



# Problem solvers

Are you facing a community transport problem? Perhaps you're assessing the implications of recent legislation or considering the specifications of a new vehicle. Whatever your community transport poser, *CTA Journal* can help.

Our problem solver, Amanda Eastwood (pictured), is a member of the CTA's advice and information team. Every day the team members field enquiries from across the UK's community transport sector and have

a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw upon.

If you have a problem that you'd like solved on this page, please write to Problem Solvers at *CTA Journal*, 26 Gransden Avenue, London E8 3QA.

## "I know there are going to be some changes to the permit legislation, can you give me a brief synopsis?"

The changes to community transport permits made by the Local Transport Act (LTA) 2008 came into effect on 6 April 2009 in England, Wales and Scotland. Nothing in the act applies to Northern Ireland because different legislation is used there (section 10b permits), and is being reviewed separately.

### Section 19 standard permits

The LTA introduced a new form of permit which can be used in both minibuses and smaller vehicles, the "section 19 standard permit".

The standard permit is time limited for up to five years and may only be used in smaller vehicles that are maintained and insured by the organisation holding the permit.

Organisations must be aware that operation of these smaller vehicles under standard permits must be made as "separate fares", as opposed to charging for the vehicle as a whole. This means that if a community group hires the vehicle it can't pay a set fee for it, but must instead pay a fare for each passenger.

Existing section 19 small bus permits can still be used on both minibuses and smaller vehicles, as above, until April 2014 – as long as the A4 size version of the permit is held and the disc displayed in the vehicle windscreen is legible.

If the disc is illegible or the permit has been misplaced then a new standard permit must be obtained.

### Operating smaller vehicles

The ability to use smaller vehicles such as cars and MPVs under permits provides new challenges to operators as well as opportunities.

- Separate fares must apply – hiring the vehicle as a whole would make the service likely to fall into the private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing regime.
- VAT must be charged on the fares if the operator is VAT registered.
- The driver must be at least 21 and have held at least a B entitlement licence for at least two years.
- Operators can claim Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) as long as the service is wholly or mainly for groups or individuals in the qualifying categories.
- As with all section 19 permits, the operator must be a non-profit organisation.

The CTA is a "designated body" so we are able to issue section 19 standard permits to members. We make a small charge of £7 a permit to cover our administration costs. Application forms for permits are available from the "Advice & learning" section of our website ([www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org)). You need to register to download them.

### Section 22 community bus permits

Section 22 permits are used by organisations that wish to run a local bus service on a non-profit basis. They used to be restricted to bus services provided by volunteer drivers only. Now organisations can operate services using paid drivers with a

D, D1 or D1(101) entitlement on their driving licence.

What's more, community transport operators now have the potential to carry the general public as well as their own members. Organisations wishing to do this will need to apply to the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) for a section 22 permit before registering a route with the traffic commissioner. The forms for applying for both a permit and for registering routes can be found on the VOSA website, under "Bus service registration forms" in the Forms section (see [www.vosa.gov.uk/vosacorp/index.htm](http://www.vosa.gov.uk/vosacorp/index.htm)). There are fees involved in applying for a section 22 permit and for registering a route – see the "Bus Service Registration" section of the Bus and Coach Operators page on the Transport Office website ([www.transportoffice.gov.uk](http://www.transportoffice.gov.uk)).

Operators can try to subsidise their section 22 services by seeking permission to run additional, for-profit services.

Local registered services operated under section 22 permits have to accept concessionary fare passes but are eligible for reimbursement from the local authority.

Section 22 permits can now be used on larger vehicles, provided the traffic commissioner approves the application and the vehicles are correctly maintained and are operated within the law.

Section 22 permits issued prior to 6 April 2009 can only be used on minibuses. ■

See the CTA's online Professional Services section for more information, available through "Advice & learning" at [www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org)

### The CTA Advice and Information Service

Open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, the CTA's advice and information service covers the whole of the UK. To contact an expert adviser, call 0845 130 6195, or email [advice@ctauk.org](mailto:advice@ctauk.org). In Northern Ireland, call 028 9094 1661 or email [kellie@ctauk.org](mailto:kellie@ctauk.org)  
NB: CTA Ireland manages its own service for the Republic of Ireland.