



**Community
Transport
Association**

Response to the
Department of Health

Strategic review of DH funding of third sector organisations

Closing Date: 20 March 2008

The Community Transport Association

The CTA is a rapidly growing national charity giving voice and providing leadership, learning and enterprise support to member organisations, which are delivering innovative transport solutions to achieve social change. CTA UK promotes excellence through providing training, publications, advice and information on voluntary, accessible and community transport.

Voluntary and community transport exists to meet the travel and social needs of people to whom these would otherwise be denied, providing accessible and affordable transport to achieve social inclusion.

The CTA is the representative body for third sector passenger transport operators in the UK. CTA Member organisations are involved in the provision of transport, especially accessible services.

The CTA is the UK's largest provider of training, advice and information on accessible, voluntary and community transport provision. The CTA is part - funded by the Department for Transport, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland).

CTA's Response to Consultation

Although the CTA was not a direct consultee, we have listened to the views of our member organisations and are submitting a narrative style response to highlight the concerns of many third sector organisations that are assisting the DH with their objectives using the effort of many thousands of volunteers without any recognition or recompense.

Contact Details

Any queries regarding this response should be directed to:

Brian Shawdale
Advice and Training Director
Community Transport Association
Highbank
Halton Street
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 2NY
Tel: 0870 774 3586
Fax: 0870 774 3581
E-mail: brian@ctauk.org

Our Awareness

The Community Transport Association is fully aware that the Department of Health is reviewing its funding and investments in third sector organisations. We also understand that the current consultation covers direct funding by DH in the form of Section 64 General and Specific Grant Schemes, Opportunities for Volunteering fund and investments made through formal contract arrangements. We are also aware that the review does not include funding and investment by the NHS organisations – Strategic Health Authorities (SHA), Primary Care Trust (PCT), etc.

Present Situation

Many community transport groups are providing transport to health facilities including, doctors, dentists, health centre clinics and hospitals. The direct benefits of these services are accruing to the PCTs and practitioners and hospitals. In many cases these professionals and organisations do not perceive any particular advantage from the, often voluntary, work by charitable transport providers. It is obvious, however, that they would notice the impact, both in health care and financial income, of such transport not being available. Needless to say, whilst the need for transport still exists and the voluntary organisation can muster sufficient funds they will continue to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged people who are the focus of their existence.

The DH Review

A key principle underlying the DH review is said to be improved access to funding opportunities for all voluntary and third sector groups. The review also recognises that the government has made a commitment to a strong and sustainable Third Sector having a key role in improving health and well-being and reducing health inequalities.

These principles fit extremely well with the role that voluntary sector transport providers are undertaking. Whilst, it is obviously a matter for individual PCTs to look at funding and investment decisions, there is a marked lack of understanding of this part of the voluntary sector across the Health Service.

What needs to be done?

The CTA believes that the DH should assist voluntary sector transport providers by taking steps to raise the profile of this essential service.

The CTA is pleased to see the DH embracing the full cost recovery mythology as a means of funding the full costs of a project or service.

We have been aware for some time that providing transport to elderly and disabled people and those living in isolated communities, has significant cross sector benefits. The funding for such social interventions is often not provided by the agency that gains the greatest benefit. Specifically, transport can reduce total health care budgets by stimulating people both physically and mentally; improve uptake of medical interventions and facilitate community cohesion, which is a factor in overall welfare.

The CTA calls upon the Department of Health enter into constructive discussions with the Community Transport Association to examine what can be done to ensure that the present network of community based and third sector organisations can continue to play their part in creating a better quality of life and improved well being of the most disadvantaged members of the community.