

- LendAFriendACar would make it easier for people in trusted social networks to use each other's cars legally and with confidence.
- It would lead to less need for people to own cars – especially only-occasionally-used second cars - and (probably) less use of cars overall¹. It could also provide affordable access to cars for people currently excluded from opportunities due to mobility-related isolation.
- It has emerged as a cost-effective idea for more rural communities where the economic model of dedicated car clubs has repeatedly been shown to not be viable.
- It effectively makes the private car fleet into a national-scale car club that is currently hiding in full view.

But isn't this just a car club?

Yes and no.

The similarities are the facility of on-demand access to cars vs. ownership, but the main differences are:

To a car club:

- No dedicated vehicle.
This effectively removes the capital cost of the vehicle from the economic model for usage

To peer-to-peer rental & car club

- No per-time usage costing
As the car is being lent when the owner does not need it, the user pays only per mile driven (fuel + wear & tear – at a rate of c. 50p per mile, but to be determined per car).

So how would it work?

LendAFriendACar would target trusted social networks such as:

1. Friends, relatives and known neighbours living in the same local area
People with cars would make them available for those without (for one-off, occasional or routine use) – or who might need a different type of vehicle (van? People carrier?) or a second vehicle for occasional trips.
2. Relatives and friends living more remotely
Vehicles made available so that the borrower can travel to (e.g.) visit by train, then use a friend or relative's car to get around once at the destination.

In order to address the two main outcomes (1. car ownership & use reduction and 2. Tackling transport related social exclusion), LendAFriendACar would be designed to target differently the four categories of car user identified by Mattioli's work on Forced Car Ownership², namely

- **Forced Car Owners** (FCO; 6% (thinly populated) - 7% (densely populated) of households): households who own at least a car and are materially deprived.
This definition is similar to Curl et al.'s (in press), but is based on the official EU indicator of absolute poverty. We assume that these households trade-off (at least potentially) motoring expenditure against expenditure in other essential areas;
FSCO as main target group for car ownership reduction and economic benefits
- **Other Car Owners** (OCO; 65-84%): households who own at least a car and are not materially deprived;
OCOs as target for car ownership reduction
- **Car Deprived** (CD; 3-13%): households who do not own cars because they 'cannot afford it';
CD as target for social inclusion benefit (insurance an issue?)
- **Other Non-Car Owners** (ONCO; 7-15%): households who do not own cars for 'other reasons'.

¹ CoMoUK (formerly Carplus) have undertaken robust, impartial research documenting the environmental and social impacts of car clubs for 20 years. <https://como.org.uk/shared-mobility/shared-cars/why/> The psychology of cost-per use (probably c. 50p per mile for this model) puts the decision to take a car fairly alongside other options for journeys.

² Mattioli, G. (2017) 'Forced Car Ownership' in the UK and Germany: Socio-Spatial Patterns and Potential Economic Stress Impacts. *Social Inclusion* 5(4), 147-160. <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion/article/view/1081>

ONCO not target? Likely car club users? (insurance?)

Possible applications might also include

3. Guest houses and visitor accommodation making their cars available to their guests.
This would enable the longer approach part of visits being made by less carbon-intensive modes (trains, coach etc) without compromising the on-demand mobility at the destination. It would also provide a marketable product to the visitor businesses.
4. B2B?
Employees in a local area are able to use each others cars to extend effective pool size or to access different types of vehicle?
5. Businesses use it to manage employee's occasional use of their own vehicle?

But doesn't this already happen?

Yes and no

- People can already add others as named drivers on their car insurance - which is useful for people in the same household and is sometimes used for close family and friends
- For existing car owners, comprehensive car insurance on their own car often (but not always) permits them to drive others' cars under third party cover
- Temporary car insurance is available (if expensive)
- "Drive Other Cars" insurance is newly emerging – allowing non-car owners to buy insurance to drive other's cars³.

How would it work?

LendAFriendACar involves matching lenders to users

LendAFriendACar would provide:

1. A branded platform
2. Membership mechanisms for lenders and users (addresses, bank details, any other diligence required)
3. The mechanism and processes for both users and lenders to express a will in principle to borrow / lend
4. Appropriate and necessary guidance and agreements
5. A trip matching facility for specific car lending events
6. A facility for a user to pay the lender for trips made
7. Processes for resolving problems that arise from the lending facility that are not covered by the insurance

A: Establishing user-lender links

- ⇒ A user would
 - ✓ Log an interest on the platform that they might sometime like to borrow a car in an area and/or across a relevant social network
 - ✓ Tell their own social networks that they are signing up as a user of LendAFriendACar – to increase the pool of possible cars by recruiting lenders in the networks
 - ✓ LendAFriendACar would alert possible lenders in the user's local area that the user is looking for a possible match
- ⇒ A lender would
 - ✓ Log their car on LendAFriendACar as possibly being available (+ type, cost per mile, other conditions etc – via using guidance).
The existence of a possible lend and rough location would be indicated on the platform so that possible users can see if there are any cars available locally. The specific car, its location and lender would not be visible.
 - ✓ Be able to see the possible users in their local area.

³ Such as <https://www.adrianflux.co.uk/drive-any-car-insurance/>

- ✓ Select the users to whom they would be prepared to lend their car

This creates the local lender-user links and networks.

