



Cymdeithas
Cludiant
Cymunedol
Community
Transport
Association

Consultation: Legislation Committee 3

The National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Transport) Order 2010 relating to learner transport and concessionary travel

A response on behalf of The Community Transport Association (CTA Cymru)

The Community Transport Association (CTA Cymru) is part of a rapidly growing UK-wide charity, giving voice and providing leadership, learning and enterprise support to our member organisations who are delivering innovative transport solutions to achieve social change. Our vision is of *“a society free of social exclusion and injustice where everyone has mobility and access to the services they require.”*

We promote excellence through the provision of a range of direct support services to our members and we are recognised by the Welsh Assembly Government as “the voice of community transport”. Our services include development support, training, publications, advice and events for Wales based voluntary and community transport operators from our offices in Clydach and Rhyl. Our members also include other third sector organisations with an involvement or interest in transport, Local Authorities, schools and colleges.

Community transport exists to meet the travel and social needs of people to whom these would otherwise be denied because of their home location, age, disability and/or poverty, providing accessible and affordable transport to achieve social inclusion. Our priority is to ensure that community transport is recognised and included as a valid part of a fully integrated public transport system in Wales.

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1 General Comments

- 1.1 We understand that the proposed LCO would give the National Assembly for Wales legislative competence in the area of concessionary travel, and extend its existing competence in the area of Learner Travel.
- 1.2 We have restricted our comments to the scope of the LCO and will respond in detail to any future consultations on proposed Measures coming forward in these areas.

2 Concessionary Travel

- 2.1 CTA Cymru is supportive of additional powers being conferred on the National Assembly for Wales in the area of Concessionary Travel.
- 2.2 The All Wales Concessionary Travel scheme has undoubtedly provided significant benefit to many elderly and disabled people and it is important that the measures to ensure the long term sustainability of the scheme and improve its management can be enacted promptly, without the need to refer to Westminster for approval. However, CTA Cymru is disappointed that the order is limited to bus and (certain) rail services and **makes no specific mention of community transport**.
- 2.3 The explanatory memorandum to the LCO notes that a pilot project is underway offering concessionary travel on certain local rail services. The proposed LCO would give the Assembly powers to legislate for concessionary fares on rail services within Wales in the future (where covered by franchise agreements to which Welsh Ministers are party), enabling the assimilation of the pilot project into mainstream policy.
- 2.4 However, no mention is made of another major pilot initiative which extends concessionary fares to certain community transport services in Wales, namely the Community Transport Concessionary Fares Initiative (CTCFI). This provides concessionary travel for very elderly and severely disabled people unable to access conventional bus services. Under CTCFI, 15 pilot projects have been underway across Wales since 2005, which CTA Cymru manages on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. The scheme was extended in 2008 for a year to allow for an independent evaluation by Capita Symonds, and following this positive report, the Deputy First Minister announced a further three years' extension to 2012 in order to:

“develop a model that provides an acceptable level of concessionary travel; supports the broader development of the community transport sector and is more sustainable in the longer term” (Written Statement from Ieuan Wyn Jones, Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport, 10/03/09).

- 2.5 However, this extension encompasses only the existing pilots, and CTA Cymru is concerned that whilst the CTCFI's aim is to address inequality in the current concessionary fares scheme, this cannot be achieved unless the scheme is rolled out to all community transport in Wales. Without this, many vulnerable and isolated elderly and disabled people will be unable to use the All Wales Concessionary Travel Pass to which they are entitled, because their mobility impairments make it difficult or impossible for them to access conventional bus services.
- 2.6 CTA Cymru strongly believes that any future amendments to the concessionary travel scheme in Wales MUST be developed according to the principles of disability equality. Therefore, it is important that the National Assembly's legislative competence should include Community Transport services as well as conventional bus services. It may be possible to achieve this by including Community Transport services within a definition of "Bus Services" under Matter 10.2 (a) or a separate category (c) may be required.

3 Learner Travel

- 3.1 CTA is broadly supportive of the proposal to confer additional powers on the National Assembly for Wales regarding the kinds of vehicles used for Learner Travel services and safety features on these vehicles.
- 3.2 However, we would like clarification as to whether any measures coming forward as a result of the LCO would apply only to vehicles used for home-to-school transport or also to those vehicles owned and operated by educational establishments themselves (e.g. school minibuses) and/or hired in for extra-curricular trips and/or after-school activities. This could also include community transport vehicles operating under a S19 permit.
- 3.3 We would note that the costs of complying with any measures which may be introduced will need to be evaluated to ensure that the costs of compliance are proportionate to the benefit which will be gained – e.g. the introduction of CCTV may be appropriate for larger buses on home-to-school runs but may not be appropriate for school minibuses and community transport vehicles.