



**Community
Transport
Association**

Response to Lancashire County Council

Consultation on Minibus Driver Training

Closing Date: 28 September 2007

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 Government, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland).

CTA's Response to Consultation

The CTA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Lancashire County Council's consultation process. After reading through the consultation we have decided to respond on those specific areas that we believe would have a marked effect on our sector.

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MINIBUS DRIVER TRAINING

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Lancashire County Council
Environment Directorate
Road Safety Group
Guild House
Cross Street
Preston
PR1 8RD



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



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Summary

The purpose of this document is to outline the proposal by the Road Safety Group to change the provision of Minibus Driver Assessment and Training from the current Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) to a new more effective and efficient model.

A recent consultation exercise with Local Authorities nationally has revealed that there is no one nationally recognised accredited minibus driver assessment and training scheme.

In a letter of 6th June 2007, The Community Transport Association were invited to consult with the Road Safety Group on the future of minibus driver assessment and training in Lancashire. At the date of publication of this document no response has been received from them.

Although a letter was received by the CTA (11 June), the statement on a lack of response is untrue. An email was sent on 16 June, to Neil Fletcher, accepting the invitation and offering dates. The CTA received no reply. Two representatives of CTA visited Lancashire County Council Engineering Dept with a view to discussing this proposal amongst other issues. We understand that a representative from Road Safety was invited to attend but did not turn up.

The document covers the background to MiDAS and Lancashire County Council's involvement with the Scheme, the issues surrounding the existing arrangements, the proposals for a new scheme to operate in Lancashire, the options available and associated cost implications.

Two options are put forward in this document, option 1 to remain with MiDAS, option 2 to develop a new Lancashire County Council scheme. The main issues are set out in the table below

	MiDAS	LCC
Nationally Accredited	X	✓
Quality Assurance	X	✓
Monitoring	X	✓
Training Agent (Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)) required * (see below)	✓	X
Professional Driver Assessor Trainer (DSA Fleet Registered ADI) ** (see below)	X	✓
Down trained not professionally qualified (DSA) Driver Assessor Trainers	✓	X
Driving Assessment	✓	✓
Driving theory training	✓	✓
Additional driver training and assessment available subject to status after initial assessment	X	✓
Royalty Fees payable	✓	X

* Training Agents are required to be Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADI). Training Agents are only required if the organisation intends to train Driver Assessor Trainers (DATs)

** The minimum requirement for a DAT with MiDAS is that they hold a category D1 (101) licence, not for hire or reward.

In addition to being an ADI, a Training Agent must have extensive experience driving passenger carrying vehicles. They must also have a wide knowledge of disability awareness and passenger assistance techniques. They must be fully competent in the operation of wheelchair accessible vehicles and not only have the knowledge on how wheelchair and occupant restraint systems should be correctly used but the ability to 'train trainers' in these skills. All prospective Training Agents must attend a five-day training course, during which they must successfully complete a number of formal assessments including: driving skills, driving and legislation theory, presentation skills and practical skills.

Driver Assessor Trainers (DATs) must also attend a five-day course, delivered by a Training Agent, during which they must successfully complete the same assessments as a Training Agent.

MiDAS also requires that trainers at all levels attend Refresher Training every two years to maintain their trainer status.

You are invited to respond to this document in order that the Road Safety Group gain a clear picture of the requirement of its partners, customers and potential customers before recommendations for change are put forward to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.

The Road Safety Group wish to ensure that minibus drivers employed by this authority or working as volunteers for this or other organisations within Lancashire are professionally assessed and trained in the safe use of minibuses.

Please respond to:

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Road Safety Adviser
Lancashire County Council
Environment Directorate
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A pre-paid envelope is enclosed for your reply, or
Telephone 01772 531470
Fax: 01772 531469
Email neil.fletcher@env.lancscc.gov.uk

The closing date for consultation will be Friday 28th September 2007.

This document is also available to access at www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety

Background

The Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) is a programme developed to enhance the driving and passenger awareness skills of the many thousands of individuals who drive minibuses in the course of their work or as volunteers.

With approximately 125,000 minibuses in Great Britain it is estimated from available statistics those travelling in a minibus are 2-3 times less likely to suffer death and injury than car passengers. However, when incidents do occur there is a likelihood of a higher number of casualties.

Whilst minibuses are therefore a relatively safe form of passenger transport, all are agreed that the task of minibus driving requires skills over and above those required for driving a car. Drivers also have specific responsibilities for vulnerable passengers such as children and disabled people as well as a duty of care to take reasonable safety precautions when arranging and providing transport for all passengers.

MiDAS is designed to make appropriate assessment, training and accreditation available to minibus drivers from schools, colleges, universities, health authorities, local authorities and voluntary organisations at any level.

