

INFUZE USER STORIES



What users need from
car sharing models

Connected Places Catapult
and INFUZE

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INTRODUCTION – WHO ARE OUR CAR SHARING USERS?

On the 1st of May 2025, a focus group with 7 Leeds residents was held where we explored perceptions of and preferences for various car sharing models among Leeds residents.

Participants varied in age, gender, car ownership, transport habits, and needs, providing a broad spectrum of views.

Based on the conversation, we developed a set of **12 user personas and stories** to explore the social desirability of different car sharing models in and around Leeds.

These personas reflect a diverse range of real needs, values, and barriers to car sharing, drawn from direct quotes, lived experiences, and experiences of participants family, and friends.

These personas help highlight how different car sharing models align—or clash—with people's needs, values, and lifestyles, and would be helpful when co-designing solutions to think of and empathise with other people's needs and experiences.

EXAMPLE CARSHARING MODELS

Shared with participants

Mobility Cooperative (Switzerland)

The **Mobility Cooperative** grew out of small car sharing cooperatives in the 1990s to have more than 3000 vehicles across Switzerland today.

How does it work?

- Users either pay as they go per hour, or to get a reduced hourly rate can either subscribe monthly or pay a one-off fee to be a cooperative member.
- A combination of operating models have been tested but the core service has the user picking up and returning the vehicle to the same location - a "return to base" service.

What types of vehicle?

- A range of vehicles are available from small city cars to vans, electric and non-electric.

Other information

- The **Mobility Cooperative** regularly makes an annual profit while still supporting carsharing in locations that aren't profitable.

More info: mobility.ch

Leo&Go (France)

Leo&Go launched in Lyon in 2021 and has expanded to more than 400 vehicles and 30,000 registered users.

How does it work?

- Users book the vehicle at the time they need it or can book in advance with 24 hours' notice.
- Users drop-off their vehicles in any of the designated zones within the city - a "free-floating" service.
- Users can also pre-book accessories such as car seats, winter tyre chains and ski carriers for mountain trips.
- **Leo&Go** staff are needed to reposition cars for some advance bookings and to make accessories available.

What types of vehicle?

- The service has a range of vehicles with small city cars, family cars, vans and even luxury models - most are electric or hybrid vehicles.

Other

- The service is run by a private organisation, and it was profitable within 2 years.

More info: leoandgo.com

Hiyacar (UK)

Hiyacar is a platform that connects people who want to use a car with car owners who are willing to rent their car out. This is called "peer-to-peer" car sharing.

How does it work?

- Car owners list their vehicle on the platform along with details on when it is available and the cost.
- A user who needs a car makes a request for a specific time period which the car owner has to approve.
- Once approved, when the time comes the user can unlock the car using the **Hiyacar** app and returns the vehicle to the same location.
- The platform operates across the UK wherever people want to share their cars and handles insurance and the verification process for new users.
- You can set up a closed sharing group with friends, family, colleagues or in a specific area (e.g. your street).

What vehicles are available?

- This depends on what is put on the platform by members.
- The vehicles are not necessarily new cars (common in other schemes).

Other

- **Hiyacar** takes a fee but the 'owner' makes money from each hire.
- A proportion of the hire can be given back to the community.

More info: hiyacar.co.uk

Tisbury Electric Car Club (Wiltshire, UK)

A community car club focuses on a local area. Tisbury is a village in Wiltshire where residents set up **Tisbury Electric Car Club** with two electric cars and charging infrastructure available to members.

How does it work?

- A membership fee is paid to join, users buy credit and are then charged per hour or day of use.
- The club is part of a network of community car clubs across Europe that share the cost of aspects such as the digital platform for joining, booking, and accessing vehicles.

What types of vehicles?

- This is down to the choice of the community running the club. Typically a small number of vehicles in a specific place.

Other

- Run by volunteers but does not need to return a profit.

More info: tisburyelectriccarclub.com

PERSONAS & USER STORIES

AS A PARENT OF THREE, I WANT A CAR IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES SO THAT I CAN HANDLE SCHOOL RUNS AND EMERGENCIES WITHOUT DELAY

John – Parent of three



John is **a man in his 40s** and lives with **his partner and three children**. John drives, and his household **owns a seven-seater vehicle**, essential for school runs, shopping, and family emergencies. **He doesn't hire cars** and depends on immediate access to a vehicle.

