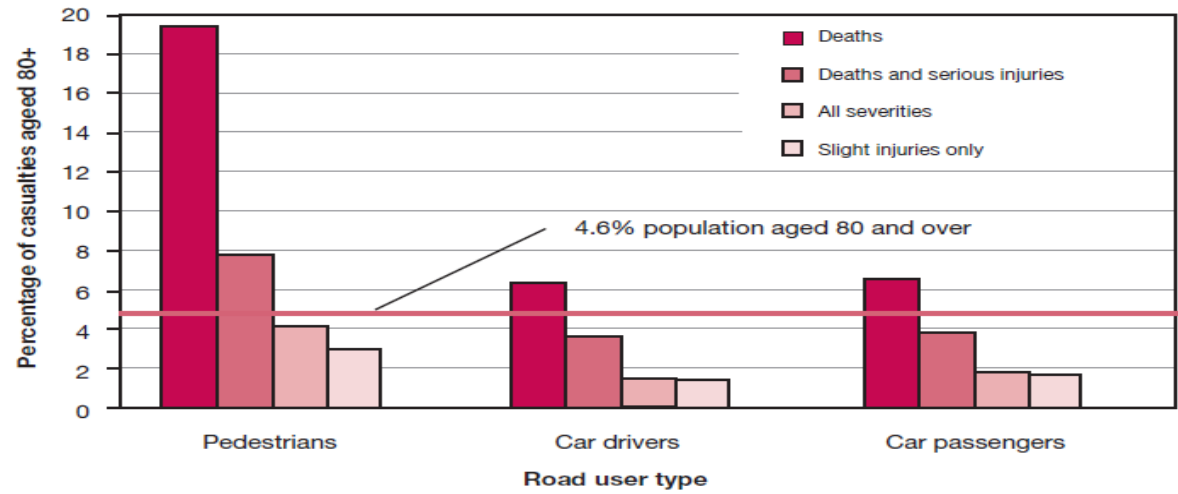   Faster if higher socio-economic background,

Musselwhite, C.B.A. (2015). Environment-person interactions enabling walking in later life. *Transport Planning & Technology* **38(1),** 44-61
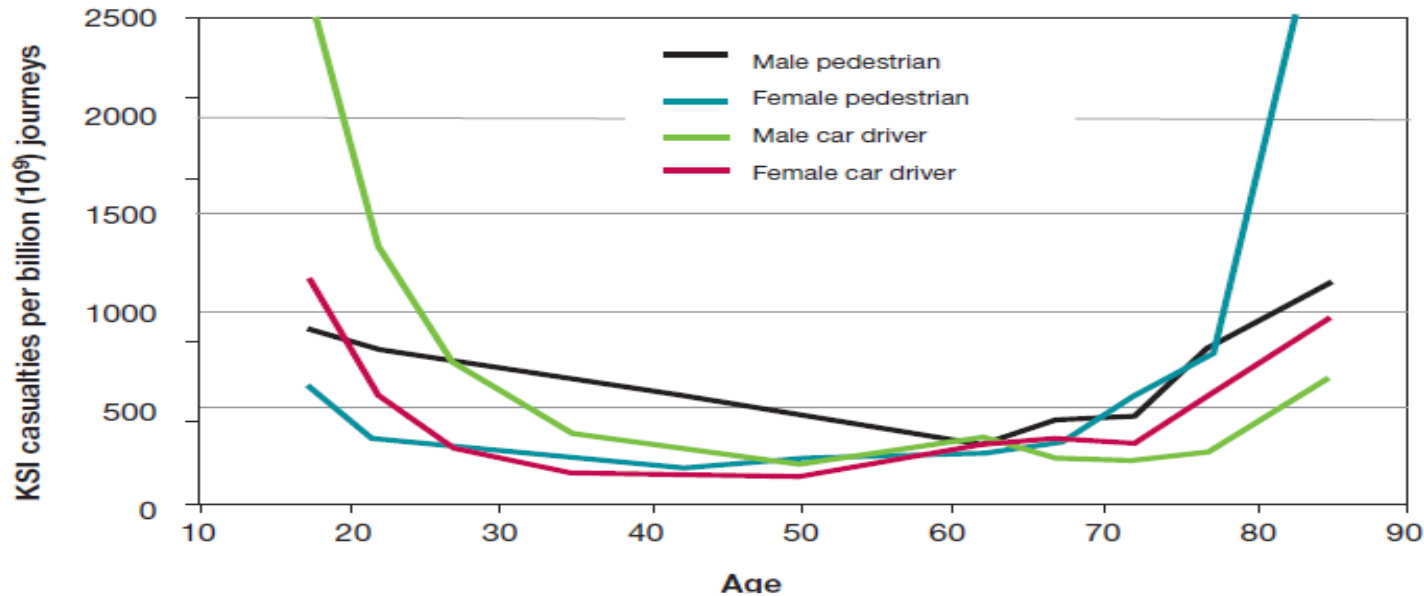
Over 60s in GB	GB
Population	22.04%
Pedestrian miles	19.05%
Killed as a pedestrian	42.83%
Serious injury as a pedestrian	21.01%
Slight injury as a pedestrian	12.23%