The scheme was originally developed by Hampshire County Council who granted a licence to the National Community Transport Association (CTA) to undertake the management of the scheme throughout the country.

The proposal to consider the implementation of the MiDAS scheme in Lancashire was delivered to the Highways and Transportation (H & T) Committee in May 1996.

The concerns which led to the need for the MiDAS scheme were:

- The issue of driver quality, particularly with vehicles that did not require the driver to have a passenger carrying vehicle entitlement (PCV) originally known as the PSV driving licence.
- A number of different departments of the County Council as well as each Community Transport Group currently trained and assessed their own drivers. This resulted in there being no agreed uniform standard.
- A limited number of people who could be trained and assessed in any one period.

The unified cascade method of MiDAS sought to address these issues.

The H & T Committee accepted the recommendation that the MiDAS scheme be implemented. Similar recommendation were put to and accepted by the Social Service and Education Committees.

In order to deliver the scheme it was necessary to have a qualified Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) undertaking the training. The Road Safety Group had a member of staff who had this qualification; he received the required training from the Community Transport Association, at a cost of over £600 (the cost of this training is now £750), to enable him to deliver the MiDAS training. This enabled the County Council to become a registered Training Agent with CTA.

An ADI qualification is only necessary to become a Training Agent. It is not required to deliver training to drivers. The cost of becoming a Training Agent is an initial cost and is quickly recovered when Agents begin to run DATs courses. The cost of these courses is controlled by the Agent, not MiDAS or the CTA.

In addition to the Road Safety Group becoming the training agent, discussion took place with Lancashire County Engineering Services who had a member of staff who previously assessed drivers using county council vehicles. Lancashire Engineering Services undertook the day to day running of the scheme on behalf of the Road Safety Group who then monitored the service provision.

Following discussions in 2004 between Lancashire County Council and Lancashire County Engineering Services it was decided that the MiDAS scheme service delivery should be returned to the Road Safety Group in 2005 whereupon it was decided to review the scheme against efficiencies, effectiveness and outcomes.

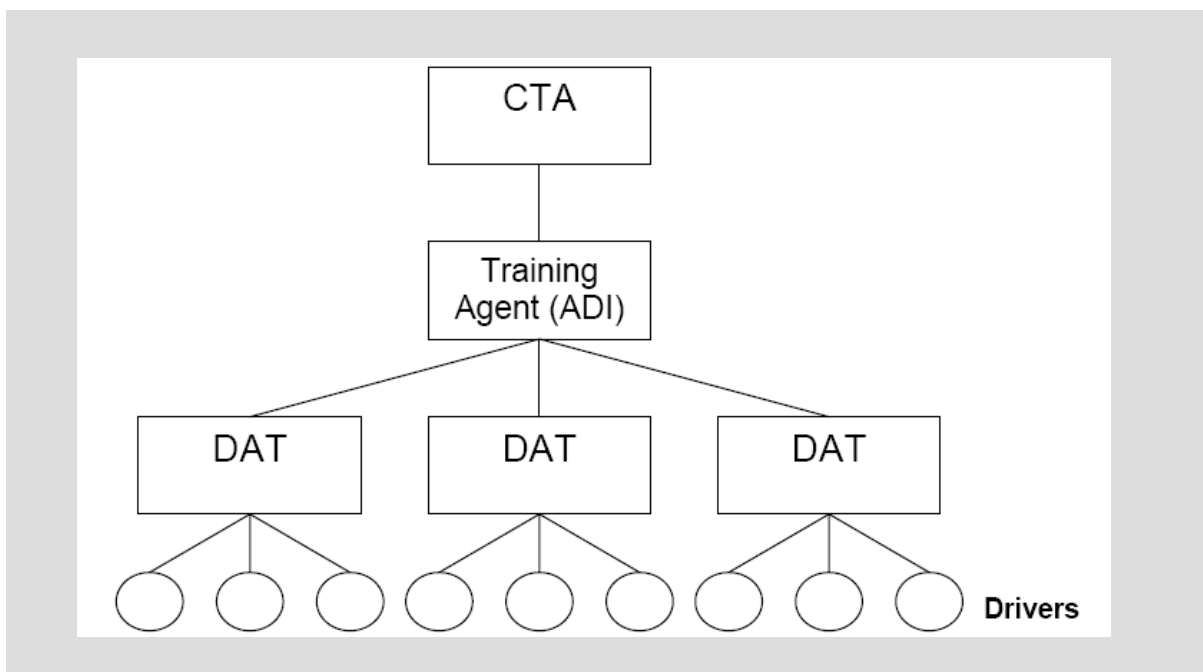
Lancashire County Engineering Services are a current MiDAS Training Agent

The MiDAS Strategy

MiDAS is designed to improve minibus safety by working with organisations to enhance the driving and passenger awareness skills of minibus drivers and in addition provides training for those people who wish to become responsible for assessing and training minibus drivers.

