



# THE CTA STATE OF THE SECTOR REPORT FOR ENGLAND 2010



Community  
Transport  
Association

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## What is community transport?

Community transport is safe, accessible, cost-effective, flexible transport run by the community for the community.

Community transport shows what can be done when people take responsibility for solving their own problems. It mobilises and engages local communities, as it is provided by charities and voluntary organisations (which are often very small and local), and harnesses the experience and energy of volunteers who give freely of their time to help others.

Community transport is about freedom and fairness of opportunity. It provides an essential, responsive service for a wide range of people – often the most vulnerable in society. These are people who cannot use or do not have access to cars, taxis or buses and who depend on community transport to get to the services and the social activities they require.

Community transport is a lifeline in both rural and urban areas. It takes disabled people to work, children to school, sick people to healthcare and older people to the shops. It runs local bus routes and provides transport for a wide range of clubs, voluntary bodies and care homes. People shape the services they want and community transport makes it happen.

## About the CTA

The CTA:

- is a UK-wide charity providing leadership, learning and enterprise support to member organisations in civil society which deliver innovative and flexible transport solutions to achieve social change in their communities.
- promotes excellence by providing training, e-based resources, publications, advice, consultancy, events and project support on voluntary, community and accessible transport.
- strengthens the work of our members (which encompass voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals) by creating an environment in which they can prosper and provide much-needed help to people who need it.
- offers a wide range of direct support services to members and is recognised by government as the voice of voluntary and community transport in the UK.
- is a membership organisation with a members' programme based on four key values: Influence, Being Informed, Development and Advantage.

The CTA's vision is "A fairer society free from social exclusion and injustice, where everyone has mobility and access to the services they require."

To find out more about the benefits of joining the CTA visit [www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org) or call our membership team on 0161 351 1475.



**Community  
Transport  
Association**

## About RBS Community Banking

RBS works with a broad spectrum of businesses in the UK including small and medium sized enterprises, social enterprises and entrepreneurial ventures. With the recent publication of the Business Finance Taskforce report by the chief executives of major banks and the British Bankers' Association, there is a renewed impetus to ensure that enough support is provided for the SME market. RBS is supportive of measures to increase investment, provide more business mentors and introduce new lending principles to facilitate this aim.

Through our Community Banking Team, we have been active in the social enterprise space for many years and, in June, we launched the first RBS SE100 Index which represents a significant step forward in terms of measuring impact and growth in the sector. Year two of the Index is already up and running and the intelligence provided by the indicators will be a tremendously useful tool to demonstrate the importance of these socially conscious businesses.

RBS has a large and diverse range of business customers across a broad selection of sectors and it is important that we understand their individual needs. Finding new ways to access capital, cultivating enterprise and leadership and the importance of good governance structures are just some of the challenges that must continue to be addressed to ensure that the social enterprise sector can achieve even greater success in the years to come.

Under the banner of 'Supporting Enterprise', we work with partners to create opportunities for businesses that may not have traditionally had access to financial services. In doing this we hope to enable social innovation that makes a real difference.



# INTRODUCTION

Community transport is a crucial, but frequently overlooked, part of the transport system in England. It complements private and commercial public transport and has a distinct purpose and ethos. However, surprisingly little is known about the characteristics of this important sector: how big is it? how is it financed? what are the characteristics of the community transport organisations themselves?

Without answers to these and similar questions it is difficult to assess the contribution which community transport makes today – and the wider contribution that it may need to make in the future.

This report builds on our first State of the Sector Report for England last year and provides more in-depth information about community transport organisations themselves. It is therefore the CTA's first large-scale assessment of the size and characteristics of community transport organisations in England. (A parallel exercise has been conducted in Wales; Northern Ireland and Scotland will follow in the future.)

We approached the 1,692 community transport organisations known to the CTA in England. 593 responses were received, representing a response rate of 35%.

We recognise that the raw numbers presented in this report significantly understate the actual size and importance of the community transport sector. First,

because although we cross-referenced our membership database against other sources, there are undoubtedly still organisations that we do not know about. Second, not all of those we do know responded. And third, the survey did not

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## “This is the CTA's first large-scale assessment of the size and characteristics of community transport in England”

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include the enormous number of voluntary bodies, such as youth clubs, care homes and environmental organisations, which exist primarily for purposes other than community transport, but which also provide transport under the community transport legislation.

Despite these reservations, the results presented in this report are important. Although we have not yet extrapolated the numbers to reflect the known under-reporting, we will consider this in the future.