Percentage of casualties aged 80 and over – Britain

Source: DfT

Rates per journey for casualties killed and seriously injured (KSI) as pedestrians and car drivers - men and women - Britain
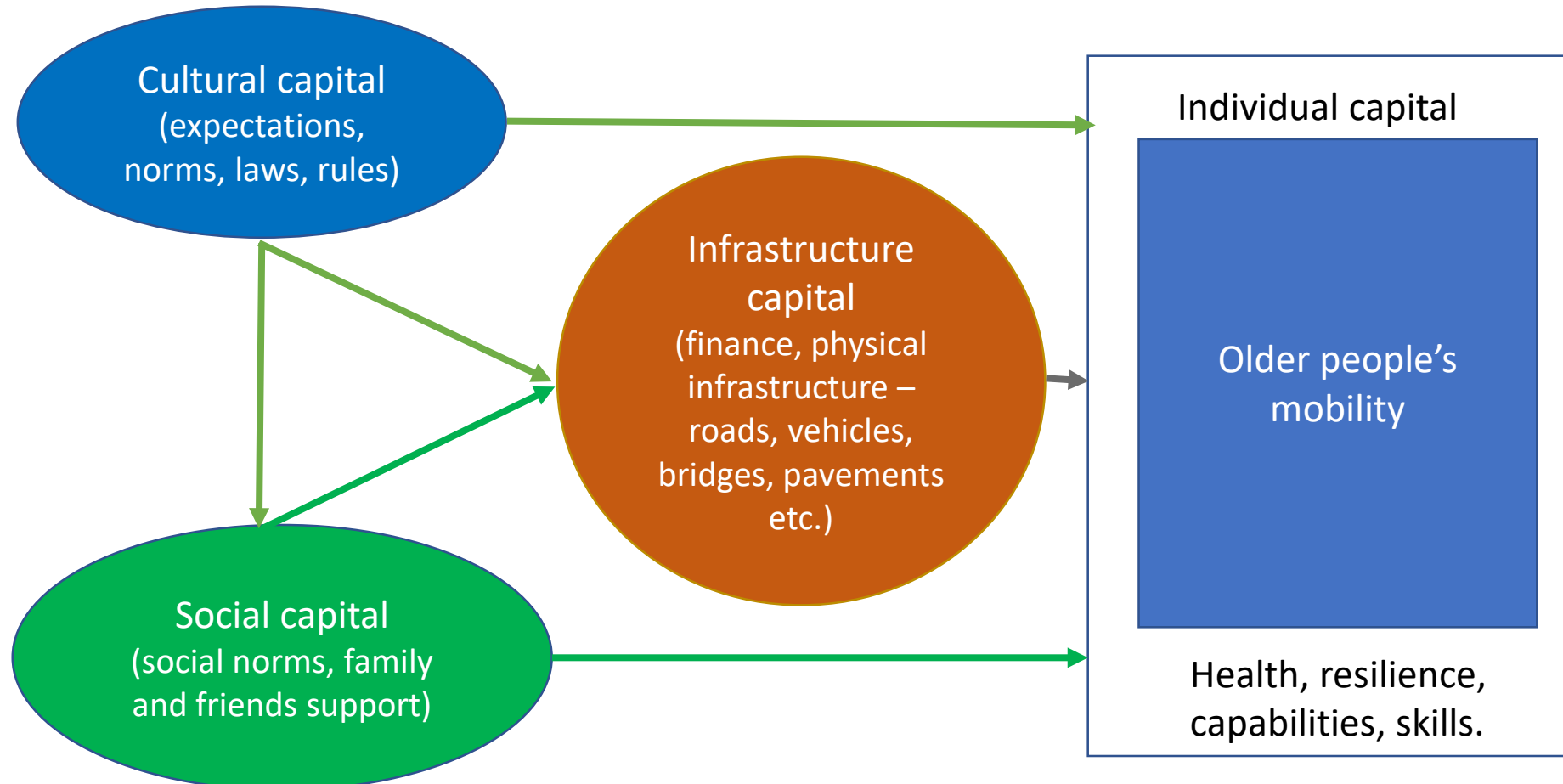

Source: DfT

Mobility is about getting from A to B but **A-B is not just about provision of infrastructure**

Mobility capital

Different types of mobility capital can be traded to get the desired mobility

Musselwhite, C. and Scott, T. (2019). Developing a Model of Mobility Capital for an Ageing Population. *International Journal of. Environmental Research and Public Health* 16, no. 18: 3327

Musselwhite, C. (2021). Designing Public Space for an Ageing Population: Improving Pedestrian Mobility for Older People. Bingley, UK: Emerald.