These people, would be known as Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs) and would receive appropriate training. This is achieved in the following ways:

- The training which Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs) receive has to be provided by an ADI as the Training Agent. This training is delivered from CTA notes.
- Driver Assessor/Trainers then assess and train drivers locally using standard training materials and the MiDAS assessment and training programme.
- In some cases, organisations may decide not to appoint their own Driver Assessor/Trainer but to use someone from another organisation.



The above diagram has been incorrectly copied from a MiDAS publication. The correct version does not say 'Training Agent (ADI)' but Training Agent. Qualifications for Training Agents are referred to in earlier comments.

Issues affecting MiDAS in Lancashire

There are a number of issues which the Road Safety Group have identified regarding the operation of MiDAS, these include:

- Quality Assurance
- Monitoring
- Training Courses held by CTA
- Standards Nationally (see Appendix E)
- Qualification of Driver Assessor/Trainers
- Royalty fees
- Changes in legislation affecting trainers
- Cost of training Driver Assessor/Trainers and Drivers
- Resources

Quality Assurance

CTA appear to have no Quality Assurance systems in place, they appear to be only concerned with training of Training Agents.

This statement is clearly based on an assumption. The system in place has resulted in a number of Training Agent applications being refused (including LCC Road Safety). As previously stated, the Training Agents Course contains a number of formal assessments and a number of potential Agents have not been successful in completing these. The course for Driver Assessor Trainers (DATs) also includes a number of formal assessments and is not simply 'attendance only'

Monitoring

CTA appear not to monitor the delivery of the scheme. Out of all the Training Agents in the country only **four** are **local authorities**, including LCC, the remaining are private companies one of whom stated at the AGM of the Training Agents "I haven't time to be monitored – it costs me money".

Monitoring of the scheme takes place at all levels. New Training Agents are required to deliver a directly monitored Driver Assessor Trainers (DATs) Course before being added to the list of approved Agents. All new DATs are sent a questionnaire asking about the training they have received, with the Training Agent concerned being contacted should any irregularities be highlighted. Drivers are randomly selected and sent questionnaires about their training, with action taken against DATs where problems are indicated.

It is difficult to substantiate the alleged comment "I haven't time to be monitored" The subject of monitoring has been regularly discussed at Training Agents meetings, with debate concentrating on how it should be done. No comments on 'not having time' have been minuted at these meetings.

Training Agent courses

CTA do not appear to make plans for the training of new Training Agents and work very much on the basis of when they have enough they will consider putting together a course.

The cost of running these courses and the shortage of applicants with the required skills and knowledge (as discussed above, simply being an ADI is not enough) means that

courses for new Agents are not run on a regular basis. As discussed previously, MiDAS cannot compromise the standard of DAT training by allowing Training Agents without the necessary experience.

Standards Nationally

See Appendix 'E'

Qualification of Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs)

Other than the Training Agent requirement for an ADI, MiDAS does not call for any professional qualification for Driver Assessor/Trainers other than they hold an appropriate driving licence (category D1(101)).

They must attend a five-day DATs course and significantly, attend refresher training (including formal assessments) every two years to maintain their trainers certificate. MiDAS is not aware of any other scheme for minibuss drivers that requires such regular refresher training of trainers

Royalty Fees

A royalty fee of £22 is payable to CTA for each DAT that is trained. For each DAT attending a refresher training session a further royalty fee of £11 is payable.

Only applicable to the training of DATs, not drivers and membership of MiDAS is free.

Changes in legislation affecting trainers

Section 123 of the Road Safety Act 2006 states:

- “(1) A person –
(a) must not give paid driving instruction of any prescribed description unless he is registered in respect of the giving of that description of driving instruction”

Currently this applies only to motor cars but recent consultation with the Policy Section of the Driving Standards Agency revealed this is to be implemented to minibusses within a time frame of 18 months to 2 years. The impact of this on the MiDAS scheme means that the assessment drive in its current format may be illegal if the assessor is not an ADI

The Road Safety Bill has given the DSA the powers to introduce compulsory registration for all trainers. Although a voluntary register for LGV trainers currently exists, there is no such register for PCV trainers. Given the current workload of the DSA, it is unlikely this will be given priority. The CTA, Hampshire County Council and the DSA are in ongoing discussions as to how the DSA can give some formal accreditation to MiDAS. Should changes in legislation occur these discussions mean that MiDAS will be well placed to adapt

The paragraph also confuses assessment with instruction, MiDAS DATs are assessing drivers who already have legal entitlement to drive the vehicle. There is also no guarantee that being an ADI will qualify an Instructor for the proposed new register. It may well be that an ADI has little or no experience of minibuses, whereas most DATs have extensive minibus driving experience. In a sector where financial resources are restricted, organisations are not going to pay to have a person trained as a DAT if they are not already experienced.

