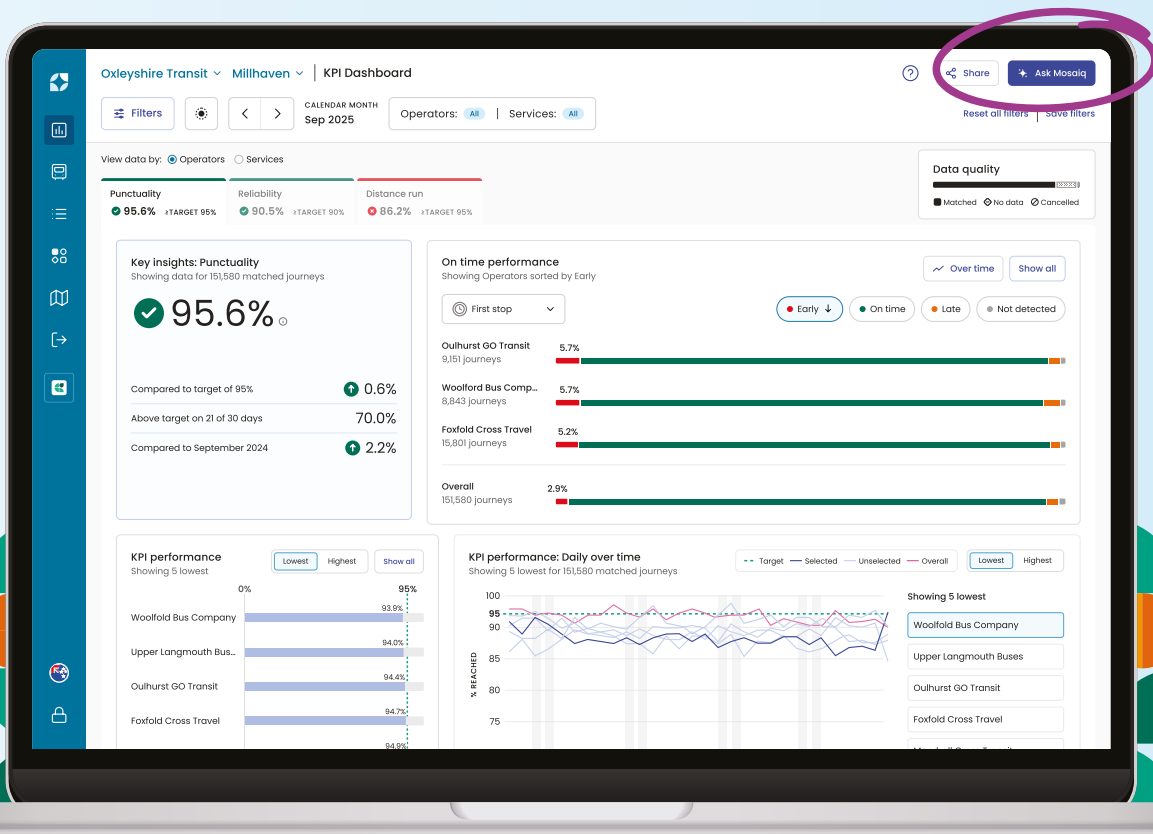


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Snapper Services

The people who know public transport networks the best are retiring. What happens to their networks then?

Every public transport network has one. The planner who's been there twenty years and just knows what "normal" looks like on a wet Tuesday in February. The person who can glance at a performance dashboard and tell you, without checking, whether that dip on Route 12 is seasonal or a sign of something worse. They caught problems before they became complaints. They defended decisions in front of committees with considered evidence. However, they're retiring faster than most networks are training people to replace them.

By Miki Szikszai, CEO, Mosaiq by Snapper Services

It's a quiet problem compared to funding cuts or franchising deadlines, but it might be the more important one, because it's invisible until the day it isn't. The Department for Transport's (DfT) own 2021 review of local bus authorities, carried out by Campaign for Better Transport, found that the backbone of most bus teams is people with 20 to 30 years of experience in the role, and that when they move on, authorities can lose the expertise, local knowledge, and relationships built up over decades. But the report doesn't stop at retirement. It points to a wider capacity and capability gap across recruitment, training, and retention too, at a time when qualified people are already hard to come by.

That long service is a gift while it lasts. The same DfT report notes that experienced staff are a genuine present-day asset, holding relationships and institutional knowledge that newer team members simply haven't had time to build yet. There's a flip side worth naming too: teams that lean on the same few experienced people for years can fall into a kind of muscle memory,

where nobody quite gets around to building that same knowledge. It's a reminder that good judgement should be something a whole team can draw on, not something that lives in one or two heads.

And the stakes keep rising. Franchising contracts and tighter accountability mean the evidence behind a decision needs to hold up to real scrutiny. The report shows that bus teams have generally been shrinking as funding has fallen, at the same time as the wider talent pool has tightened. A large authority can usually absorb the loss of one experienced analyst across a bigger team. A smaller operator running a lean team, often without a dedicated data analyst at all, can lose years of institutional knowledge almost overnight.

Good news: the fix is about more than damage control

Here's the more hopeful way to look at all this. Recruit-



Miki Szikszai, CEO, Mosaic by Snapper Services

ment and retention aren't solved by collecting up and storing expertise before someone walks out the door. They're solved by making the job itself something people want to stay in, and join, in the first place. That's a much better problem to get excited about.

Right now, a good chunk of a planner's day goes on pulling reports, cross-checking spreadsheets, and hunting through dashboards. Nobody got into transport planning for that. They got into it to solve real problems for the people who rely on the network: to make the case for a better route, a better timetable, a better service for passengers in their city or region. Strip away the manual data grind, and what's left is genuinely good work, the kind that reminds people why they took the job in the first place.

This is exactly the gap Ask Mosaic was built to close. Ask Mosaic is the evidence and synthesis layer within the Mosaic Transit Intelligence Suite, an AI assistant built into Mosaic Insights rather than bolted on top. Ask it a question the way you'd ask a colleague and get answers fast – no drilling through filters and screenshots required. Because it works from your own network's data and shows its evidence alongside every finding, you can feel confident when it's time to make the case to stakeholders or a committee.

These are major gains for planners. First, the analysis

capabilities an experienced planner spent a career building don't have to retire when they do; it becomes something the whole team can draw on. Second, Ask Mosaic takes the slow, laborious slog out of everyone's day. Less time spent proving a hunch by hand means more time spent on the judgement calls, the planning conversations, and the decisions that make the job worth doing. For planners who want to keep serving their cities, regions, or networks, that's work that feels impactful, not just faster.

If you want to future-proof your network now, Mosaic Insights is free, with no trial period. We know that smaller operators have historically missed out on this kind of tooling, so we've made sure that there is no procurement process or paid pilot standing between a team and finding out what helps.

Build that analytical depth into your systems now, and you set your network up to make sound decisions for years to come, with a team that enjoys making them. Stick with manual analysis alone, and you're gambling with both.

