



**Community
Transport
Association**

**Response to the
Office for Disability**

Consultation on

**Implementation of the Independent Living
Strategy and the involvement of disabled people**

Closing Date: 20th June 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 Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland).

CTA's Response to Consultation

The CTA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Implementation of the Independent Living Strategy and the involvement of disabled people in the consultation process. After reading through the consultation we have decided to respond on those specific areas that we believe would have a impact on our sector and the work done by our member organisations.

Contact Details

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Consultation question 1:

We would welcome views on how best to involve disabled people, at a national level, in the monitoring of progress on implementation of the Independent Living Strategy, for example, by setting up an Independent Living Scrutiny Group.

The CTA applauds the approach of involving disabled people in the monitoring process. We would suggest that the family and carers of disabled people, particularly those with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorder, are also included. This would provide an additional voice for those who often find it more difficult to express logically thought out opinions.

Consultation question 2:

We would welcome views on current arrangements for promoting the involvement of disabled people and their organisations and the contribution these arrangements may make to the monitoring of the Independent Living Strategy.

CTA has no direct comments on current arrangements however we feel it is important that the providers of services to disabled people are also involved in the process. This should provide information on where difficulties in, or barriers to, meeting the needs of disabled people are occurring.

Community transport groups play a large role in providing transport to disabled people who are not able to access public transport. Many of these organisations include service users on their board of trustees. We believe that these organisations have an important role to play and will be able to provide valuable feedback on where the Independent Living Strategy is working, or failing with regard to transport.

Consultation question 3:

Is there a need for a “network of networks” to facilitate the involvement of disabled people in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy?

The CTA believes that any initiative that increases the number of disabled people (and service providers) who can be involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy is welcome.

Consultation question 4:

We would welcome views on current initiatives to build leadership capacity amongst disabled people, on whether further work should adapt the Partners in Policymaking™ model, and/or whether there are other models we should consider.

The CTA welcomes any initiatives to build leadership capacity amongst disabled people. It is essential that this includes giving a voice to those vulnerable adults who have complex needs, and who may have difficulty expressing appropriate life choices. In these cases, the assistance of family and carers should be expected.

Consultation question 5:

We would welcome views on the best ways to assist implementation and monitoring of the Strategy at regional and local levels.

Again, the CTA would request that the views of service providers and their representative organisations are sought. This will enable a dialogue between service user and provider to ensure the best services can be delivered and any deficiencies quickly addressed.

Consultation question 6:

We welcome any other views on the Independent Living Strategy.

The definition of 'Independent living' is given as:

- **'having choice and control over the assistance and/or equipment needed to go about your daily life**
- **having equal access to housing, transport and mobility, health, employment and education and training opportunities.'**

The CTA believes that this is an ideal that the whole of our society needs to be working towards. There do, however, appear to be some difficulties that may be impossible to overcome:

- **There will be people who express a specific wish to travel independently. After suitable assessment / travel training it may be determined that the individual is not actually safe crossing a road, although they may perceive themselves to be safe. It will be necessary in these cases to deny choice and control on the basis of duty of care. Telling someone with complex cognitive impairments that they will be able to make these choices will raise their expectations and this could result in a great deal of frustration and annoyance if it subsequently becomes clear that what they have chosen is not possible.**
- **It may also be necessary to limit travelling disabled people's choice over the assistance and/or equipment they need due to health and safety considerations. The transport operator's duty of care to other travellers will have to take precedence over the wishes of the disabled person if they choose an unsuitable level of assistance and/or equipment.**

The CTA also wishes to add that there are several sections of the Strategy including transport, health, access to employment and young disabled people in transition to adulthood, where transport will be a key factor in meeting the aims of the document. On this basis, the CTA would welcome the opportunity to continue to represent our member organisation's views as transport providers, often managed partly by disabled people, in discussing ways in which community transport can contribute to achieving the success of this Strategy.