Changes in driver licensing means that those drivers who passed their motor car driving test on or after 1st January 1997 no longer receive the D1(101) 'not for hire or reward' category with their licence. This has already impacted on various organisations as new younger staff members who would normally have been able to drive minibuses are not qualified and need to undertake another driving test to obtain the full D1 licence. This has resulted in some organisations changing vehicles to MPVs for which there is currently no provision made in Lancashire for driver assessment and training.

Not true. MiDAS Car & MPV is specifically aimed at the needs of drivers of vehicle with less than nine passenger seats. Lancashire County Council Engineering Services are Training Agents for MiDAS Car & MPV

Also associated with this issue is the fact that under The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2005, from 1 November 2005 persons wishing to supervise learner PCV drivers (including D1) will "need to meet the following requirement:

Have held a full licence for at least 3 years for the category of vehicle they are travelling in"

This must be a full D1 licence by virtue of having passed a driving test, the D1(101), not for hire or reward, is not sufficient. (Advice from Policy Section, Driving Standards Agency). The impact of this on organisations is that these drivers are very restricted in the practice that they can do in a minibus unless the organisation has a correctly qualified driver to supervise that practice.

MiDAS is dealing with drivers who have the legal entitlement to drive the vehicles in which they are being assessed. They are not learner drivers and are not being trained to gain additional licence entitlements. In addition, the D1 (101) is a full licence, European legislation allows for only two types of licence, FULL or PROVISIONAL and the holder of a D1 (101) clearly holds a full licence as they can drive minibuses unaccompanied and receive payment for doing so. The code (101) not for hire or reward, applies to the carriage of passengers and the payment of fares by them, not the driving of the vehicle.

Cost of Training Driver Assessor/Trainers and Drivers

Under the MiDAS scheme the current cost of training a DAT to train drivers of standard minibuses with Lancashire County Council is £475. The training consists of a driving assessment and 3 days of training, much of which is classroom based theory. The training for a DAT to deliver accessible training (for those minibuses fitted with a passenger lift) adds an additional £85 and consists of an additional day of training, much of which is classroom based. These costs to be borne by the organisation wishing to

have a Driver Assessor/Trainer trained. Completing the training certificates them for two years. After this period refresher training needs to be undertaken to maintain the DAT qualification at a current cost of £84 (Standard Minibuses) or £145 respectively (Accessible Minibuses)

CTA cannot comment on the cost of DAT training within Lancashire, as this is clearly an internal matter. However, the requirement for regular refresher training is clearly a significant benefit of MiDAS as it ensures trainers maintain their skills and knowledge.

Although much of the training is classroom based, there are numerous assessments to be completed by the trainee DATs. The additional accessible training is not just classroom based and includes a number of practical elements, which are formally assessed. These include: guiding passengers who are blind or partially sighted, guiding passengers with walking difficulties, assisting wheelchair users, safe use of wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint systems and safe use of passenger lifts. These practical assessments judge a DAT's ability to demonstrate safe practice to others, not merely whether they can do so themselves

The current cost of assessing and training a driver is £115 for drivers of standard minibuses and £145 for accessible minibuses (see Appendix A for details of training). This is for the initial training which certificates them for four years. After this period further refresher training sessions to be undertaken to maintain the qualification at a current cost of £111 and £128 for accessible minibuses.

Resources

The main resources that need to be purchased are manuals and certificates. These need to be purchased (when in stock) direct from the Community Transport Association and are required to be renewed every 2 years (Driver Assessor/Trainers) and 4 years (Drivers).

The cost of these resources at February 2007 are:

Driver Assessor/Trainer Manual:	£6.75 + £2.60 p&p = £9.75
Driver Assessor/Trainer Certificate:	£2.90 + £0.41 p&p = £3.31
Driver Manual:	£5.50 + £2.60 p&p = £8.10
Driver Certificate:	£1.50 + £0.41 p&p = £1.91

The price of a Driver Assessor/Trainer Manual is £90.20 (inc VAT), however this item can only be purchased by a Training Agent and the cost of the Manual is usually built in to the cost of the course. The same applies to Driver Assessor/Trainer Certificates, which cost £1.50 (not £2.90).

The price quoted for a Driver's Handbook is correct, however the postage refers to a single item and most organisations purchase more than one at a time.

Proposed New Scheme

It is proposed to replace the existing arrangement for MiDAS with an updated effective and efficient training programme that can easily be transferred between the differing fleet that is currently operated by Lancashire County Council and other organisations. The effect of this new scheme would be to simplify the process and to incorporate a quality control and monitoring process.

A number of options are put forward in this document for consideration and your views are sought on these. They are outlined below.