Quote

“We’ve got three children. So, we’ve got a seven-seater car... we mainly use it for shops and bits and pieces... I wouldn’t like the idea of trying really [to manage without it].... With kids, you just have to have it straight away.”

Most Desirable Model

Privately Owned Car (no sharing model preferred) – Existing private car meets all needs.

Least Desirable Model

Mobility Cooperative – Doesn’t offer immediacy or guaranteed access; car size may be insufficient.

AS SOMEONE WITH MOBILITY CHALLENGES, I WANT A CAR THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE MY WHEELCHAIR AND BE DELIVERED TO MY HOME SO THAT I CAN REMAIN INDEPENDENT WITHOUT RELYING ON INACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

Aisha – Mobility-Constrained and Dependent Driver



Aisha is a woman in her 60s who lives with her dog. She owns a car and depends on it daily due to mobility issues. She needs a car that can fit her wheelchair and ideally be delivered to her doorstep.

Quote

"I use the car every day. Without it, I wouldn't be able to go anywhere... I need something I can get my wheelchair into... a small car wouldn't be of any use to me."

Most Desirable Model

Enterprise-style or Delivered Vehicle Model – delivery and accessibility are key.

Least Desirable Model

Mobility Cooperative – Inflexible pick-up model, unsuitable small cars, no guaranteed access when needed.

AS SOMEONE WHO SHARES A CAR WITH A FRIEND, I CAN SEE THE BENEFIT OF FACILITATING THAT THROUGH A PLATFORM WHERE WE CAN JUST BOOK THE DATES AND TIMES THAT WE NEED.

Ben - Closed-Group Car Sharer



Ben is in his **30s**, and lives **with his partner**. He **shares a car** with a friend for occasional use like festivals or airport trips. **He prefers informal arrangements** and avoids formal rental models. Most of his daily transport is by taxi or bicycle.

Quote

“I don’t really see the point of renting out your car. It’s a lot of hassle just to make a bit of money, and something could go wrong... When you’re lending to a friend, it’s easy. You just say what you need — there’s already trust there.”

Most Desirable Model

Hiyacar (closed group sharing – with friends & family) – Reflects how he already shares a car with a friend; easy coordination and mutual trust.

Least Desirable Model

Hiyacar (Open sharing – with strangers) – Too risky if you’re renting your car, it could get wrecked. No guarantees if you’re renting one yourself, is it clean? MOT? What happens if it’s dirty and not safe?

AS SOMEONE WITH A VAN I RARELY USE, I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SHARE IT WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY WHEN THEY NEED IT, SO THAT IT DOESN'T JUST SIT UNUSED AND I CAN AVOID THE AWKWARDNESS OF HAVING TO ARRANGE IT INFORMALLY.

Emma – Van owner



Emma is a **woman in her 40s**, and with her partner, **they own two vehicles**, including a **camper-style van** that she rarely uses. She is considering selling it but is **open to lending it to friends** if there were a simple, trusted system in place.

Quote

“I wouldn’t want strangers using it... if it came back dirty or damaged, it’d be a pain to deal with.... It would be easier to share with friends if there was something like Hiyacar in place that includes insurance and a system... so I didn’t have to sort it all out myself.”

Most Desirable Model

Hiyacar (closed group sharing – with friends & family) – Supports lending out a specific vehicle like her van, informally but with structure and insurance.

Least Desirable Model

Hiyacar (Open sharing – with strangers) – Too risky, and too much hassle to sort out disputes, especially if not much help is provided by the company.

AS SOMEONE WITH N UNDERUSED CAR, I WANT TO BE ABLE TO RENT IT OUT, SO THAT I CAN MAKE MONEY ON THE SIDE.

Lucy –Professional with Occasional Work Travel



Lucy is in her **early 30s** and lives **with her partner**. She **owns one car** but prefers to use public transport. She occasionally **needs a car for work site visits** and uses a car club near her city-centre office.

Quote

“We have a car but don’t use it much — we usually walk, cycle, or take the bus into town. ... I use Enterprise CarClub sometimes for work because they’d rather we rent for site visits than use our own cars due to insurance.”

