

Mary's case study

Mary is partially sighted and regularly uses Interloch Transport for assisted shopping and social outings. At 91, she is comfortable in her park home on the edge of Gare Loch where she and her husband moved when he retired: "I have friends round about. I'm quite happy here and people come to see me". But following two hip replacements some time ago, her mobility is now very limited and without family living locally, she needs help to access local services – the local Co-op is a couple of miles away.

Mary used to go shopping every week with a friend but says "lockdown changed things" and "everyone is living a different life now". She can't get anywhere by herself and with Covid rates going up and down, she doesn't want people to feel uncomfortable having her in their car. Online shopping isn't an option because she can't make out the different items on the screen. Mary speaks very highly of Interloch drivers Anna and Kay, who will take her into the shop and help her select the right items from the shelf, or make sure she gets the right kind of birthday card if she can't make out the writing. Back at home, they will help her down the front steps and through the door, taking her arm to get into the house and offering reassurance.

Neighbours often help when she needs deliveries, but Mary has also used Interloch for these, or to get to the hairdresser, on occasion. It makes a real difference to her independence. **"I feel a different person now I can call on them"**, she says. **"I wish had known about it earlier"**.

Other options have not been so satisfactory. Previously Mary had used patient transport but gave up on it after being let down on 3 different occasions. Later, she got lifts from a volunteer, but they were unable to continue because they were not getting their fuel costs reimbursed. "I was delighted to find out about Interloch" Mary adds. **"The first time I went, I thought 'I can't believe this!'"**

Mary notes that at present, Interloch is busy and it's often necessary to shoogles appointments or share the van, so she would be delighted if Interloch expanded their presence in the area. **"It's a great service and I hope they keep going"**, she adds.