Lancashire County Council Strategy

The scheme will be administered by the Road Safety Group, who are one of only 16 Driving Standards Agency accredited Fleet Instructor Training providers in the UK. The Driving Instructors Association (DIA) have agreed an interest in accrediting this scheme.

All assessment and training will be delivered by Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) who are on the Driving Standards Agency register of Fleet Trainers and will have been specially selected and trained to operate this scheme.

The ability of an ADI to assess and train car drivers is not in question. However, many ADIs have little or no experience of driving or operating minibuses (unlike MiDAS DATs who almost universally come from organisations that are operating minibuses). CTA also questions the ability of an ADI to give appropriate training to the drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles. As previously stated, CTA has refused applications from potential Training Agents on the grounds of apparent lack of knowledge and experience in this very specialist area.

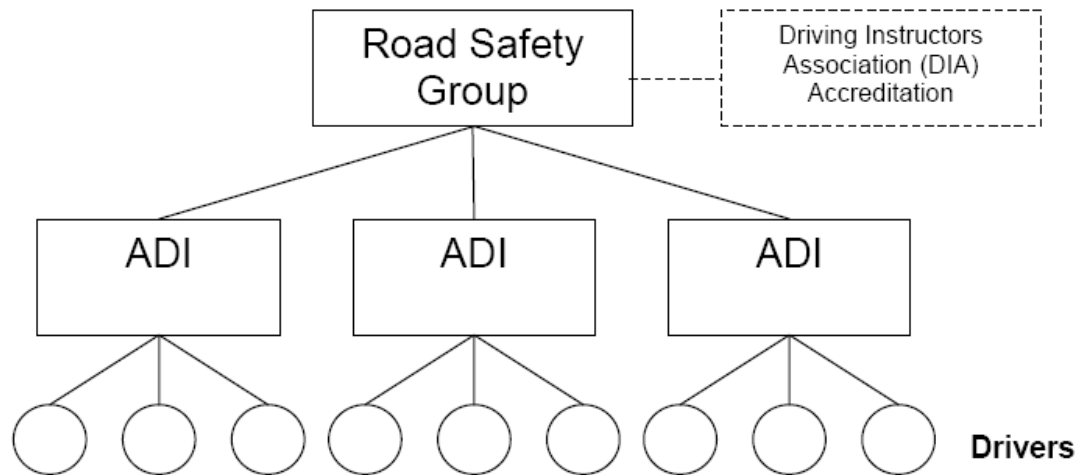
There will be no need for Training Agents, as this role will be covered by the Road Safety Group.

All training will be rigorously monitored and evaluated and it is anticipated the driving elements will be accredited by the Driving Instructors Association (see appendix D) and the passenger assistance elements endorsed by the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation (see Appendix D)

There is no indication of how this monitoring will take place. MiDAS already has the mechanism in place and, as previously mentioned, is in discussions with the Driving Standards Agency over formal approval. These discussions have already resulted in a Foreword to the MiDAS publications by Trevor Wedge, Chief Driving Examiner.

The Queen Elizabeth's Foundation play an important part in helping people with disabilities into employment and run a number of valuable courses aimed at improving peoples skills. However, they do not appear to be experts in the field of passenger transport, although they obviously care about the people who drive on their behalf and the passengers they carry as they are current MiDAS members, with their own Driver Assessor/Trainer (having joined on 25 July 2005).

The carriage of passengers with disabilities is a specialist area and can involve the use of many different types of equipment. The accessible module of MiDAS has been developed over a number of years by calling on the expertise of many professionals who have extensive experience in this area.



All assessments and in-vehicle training will be conducted either within the customer's own vehicle or in a modern fully equipped training vehicle provided by the Road Safety Group.

Financial Implications

The cost of providing this assessment and training will be £185 per driver and will include all necessary resources.

Refresher Assessment

To ensure that the standard of driving is maintained it is proposed that a refresher assessment would be undertaken every three years. This would include an assessment of driving and passenger lift operation and passenger security.

It is proposed to create a database to ensure all drivers trained within Lancashire can be contacted with new or additional road traffic regulations pertaining to drivers of minibuses.

MiDAS has had refresher TRAINING and assessment from its launch in 1996. Simply re-assessing drivers does not give them the opportunity to be shown new techniques and be informed of changes in good practice and does not give them the opportunity to practise new skills before being re-assessed.

There is no mention of refresher training for trainers, another aspect of MiDAS in place since 1996.

Transitional Arrangements

It is acknowledged that there are a number of drivers working for Lancashire County Council and other organisations that hold a current MiDAS certificate, some of whom will have recently gained or retained their certificates. It is proposed that these certificates should be recognised as being evidence of having taken and passed the MiDAS course or refresher course until the expiry date. When the certificates are due to expire the drivers should be brought into the new scheme.