Most Desirable Model

Mobility Cooperative – Familiar structure, reliable booking, and ethical reinvestment; suitable for planned work trips.

Least Desirable Model

Hiyacar (Open sharing) – (would happily rent her car out, but not rent one herself) Less reliable, lacks standardisation, and carries concerns over quality and personal responsibility.

AS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T OWN A CAR, I WANT TO BE ABLE TO BOOK ONE EASILY FOR PLANNED WEEKEND TRIPS OR ERRANDS SO THAT I CAN REACH PLACES THAT AREN'T ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

Daniel – Organised Non-Owner with Planned Car Use



Daniel is in his **30s** and lives **with his partner**. He **doesn't own a car** but **uses Enterprise Car Club** for errands or countryside trips. He **prefers to plan** ahead and use the car for several tasks in one go.

Quote

"I'm not a particularly spontaneous person, so I don't need to book a car last-minute — but I do want to know I can get one when I've planned something.... What I tend to do is book it out for the day and do all my car things in one go — like going to the tip, the garden centre, maybe out for lunch"

Most Desirable Model

Mobility Cooperative – Supports pre-booked, day-rate use; familiar structure; trusted platform with variety of vehicle types.

Least Desirable Model

Hiyacar (Open sharing) – Concerns over vehicle quality, unpredictability, and lack of central standards for upkeep and cleanliness.

AS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T DRIVE ANYMORE, I RELY ON WALKING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT SO THAT I CAN GET AROUND EASILY WITHOUT NEEDING A CAR.

Alan – Car-Free Resident with Good Local Access



Alan is in his **70s** and lives **on his own**. He **hasn't driven in years** and **doesn't own a car**. He benefits from living in a walkable area with good public transport and local amenities and **does not feel the need to use car sharing**.

Quote

"I can't remember the last time I actually drove a vehicle... it's been so many years... I feel I'm lucky that I'm in a well-serviced neighbourhood — I can walk into town and out again. There is a train station, good bus service. So yeah, it works for me."

Most Desirable Model

Community Car Club – As a theoretical backup for essential needs in a low-car neighbourhood. Seen as valuable for others in rural or underserved areas, but not personally required.

Least Desirable Model

Hiyacar (Open sharing) – Peer-to-peer model is overly complex and unnecessary given his current lifestyle and transport needs.

AS SOMEONE IN MY 90S LIVING IN A RURAL AREA, I WANT TO USE A CAR SHARING SERVICE THAT INCLUDES A DRIVER SO THAT I CAN GET WHERE I NEED TO GO WITHOUT DEPENDING ON FAMILY OR HAVING TO DRIVE MYSELF.

George – Rural Non-Driver in His 90s



George is **92** and **lives alone** in a small **rural village** outside Leeds. He **gave up driving** some years ago. There's no bus service in his area, and his family live far away. He needs transport to do weekly shopping, attend medical appointments, and maintain social connections.

Quote

"I've no bus, no car, and no way to town unless someone takes me. I don't want to be a burden... I just need a lift now and then... If there was someone who could drive me a few times a week, it would make all the difference... just someone I could trust."

Most Desirable Model

Community Car Club with drivers – A local model that includes friendly, vetted drivers and support for those who cannot drive.

Least Desirable Model

Any with no drivers – Not viable as he no longer drives and cannot walk to or from vehicle pick-up points.

AS SOMEONE WHO WORKS IN A HYBRID ROLE WITH UNPREDICTABLE OFFICE DAYS, I NEED ACCESS TO A CAR AT ALL TIMES SO THAT I CAN RESPOND TO WORK DEMANDS WITHOUT BEING STRANDED OR LATE.

Mark – Hybrid Worker with Unpredictable Commutes



Mark is **55** and **lives in a semi-rural area just outside Leeds**. He **works a hybrid job** in the city centre with **office days that vary unpredictably**, often at short notice. **Public transport from his village is poor**, so he needs constant access to a car in case he's called into work.

Quote

“As someone who works in a hybrid role with unpredictable office days, I need access to a car at all times so that I can respond to work demands without being stranded or late.”

Most Desirable Model

Personal Car Ownership – Provides guaranteed access.