Solution:
Transport & mobility is about people, not just about machines, infrastructure and technologies.

Issues with public buses

1.Driver awareness

*2. Service inconveniences
(Having to change buses; early finish of buses in afternoon; need free bus all day long not just after peak time).*

*3.Service performance
(Buses being cancelled altogether or reduced in number; the unreliability of the service)*

*4. Poor bus stops
(Poor signage, information, seating and shelter; safety and security issues at bus stop; the bus stop not being near the main residential areas)*

*5. Poor quality buses
(do not lower to kerb / grab rails missing)*

"Some drivers can't wait for you to get in the bus and they're going…for me it's intimidating. You're frightened of falling"

- Outdoor environments to support walking

Functional   Aesthetic

HUMAN SPACES
- Spaces to pause

- Spaces for social interaction

- Spaces for happenstance

- Spaces to people watch

- Spaces to watch the world go by

- People connect to place through
  - Meaningful social interactions in the past

  - Through anchors to the past and history. Distinctive…
    - Buildings
    - Names
    - Events

  - But far more… places of personal significance/distinction
    - Home
    - Work
    - School
    - Leisure

- They lamented that anchors and significant buildings are destroyed, for example, by bad planning and by road building

People and social capital

- **Issues are people based**
  - Overlooked or ignored in service delivery, policy and practice

- **To mobilise change need to mobilise people**
  - Move from resilience and individual to collective and structural

- **Give older people more of a role in their transport provision**
  - Auditing and demanding change to their transport (e.g. Graffiti Grannies)
  - Designing solutions to issues
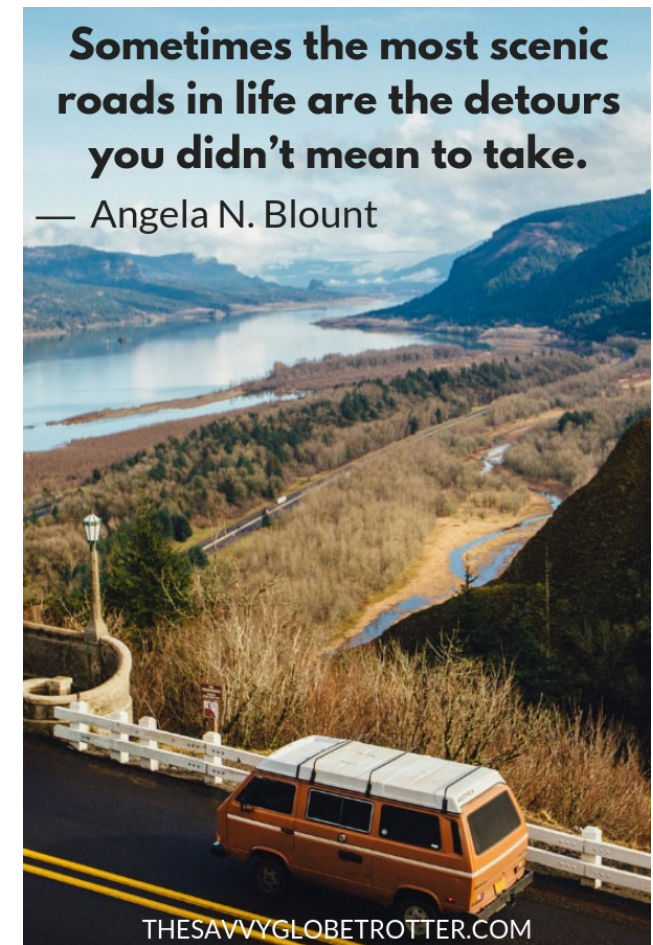 - Getting involved in governance, policy and practice

Conclusions

- **Transport is partly about getting from A to B**
  - But it is ultimately a social endeavour
  - Involves psychosocial aspects of mobility
  - Involves aesthetic aspects of mobility
  - Happiness is the road!

- **Remember transport isn't just functional…**
  - Yet in making spaces and services fun you improve the functionality

- **Transport is about people**
  - This is overlooked
  - Solutions need to understand how people act and behaviour
  - Need to involve older people in decision-making about their transport needs

Sometimes the most scenic roads in life are the detours you didn't mean to take.
— Angela N. Blount

THESAVVYGLOBETROTTER.COM

Professor Charles Musselwhite

chm93@aber.ac.uk

@charliemuss