This implies that Road Safety accept that MiDAS is an appropriate standard. However, from the information provided in this proposal and the application forms previously received by the CTA showing the experience and training of two of the ADI's employed by LCC, the CTA has to conclude that the proposed scheme will not meet the MiDAS standard

Options

Option 1

Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS)

Maintain MiDAS as it is currently operated. This is not considered to be the best option as there are deemed to be major flaws in the scheme, operational differences across the country and no quality assurance or monitoring and appears not to be representative as a national course. An outline of the course can be found at Appendix 'A'

Whereas, MiDAS accepts that it is not perfect, comments previously made in this document clearly indicate that quality assurance and monitoring does take place and that positive steps have been taken to further improve this. A UK-wide membership of over 3000 organisations, including many local authorities and major national charities and the winning of a National Training Award in 2003, demonstrate its credentials as a national course

Option 2

Lancashire County Council and DIA Minibus Driver Training Scheme.

This scheme will consist of an intensive driver assessment together with an interactive 'theory' session conducted in both the classroom and minibus. It will include training for accessible minibuses which will provide for 'generic' drivers who will then be able to operate both standard and accessible minibuses.

The course will also be available as an MPV module at the same cost.

This appears to follow the MiDAS model and depending on the materials used, there may be copyright issues. As mentioned previously, a MiDAS Car & MPV course already exists.

All assessment and training will only be conducted by specially selected and trained Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors who are on the Driving Standards Agency register of Approved Fleet Trainers. Quality Assurance systems will be in place together with regular monitoring of standards of delivery of the assessment and training.

See previous comments on status of ADI's.

This scheme is outlined at Appendix 'B'

List of Consultees

Bacup Road Resource Centre
Hesketh Bank and Tarleton Air Cadets
Highfield Humanities College
Hill Climb Activities Ltd
Lakeside YMCA
Lancashire Care Preston
Lancashire County Council Social Services
Lancashire Youth Offending Team
Lancaster and Morecambe College
Lancaster Supported Living Scheme
Larches Childrens Home
LCC Care Services
LCC Childrens Integrated Services
LCC Directorate for Children and Young People
LCC Educational and Social Services Department
LCC Marles Hill
LCC Social Services Respite
Leonard Cheshire Homes
Lune Valley Transport Enterprise
Moor Park House
Mossview Enhanced Day Centre
Myerscough College, Sports Turf and Mechanisation
Nguzo Saba Centre
NST Travel Group PLC
Ormskirk Community Support Team
Ormskirk District Scout Fellowship
Pendle Community Transport
Preston City Council
Preston Community Transport
Ribbleton Sure Start Childrens Centre
SMSU Ambleside
St Anthony's S.V.P. Society
St Martins Students Union
Surestart Clifton
Surestart Hyndburn
The Bungalow Respite Unit
TLC Travel Ltd
Transtech
Traveller Education Services
University of Central Lancashire
University of Central Lancashire Students Union
Warwick Avenue Childrens Home
West Lancashire Dial-A-Ride
Wigan and District Community Transport
YHA Ambleside
Youth and Community in Lancashire

APPENDIX 'A'

Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS)

This scheme is operated nationally by the Community Transport Association (CTA) based in Manchester and comprises three modules:

- Module 1 – Driver Assessment
- Module 2 – Training Drivers of Standard Minibuses
- Module 3 – Additional Training for Drivers of Accessible Minibuses.

These Modules are delivered by a Driver Assessor Trainer (DAT), the minimum qualification for this role is that the DAT holds a category D1 (101) driving licence.

Module 1 – Driver Assessment

The Driving assessment, including pre-assessment checks, is scheduled to take 80 minutes, **only 30 minutes** of which is driving by the client, **only 10 minutes of which is 'assessment'**. Due to the short length of time for the assessment it is usually impossible to include much variety of road and traffic conditions, mainly being conducted on urban roads. Part of the assessment process is giving advice and instruction on driving techniques and, should it become obvious during the assessment that the driver is not of the required standard, then the assessment session can become purely a training session. Expected changes in driver training regulations may make this illegal for assessors who are not Approved Driving Instructors.

This paragraph fails to mention the demonstration drive given by the DAT and the vehicle familiarisation time of at least 15 minutes, that the driver has before commencing the assessment. The assessment part of the drive lasts for a minimum of 30 minutes, giving a total minimum driving time of 45 minutes (not 30 as stated here). These timings are on page 56 of the current Driver Assessor Trainer's Manual.

The differences in road and traffic conditions are equally applicable to drivers taking their car driving test. Drivers in any large city are clearly not going to experience country lanes and those in rural communities will obviously not be tested in the centre of major cities.