This report provides a baseline, not just to assess the role and characteristics of the sector today but the impact of changes in the future. We therefore intend to repeat the survey regularly and to work to extend its coverage.

Community transport is demonstrably crucial to the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people across England. Where transport is

limited, community transport gets people to work, to school, to church, to hospital, to the shops and to visit friends. This gives people freedom, dignity and self-respect, allows them to fulfil their aspirations, stay independent in their own homes, and builds the bonds that keep families and communities strong.

Community transport demonstrates what the government refers to as the 'big society' in action. Every day community transport organisations harness the energy and experience of thousands of volunteers across the country to answer the phones, schedule services, drive vehicles and ensure that our passengers are safely transported from A to B. Local organisations also employ people where necessary, providing training and jobs in places where these are sometimes scarce.

Looking ahead, although funding pressures may grow, the need for community transport is only likely to increase as other services come under financial pressure. The CTA will encourage dialogue to ensure that the crucial role of community transport is recognised so that it can continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people.

We intend to use this survey as vital input to this debate – in the interests of all those whose need for community transport services has never been greater.

**1,700**

is the minimum number of community transport organisations in England

**42,000**

at least the number of voluntary groups that use community transport

**15m**

the number of passenger trips provided in 2009/10 by our survey respondents

**50%**

of the organisations in our survey are run entirely by volunteers

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THERE ARE AT LEAST 1,700 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ORGANISATIONS IN ENGLAND.

This figure reflects the number of organisations known to us that have community transport as their primary purpose. There are many more voluntary bodies – such as youth clubs, faith groups and care homes – which exist primarily for purposes other than community transport, but which also provide transport to their members under the community transport legislation. Furthermore, we believe that this figure doesn't include many small community car schemes which may be underrepresented in our data.

## COMMUNITY TRANSPORT HAS TREMENDOUS REACH ACROSS THE COUNTRY, PROVIDING SERVICES TO HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUAL PASSENGERS AS WELL AS TO TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ORGANISATIONS IN THE WIDER VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

An average community transport organisation in our survey has nearly 1,000 individual users, and those organisations that have group members serve an average of 175 groups. Most community transport organisations provide transport for individuals who cannot use mainstream public transport. Many also provide transport for voluntary groups. Our survey respondents are serving a total of nearly 42,000 voluntary organisations through their group transport services. As there are many more group transport operators that didn't respond to our survey, it is fair to assume that many more thousands of groups rely on community transport to fulfil their social objectives.

## COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PROVIDES MILLIONS OF JOURNEYS EACH YEAR. OUR SURVEY RESPONDENTS ALONE PROVIDED 15M PASSENGER JOURNEYS IN 2009/10.

## THE TOP THREE TYPES OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE ARE:

- > GROUP TRANSPORT
- > COMMUNITY CAR SCHEMES
- > DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICES.

In our survey, 47% of respondents provide transport for voluntary groups. 45% of respondents operate a community car scheme where volunteers use their own cars to give lifts to people who struggle to use mainstream public transport. And 33% provide door-to-door transport, with a minibuss picking up a number of passengers from their homes and taking them to the supermarket, for example. Many community transport organisations run more than one of these services.

## OUR RESEARCH SUGGESTS THERE ARE AT LEAST 60,000 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT VOLUNTEERS IN ENGLAND. AND ALMOST HALF OF THE ORGANISATIONS IN OUR SURVEY ARE OPERATED ENTIRELY BY VOLUNTEERS.

Volunteers are vital to the community transport sector – this is the 'big society' in action. This volunteering figure is based on the responses to our survey plus an estimate to compensate for those organisations that didn't respond. We believe small community car schemes may be underrepresented in our data so it is likely that the actual figure for the number of volunteers is significantly higher.

## WE ESTIMATE THERE ARE A MINIMUM OF 10,600 EMPLOYEES IN THE SECTOR.

This figure is based on the responses to our survey plus an estimate to compensate for those organisations that didn't respond. Paid employees have an important role to play in the community transport sector. While most community transport organisations will only have a handful of paid staff there are three

very large organisations in England with several hundred staff. It is important to note that community transport provides valuable training and careers in places where these are sometimes scarce.

## THE INCOME RECEIVED BY EACH COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ORGANISATION IN ENGLAND VARIES HUGELY.

The average annual income, according to the respondents to our survey, is £48,800. However, this conceals some wide variations. Ten of our respondents have income of more than £1m a year, and 47 respondents have an income of less than £10,000 a year.

