



**Community
Transport
Association**

Response to the Department for Regional Development (NI)

Draft Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan 2007-2009

Closing date 04 January 2008

Community Transport Association

The CTA is the representative body for non-profit passenger transport operators in the UK. Its membership, now in excess of 1,300 – includes groups whose main activity is the provision of transport, especially accessible services.

The CTA is the UK's biggest provider of training, advice and information on accessible, voluntary and community transport provision. The CTA in Northern Ireland has an office, a small staff team and a regional committee. The committee is made up of representatives of the sector.

The CTA exists to support, advise, develop and represent the not for profit transport operator, including statutory and other public sector operators. It also seeks to promote standards, best practice and policies throughout the transport industry, which are derived from the experience of its members and constituency.

CTA's Response to Consultation

CTA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the DRD's consultation process.

The Impact of the ATS

In general CTA believes that the ATS has had a positive impact since its introduction in 2005. There have been a number of measures that CTA and/or its members have been involved in. These include:

- The dissemination of guidance on the design of small buses to community transport providers
- The provision of information about best practise in passenger transport cooperation
- The collation of information about accessible transport opportunities in local areas
- The provision of disability awareness and diversity training
- The promotion of MiDAS and PATS as minimum training standards
- The constitution of IMTAC as an independent Committee
- The support of a number of travel training initiatives

We consider the Mobility and Inclusion Unit within the DRD as being instrumental in championing the ATS within government and across the community. It is evident that it has been supported in this role by a number of other key agents such as IMTAC and designated officers within Translink, Roads Service, DOE, DRD PPTD, CTA and a number of other voluntary groups.

Future Priorities for the ATS

The CTA recognises that the ATS does not have major resources at its disposal, however it has a significant role to play in influencing and mainstreaming accessibility for older people and disabled people in policy and service development.

We generally support the draft action plan and the stated priorities and will support the Department in achieving the actions. In particular we will commit to:

- Disseminate guidance on the design of small buses to a range of transport providers

- Provide information about best practice in relation to accessibility to other service providers
- Support the DRD in conducting information campaigns aimed at older people and people with disabilities about accessible transport opportunities
- Collating and distributing information about accessible transport opportunities in local communities
- Facilitate training opportunities including disability awareness and diversity training among service providers
- Further examine and support the development of good practice models in passenger assistance programmes

We have some concern about the revised timescale against a number of the initiatives that we have agreed to lead on. We would be pleased to discuss and align these priorities with our own work programme with the Department.

Comments on the revised action plan

CTA proposes that the Department takes the opportunity to introduce a number of new actions (in line with new programmes which have emerged in recent years) as well as continuing with the existing actions.

In particular we would encourage the Department to consider the following additional actions:

- The work that the CT operators are developing in relation to new service provision within local areas
- The modernisation programme that CTA and PPTD have engaged in on behalf of the RCTPs
- The new Rural Transport Fund policy initiatives outlined by the Minister in Dec '07

In conclusion, CTA would be interested in continuing dialogue with the DRD after the end of the consultation period.

Contact Details

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