



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 Howard (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.

"In the past, my organisation considered setting up a community bus service for our village, but we were concerned about having to use only volunteer drivers. Following the Local Transport Act 2008, we would like to obtain a section 22 permit and register a local route using paid drivers. How do we do this?"

Service Registrations: Guide for Operators is available for England and Wales, and there is a separate *Local Bus Service Registration in Scotland: Guide for Operators*.

Permit application

Once you have decided which type of route registration will work best in your area you will need to obtain your section 22 permit, from VOSA. See the chart below for which application form you will need.

The prime purpose of a section 22 permit is to enable organisations to run local bus services. However, you can also apply for it to be extended to enable you to provide other services. This extended authorisation will give you the ability to operate other services to make some profit to support your local bus service and can include private hire. For example, the local Royal British Legion could promote and sell seats on a bus for an excursion where you just provide the transport.

VOSA application forms	Code
Application to register a bus service *	PSV 350
Supplementary form *	PSV 350A
Application to change or cancel details of a local service registration *	PSV 355
Application to register a flexible bus service	PSV 529

* Each form is available for route registration in England and Wales, in the Welsh language or for route registration in Scotland

Download these forms at www.vosa.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 9000

Route registration

When registering a route you have to give notice to the Traffic Commission. The notice period for community bus permit applications is 28 days (less than the 42 days a commercial operator has to give).

You also have to provide copies of your application to any local transport authority responsible for the area in which you intend to operate.

Route variation and cancellation

In England and Wales, even if you decide to vary or cancel your service, you will have to continue to run it for at least 56 days from the date your application is accepted. A change can sometimes be made in fewer than 56 days, but it is up to the Traffic Commission to decide whether to allow this. You do not have to pay a fee to cancel a registration.

If you decide to vary or cancel your service in Scotland, you must notify the local transport authorities at least 14 days before you apply to the Traffic Commission to change your registration.

You must then display a notice in the vehicles used for the service which explains you have applied to change your registration and explains where to find information about the changes. This notice must be displayed for 21 days, ending the day before the changes are made or the service cancelled.

Once a change has been made you must run the service with no more changes or cancellations for at least 90 days. In certain cases, the Traffic Commissioner may accept a change during this 90-day period, although you will usually need a letter of support from the local authority.

Fares for your local service

Calculating fares will initially take time and effort. You need to think of your operation as a business rather than a charitable or not-for-profit organisation. If you can't break even,

VOSA fees	Fee from 3 May 2009
Issue of section 22 permit	£55.00
Registration of a local bus service in England and Wales	£60.00
Registration for a variation of a local bus service in England and Wales	£60.00
Registration of a local bus service in Scotland	£57.00
Registration for a variation of a local bus service in Scotland Registration for a variation of a local bus service in Scotland	£57.00
Registration of a community bus service	£13.00
Variation of a community bus service	£13.00

you have the opportunity to provide private hire transport, which will give financial support to your community bus service as long as you have applied for this on your initial application for your permit.

Remember that you must accept concessionary fare passes from eligible passengers. You will be given some reimbursement by the local transport authority.

Legal requirements

When running a community bus service it is imperative that you meet all the normal legal requirements for maintenance, vehicle and driver licensing. As part of your undertakings when applying for a permit you will have to supply the Traffic Commission with your formal maintenance agreement with a local maintenance contractor, and the vehicle is expected to be maintained to a high standard at all times. You can be asked by the Traffic Commission or VOSA to provide evidence that you are keeping to your maintenance schedule so maintenance work must be documented and records kept. ■

There are advice leaflets on all of these topics in the advice and learning section of the CTA's website www.ctauk.org

The CTA advice and information service

To contact an expert adviser in the CTA's advice and information service, call 0845 130 6195 (9am to 5pm) or email advice@ctauk.org. In Northern Ireland, call 028 9094 1661 or email gerry@ctauk.org. There are many leaflets available in the advice and learning section of the CTA's website www.ctauk.org. CTA Ireland manages its own service for the Republic of Ireland.

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