Again the use of the term Approved Driving Instructors is misleading. Should changes be made in legislation there is nothing to say that existing DATs would not be eligible for inclusion on any Register of Approval (much the same as existing Driving Instructors were when the ADI register was introduced. The close working relationship between the CTA, Hampshire County Council and the DSA will ensure that MiDAS can adapt to any legislative changes.

Module 2 – Training Drivers of Standard Minibuses

This module is theory only and is scheduled to take 170 minutes. It covers such topics as introducing MiDAS, reversing and manoeuvring, defensive driving, legal requirements and good practice for minibus drivers, health and safety awareness,

manual handling awareness, passenger safety, child passenger safety, personal safety for drivers, breakdown, collision and emergency procedures and a theory assessment briefing.

Module 3 – Additional Training for Drivers of Accessible Minibuses.

The majority of this module is classroom based and is scheduled to take 175 minutes. It covers such topics as passenger awareness, passenger assistance, safe use of passenger lifts, ramps and steps, safety for passengers who use wheelchairs in minibuses, legal requirements and good practice and practical skills assessment briefing.

In addition to this there is allocated supervised practice in using equipment of no specified time duration and a practical skills assessment of 20 – 45 minutes.

Total time for module 3 = 195 – 220 minutes plus practice time.

This module makes use of an accessible vehicle to demonstrate safe use of passenger lifts and safe boarding and alighting for passengers who use wheelchairs. In addition, drivers are given instruction on passenger assistance and guidance techniques and must demonstrate understanding of these by way of a formal assessment.

Differing levels of existing skills and experience of drivers, makes it difficult to specify a given time for supervised practice in using WTORS (Wheelchair tie-down and Occupant Restraint Systems). Drivers are simply given as long as they need to prepare for their assessment, during which they must demonstrate full competence.

APPENDIX 'B'

Lancashire County Council Minibus Driver Training Scheme.

This scheme will be operated by the Road Safety Group and will comprise two modules:

- Module 1 – Driver Assessment
- Module 2 – Minibus Driver Training

The assessments and training will only be delivered by Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) who are on the Driving Standards Agency register of Fleet Trainers and have been specially selected and trained to deliver this scheme.

[See previous comments](#)

Module 1 – Driving Assessment

The Driving assessment, including pre-assessment checks, driving licence and eyesight checks, is scheduled to take 100 minutes, **60 minutes of which is actual assessment of the client**. The assessment will cover five areas of driving, urban roads, rural roads, dual carriageways, motorways and manoeuvring. There will be no training element, as clients will be expected to have reasonable experience of driving the size of vehicle in which they are being assessed. If during the assessment the driver does not demonstrate an acceptable standard of driving this size of vehicle, further training will be recommended before the driver moves on to undertake Module 2. (See Appendix C)

Module 2 – Minibus Driver Training

This training will be a combination of classroom theory and practical minibus training and the clients will be continually assessed throughout the process.

The theory part will cover such topics as an introduction, forward planning, manoeuvring, legal requirements, health and safety, breakdown and emergency procedures, manual handling, passenger awareness, passengers safety, passenger lifts, ramps and steps.

This part of the training will last 120 minutes

The practical part of the training will include such topics as a health and safety exercise, passenger lift explanation and demonstration, passenger lift practice, clamping and strapping of wheelchairs explanation and demonstration, clamping and strapping practice. The training will finish with a review and question and answer session.

Total training time = 240 minutes.

There are obvious similarities between this process and MiDAS and there may be copyright issues, depending on the materials used.

MiDAS is now moving away from conducting the driving assessment first. By asking drivers to attend classroom based theory training first, MiDAS is showing drivers what will be expected during their assessment and the assessment is giving drivers the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of what they have been taught.

*The use of the terms '**clamping and strapping**' clearly shows poor understanding of the issues surrounding transporting passengers who travel in their wheelchairs and must raise serious doubts about the quality of the training being proposed.*

The Driving Instructors Association (DIA) have committed to accrediting the driving elements of this scheme and the Queen Elizabeth Foundation will be asked to endorse the passenger care elements.

APPENDIX 'C'

Additional Training

If during the assessment drive the driver does not demonstrate an acceptable standard of driving within any of the areas assessed, urban roads, rural roads, dual carriageways, motorways and manoeuvring, further training and assessment will be recommended. Lancashire County Council Road Safety Group will be able to offer this training and continual assessment in units so that if, for example, motorways proved to be an issue then a unit on motorway driving would be available.

To enable the driver to progress to Module 2 of the training then this and any other unit will need to be successfully completed.

Alternatively training can be sought from another source in which case a full driving assessment will need to be successfully completed before progression will be allowed to Module 2.

There are clearly cost implications here, which this proposal does not consider.

APPENDIX D

ORGANISATIONS

Driving Instructors Association (DIA)

Founded in 1978 to represent the interests of the professional driving instructor, the DIA is regularly consulted by all the relevant Government bodies, has representation in Parliament and enjoys influence in Europe and throughout the world.