## THE TOP THREE INCOME SOURCES FOR THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SECTOR ARE:

- > CONTRACTS AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS
- > PASSENGER FARES
- > LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANTS.

It is important to note that only 250 respondents were able to answer this section of our survey and therefore this top three may be biased towards the larger organisations which have financial data at their fingertips. Small community car schemes may be more reliant on passenger fares and receive very little income from contracts or local authority grants.

## BETWEEN APRIL 2009 AND MARCH 2010, COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ORGANISATIONS CLAIMED A TOTAL OF NEARLY £3.7M IN BUS SERVICE OPERATORS GRANT.

Claim levels vary from £36 a year to more than £100,000 a year. 40% of claims are for less than £1,000. The commercial bus industry claims nearly £400m a year in BSOG, so the figure claimed by community transport represents just 1% of this.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## (1) Size and reach of the community transport sector

There are at least 1,700 community transport organisations in England. This figure reflects the number of organisations known to us that have community transport as their primary purpose. There are many more voluntary bodies – such as youth clubs, faith groups and care homes – which exist primarily for purposes other than community transport, but which also provide transport to their members under the community transport legislation. We also believe that this figure doesn't include many small community car schemes which may be underrepresented in our data.

1,700 represents 1.2% of the estimated 138,721 active voluntary organisations in England (*The UK Civil Society Almanac 2009*, NCVO). But it is important to recognise that this figure underplays community transport's tremendous reach. Our survey respondents are serving a total of nearly 42,000 voluntary organisations through their group transport services. As our survey doesn't capture every organisation, then it is fair to assume that many more thousands of groups rely on community transport to fulfil their own objectives.

The organisations in the sector range in size from very small operations, relying solely on volunteers and running just one

or two vehicles, to large organisations with over 100 vehicles and several hundred employees. Some of the larger organisations have expanded into related fields of activity so that bus operating subsidiaries and other businesses are now part of their role.

Many of the smaller organisations, particularly community car schemes, can fall below the radar. In Hampshire, for instance, the information on the 118 "Good Neighbours" community car schemes is held by Hampshire County Council and is therefore difficult to analyse. However, according to statistics obtained from the local authority the 3,269 volunteers in these community car schemes delivered almost 100,000 passenger trips during 2009/10. These volunteers are providing much more than simply a transport service, but are also befriending, shopping, collecting prescriptions and gardening.

Figure 1 shows the survey respondents by each region in England. There are 167 responses from the south east of England and only 25 responses from the north east. Metropolitan areas tend to have fewer, larger operators than rural areas. While we recognise that our respondents represent only a fraction of the whole community transport sector, we believe that these responses broadly reflect the distribution of organisations across the country as evidenced by other data sets.

## (2) Types of transport provision

Community transport organisations were asked to outline the type of service they operate. Although a large and diverse range of services and facilities are provided by the sector, the survey focused on the most common services which were as follows:

- **Group transport:** This is community transport for voluntary groups. The community transport provider will, for example, take a group of elderly people to their lunch club, or the members of a sports team to a match. These services are delivered using minibuses and MPVs operating under section 19 permits. Groups must be members of the organisation and all passengers must be members of the group.
- **Door-to-door services:** This is community transport for individuals, which is usually run by a minibus picking up a number of passengers from their homes and taking them to a destination such as a supermarket. It is often known as Dial-a-Ride and is usually run under a section 19 permit. Individuals must be members of the organisation.
- **Community car schemes:** Volunteers use their own cars to give lifts to people and are reimbursed for their expenses.
- **Vehicle brokerage:** A community transport organisation will match a group needing transport with a suitable vehicle.