Least Desirable Model

Mobility Cooperative – Return to base model doesn't support spontaneity; risk of no availability when needed; impractical from a semi-rural area.

AS A STUDENT WITHOUT A CAR, I WANT EASY ACCESS TO A VEHICLE SO THAT I CAN GET AROUND INDEPENDENTLY WITHOUT ALWAYS HAVING TO ASK TO BORROW MY PARENTS' CAR.

Mia – Independent Student
Without Her Own Car



Mia is a **20-year-old** student living in Leeds during term time. **She doesn't own a car** and doesn't want to burden her parents by constantly asking to borrow theirs. **She occasionally needs a vehicle** to do a big shop, visit friends outside town, or travel to part-time work placements.

Quote

"I don't always know when I'll need a car... sometimes it's last-minute. I just want something I can grab nearby and go... I hate having to ask my parents for the car... it's awkward, and it's not always free when I need it."

Most Desirable Model

Leo&Go (free-floating car sharing) – Offers flexible, spontaneous access without needing to return the car to the same location.

Least Desirable Model

Peer-to-Peer (Hiyacar) – Less attractive due to unpredictability and concern over borrowing strangers' vehicles without formal structure.

AS SOMEONE LIVING WITH MY PARENTS, I NEED CONSTANT ACCESS TO A CAR SO THAT I HAVE MY OWN PRIVATE SPACE WHERE I CAN FEEL INDEPENDENT AND IN CONTROL.

Jay – Young Adult Seeking Personal Space



Jay is **23** and **lives at home with his parents**. In a busy household, **his car is his personal space, a mobile refuge**. He uses it not just for errands but to unwind, take solo drives, hang out with friends, or find quiet time.

Quote

“Sometimes I just sit in the car, listen to music, and breathe... I couldn’t handle having to book a car. What if I need to get out of the house right now and someone else is using it?.. My car is the only place that’s mine. I don’t have to explain myself or make space for anyone else in it.”

Most Desirable Model

Private Car Ownership – Meets his need for full-time, unrestricted access to a space of his own.

Least Desirable Model

Mobility Cooperative – Incompatible with his emotional attachment and need for personal control over space and timing.

AS SOMEONE LIVING IN A BLOCK OF FLATS, I WANT TO BE PART OF A SHARED CAR SCHEME FOR OUR BUILDING SO THAT WE CAN ALL ACCESS A VEHICLE WHEN NEEDED WITHOUT THE HASSLE OR COST OF OWNING ONE INDIVIDUALLY.

Riz – Flat-Dweller Interested in Community Car Ownership



Riz is in **his mid-30s** and **lives with housemates in a block of flats** in inner-city Leeds. He **doesn't own a car** but **occasionally needs one** for big shopping trips or visits outside the city. Parking is limited and private car ownership seems wasteful.

Quote

“It’s a nightmare trying to park around here — if everyone had their own car, it just wouldn’t work... I don’t need a car most days, but it’d be really useful for shopping or visiting family outside the city. Sharing one just makes sense.”

Most Desirable Model

Tisbury-style Community Car Club – A co-owned vehicle for residents of a single building or neighbourhood with a shared booking and maintenance model.

Least Desirable Model

Free-floating or Peer-to-Peer Car Sharing – Seen as too unstructured or unreliable; lacks collective ownership and local accountability.

SUMMARY

SUMMARY – KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP

- **Diverse Needs, No One-Size-Fits-All:** Some users rely on cars for mobility or spontaneity, while others value planned, occasional access or even shared ownership.
- **Spontaneity vs Structure:** Spontaneous users (e.g. parents, young adults) prefer free-floating or always-available access. Planners prefer cooperative or club models.
- **Trust and Familiarity Matter:** Peer-to-peer sharing is popular when it involves trusted friends or family. Participants were very wary of lending to or renting from strangers.
- **Community Ownership Shows Promise:** Community car clubs (e.g. Tisbury model) appeal to those in flats or close-knit areas, offering a sense of shared control and fairness.
- **Exclusion and Accessibility Are Critical:** Mobility-constrained users are excluded by self-drive models. Options with delivery, drivers, or adaptable vehicles are essential for inclusion.

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