B: Matching lends

1. Finding a match

- A user would log their specific needs for a lend
This might be a date, time, indication of flexibility, nature & distance of the trip, vehicle requirement, deadline for match e.g.
 - ✓ “Wednesday March 5th; 12:30 (no later than 1pm) – 18:00 (no earlier than 17:30); single person; c.40 miles; any vehicle; need to know by Wednesday February 26th”
 - ✓ “Weekend of March 8/9; c. 3 hours; 2 people; c.20 miles; need to carry bookcase and bags (estate, MPV or van); ”
- [LendAFriendACar](#) then sends an alert to all of the lenders in the user’s pre-approved network
- If a lender agrees, they click on a link to let the user know
- The user and lender then make contact (ideally through the platform via a messaging facility)

2. The lend process:

- The user meets the lender at an agreed time
- The user (?) opens a lend event on the [LendAFriendACar](#) platform
- They check the mileage and log it on the [LendAFriendACar](#) platform lend event
- They note anything else on the [LendAFriendACar](#) platform relating to the car or lend event (e.g. the lender makes the user aware of an unidentified rattle etc)
- The user takes the car, then returns it
- The user logs the return mileage on the [LendAFriendACar](#) platform (this is approved by the lender (then or later)), makes any notes relating to the lend event (“checked tyre pressures; spilt coffee etc”), returns the keys to the lender and ends the lend event on the [LendAFriendACar](#) platform.
- The lender is asked via the platform to confirm the mileage on return and check for any damage, issues etc. If there are issues, these could be raised between the lender and user directly or via the platform.
- Once the return mileage is approved by the lender, [LendAFriendACar](#) charges the user for the mileage, takes a commission and pays the lender; the lender is paid the agreed ppm and the charge to the user is this *plus* the commission
- If there are issues that emerge from the lend (“rattle rear left”), the platform makes sure that the lender is aware of them.

Development

Development could take place in several ways.

The following are already known:

- People lend cars to each other through trusted social networks – either as named drivers on the car’s policy or using the fully comprehensive insurance of the borrower.
For this initiative, this is important as it means that it is possible and attractive for certain types of people in certain contexts. Note though that it is not widespread and – it is assumed – not happening as much as it could if better facilitated.
- Costs for developing a web platform have been estimated (by a developer) of up to £20k.
- There is some understanding of
 - the types of people who are more open to sharing and lending^{4,5}
 - the target groups from the perspective of forced car ownership²

Taking these into account, it suggests three phases for development:

Phase 1: Research and co-design

This phase would involve three main areas of work:

a. Research

- What does existing research say about existing and possible users?
How might this inform LendAFriendACar and apply to its development?
- Existing lending mechanisms
What are these (in detail)?
 - Named Drivers
 - Use of Fully Comprehensive insurance to drive borrowed car
 - paid-for insurance
 - Other?
- Legal & liability issues

Outputs:

- i. Clarity and guidance that informs subsequent stages
- ii. Background knowledge for guidance materials & copy

b. Concept co-design

Work across 2 communities + generic to test the main ideas:

- Car owners (potential lenders)
 - Do you own a car? How many? Type, age, “tidiness” etc
 - Do you ever borrow or lend cars [define]? Are you aware that it is possible?
 - Openness to lending car – to whom, under what circumstances, how etc
[then test specifics:
 - family, friends, neighbours, relatives, people in their local community, people in their social networks (not necessarily local), strangers]
 - length of lend
 -
 - What would “reward” feel like (££? Favour? Etc) or have to feel like
 - What conditions feel appropriate to lending

⁴ [www.CoMo.uk](https://www.como.org.uk) have monitored car club use – including car club users (types of people and motivations) for over 20 years; latest report at <https://www.como.org.uk/documents/car-club-annual-report-uk-2024>

⁵ Ozcan, P. et al 2017 *Who shares and who doesn't? Results of the UK Sharing Economy Consumer Survey 2017*; Warwick Business School;

<https://www.wbs.ac.uk/sites/wbs2012/assets/PDF/downloads/press/ResultsofUKSharingEconomyConsumerSurvey2017.pdf>

[cleanliness/messiness of lent car; similar habits to you (pets, smoking, eating etc); leaving seat/radio station as was;

- Borrowers
 - Do you own a car? How many? Type, age, “tidiness” etc
 - Do you ever borrow or lend cars [define]? Are you aware that it is possible?
 - Why might you want to borrow a car? What circumstances, for how long etc?
 - Who might you be open to borrowing a car from?
[test specifics: family, friends, neighbours, relatives, people in their local community, people in their social networks (not necessarily local), strangers
- All:
 - Snowballing ques: who else might be appropriate to approach / what types of people?
 - What are desirable ways to link lenders and borrowers?
If an online platform, what do people like / not like? (etc)
 - What else? What haven't we asked/ haven't thought about?

Outputs/outcomes:

iii. Clear steer for service & platform design (Phase 2)

c. Business planning

- Develop economic model from co-designed concept phase
- Identify keys areas of cost & revenues; draft indicative P&L
- Identify and sound-out possible partner organisations
- Identify possible sources of startup funding / financing

Outputs/outcomes:

iv. Business plan of sufficient robustness to attract appropriate funding/finance

Phase 2: Platform development, testing & launch

- a. Work with platform developer to convert research outputs to MVP1 platform
- b. Test platform with two initial communities + new community; modify on feedback → MVP2; MVP2 is launch-ready platform
- c. Develop business plan (1c) into implementation plan: target locations & networks, partner organisations, anticipated growth etc
- d. Secure appropriate funding/finance for launch

Phase 3: Implementation, scaling-up & diversification

- a. Launch (target launch communities & networks)
- b. Scaling-up – i.e. translating the two tested use cases to multiple locations
- c. Diversification

Explore possible new market types:

- (i) remote friend & family user case (i.e. making long distance journey by public transport then borrow a car at the destination);
- (ii) visitor accommodation
- (iii) business use