The DIA is consulted by the DfT, DSA, DVTA, DVLA and other Government agencies. It has representation in Parliament, in Europe through the EC and OECD and internationally through the International Association for Driver Education (IVV) and United Nations.

Objectives

- To promote the interests and welfare of those involved in professional driver training
- To raise the standard of road user education
- To increase awareness of road safety issues

The DIA's General Purposes Committee is democratically elected at the Annual General Meeting. There are also other committees assisting with various aspects of the Association's work. Considerable time and effort is given to consulting and negotiating with government agencies to help secure a safe and prosperous future for the individual driving instructor.

The DIA is a trading company, the proprietors being DIA (Int.) Ltd, and members are protected from any financial liability. The Driving Instructors Association is a registered charity No. 146734.

Queen Elizabeth's Foundation

Queen Elizabeth's Foundation encourages and enables adults with disabilities to increase independence and improve life skills. The Foundation's aim is to ensure that all adults in the United Kingdom with disabilities can access the training and support required to achieve their goals.

The Foundation is based in southeast England and provides vocational training for mainstream employment, brain injury rehabilitation, mobility assessment and training, coaching for life in the community and a national information service for people with disabilities.

Founded seventy years ago, the Foundation continues to be in the forefront of disability provision.

Community Transport Association (CTA)

The CTA exists to support its members and to act as the lead UK body for voluntary and community transport. CTA members are organisations embedded in the communities they serve. This is what shapes so powerfully the voluntary and community transport network and explains why it is so well positioned to provide services that focus on the local, on one-to-one help, on being innovative. In developing local solutions to national concerns, operators of community transport can respond to both individual and collective needs and drive forward social regeneration.

The success of any organisation depends on the people associated with it. We are grateful for the hard work and expertise of our trustees and members of our committees; the dedication and professionalism of our staff; the commitment of our funders; the breadth of knowledge provided by our partner organisations; and, of course, the integral support of our members. The CTA's vision is of a society free of social exclusion and injustice, where everyone has mobility and access to the services they require. The CTA's mission is to deliver social change through leadership, learning and enterprise. The CTA will achieve this by:

- providing effective leadership, learning and enterprise support to our members
- being the voice of voluntary and community transport in the UK and representing the views of our members to government
- supporting and influencing the wider network of organisations involved in voluntary and community transport and in mainstream transport services, in order to deliver accessible, inclusive and dynamic transport solutions to achieve social justice and social change.

The CTA is also a consultative body of the DSA, DVLA and other Government agencies. It receives funding from the DfT to run a UK-wide Advice Service, which provides a telephone and email advice line to operators of all forms of Community Transport

APPENDIX E

MidAS Standards Nationally

Comments that have been posted on the MiDAS forum on the CTA website indicate that the standard of training nationally varies tremendously: (The CTA website is currently undergoing changes and this forum is no longer accessible).

“My standard driver's certificate was obtained by sitting in a class for only 1hr 45 min, I was bored silly with a PowerPoint presentation, and it was "without" a driving assessment!

“I attended a further (standard+accessable) training session which ONLY lasted for 2hrs 15 min (this included the theory test) 25 min was spent talking about fire extinguishers, we never saw a wheelchair, the remaining content was inaccurate and the answers to the theory test were announced at the end for all to copy for a 100% pass rate.

For timings specified by CTA see appendix A.

“Lately posing as a driver in need for training I was offered a 30min classroom training session followed by a 15min on road assessment.”

“I compete against DATs who are allowed to offer the in-class workshop in only 30 mins and the off-road assessment in only 15 mins...”

“When the competition are offering these sort of deals, drivers don't want the full MiDAS course when they can just get the certificate for minimum effort.... “I have raised these "substandard MiDAS training" concerns with the CTA and Hampshire County Council but, sadly these DATs are allowed to continue this standard of training.”

*“Without doubt there is a requirement for Midas or **something similar**. My issue with the scheme is it **lacks credibility**.....*

*“Midas set out to be a potent weapon in the fight for safer Minibus operations but I feel the longer these **standards slip**, then the more damage is done to the Midas scheme and that reflects badly on the CTA who are doing so much to raise and improve the profile of Community Transport.”*

Any national training scheme of the size of MiDAS, is going to receive some negative feedback and it should be noted that most of these comments came from one person, who we understand did not win a contract to deliver MiDAS for a local authority. The comments should also be put into perspective – as mentioned previously, there are over 3,000 MiDAS members nationally, with 1,4000 Driver Assessor Trainers and over 66,000 current certificated drivers.

Any comments/feedback made directly to CTA (or Hampshire County Council) and not generally anonymously via a web forum, are acted upon and where necessary

trainers and drivers are asked for further clarification before any corrective action is taken.