# 60,000

is at least the number of community transport volunteers in England

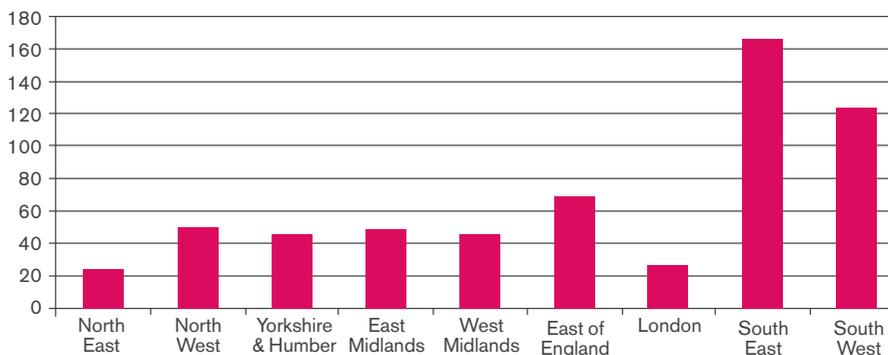
# £1m

is the annual income exceeded by ten of our respondents

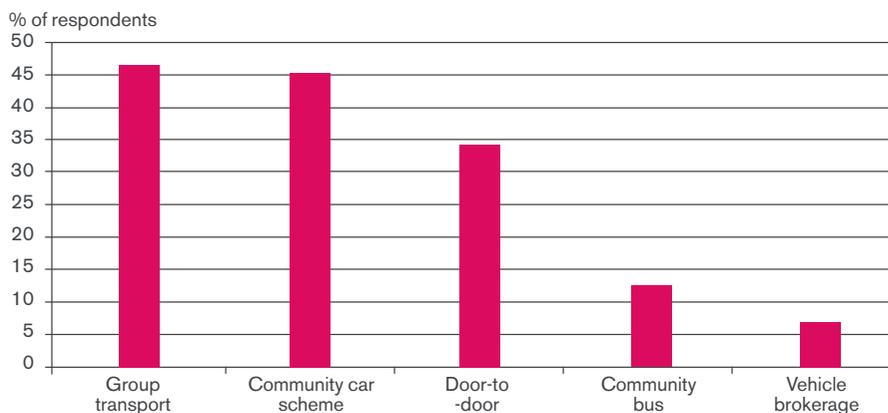
# £3.7m

is the amount of BSOG claimed in 2009/10 by community transport operators

**FIGURE 1 NUMBER OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT RESPONDENTS BY REGION**



**FIGURE 2 TYPES OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICES OFFERED**



**FIGURE 3 TOTAL PASSENGER TRIPS 2009/10 BY REGION**



**• Community bus scheduled services:**

These are local, timetabled bus services, available to the general public, run on a not-for-profit basis.

As figure 2 demonstrates, the most common type of service is group transport under a section 19 permit (47.3% of respondents) while only 7.9% of respondents operate vehicle brokerage. Community car schemes are the second most common type of community transport service (45.1%), followed by door-to-door services (32.9%). Only just over one in ten (11.3%) of organisations stated that they provide section 22 community bus services.

More than 200 organisations offer more than one type of service.

**(3) Passenger trips**

All respondents were asked to estimate the total number of passenger trips they completed during 2009/10. 102 organisations were unable to provide the figure due to lack of accurate records or their difficulty with giving an estimation.

For the 494 organisations that provided an exact figure or the best estimate, the total number of single passenger journeys that they provided during the year was just over 15m. If we exclude the 2m trips completed by West Midlands Special Needs Transport, by far the largest organisation in our survey, this averages out at just over 26,000 for each organisation. From this it is reasonable to assume that community transport in England provides considerably more than 15m passenger journeys a year.

As figure 3 shows, community transport in the West Midlands completed the most passenger journeys last year.

**(4) Passengers**

Community transport often gets associated with services to groups of people who are regarded as socially excluded. Certainly the vast majority of community transport activity

is focused on this area. This might include disabled people, older people, young people, infants (and carers), people with health problems, people with restricted financial means, women concerned about personal safety, people from ethnic minorities, people who are geographically isolated, people without a car in the family and people living in areas of social deprivation.

Although people in most of these groups make use of conventional bus services, taxi services and other modes of transport at some point in time, there is a smaller number of people who cannot do this even when such services are available.

All respondents were asked to estimate the number of members that their organisation has, splitting these into the number of groups and the number of individuals. Some respondents, in particular community car schemes and community bus operators, do not have members and therefore did not provide this data. Figure 4 demonstrates that, from our responses, on average each community transport organisation has 1,210 individual users. For those organisations that have group members the average number is 178. Some particularly high numbers of users given by a few organisations will of course skew these averages.

These figures show us that we know about 430,000 people and 42,000 groups that use community transport services, but – as our respondents only represent a small proportion of the total number of community transport organisations in England – it is clear that community transport reaches many more people and groups than this.

## **(5) Volunteers and staff**

Passenger transport is a highly labour intensive industry, with around 60% to 70% of the costs relating to staffing. Consequently, the deployment of volunteers in undertaking a number of core tasks in delivering community transport services can have a significant impact on the viability of the operation.

The extent to which volunteers are used varies enormously between community transport organisations. In some cases, such as some of the bigger, long-standing door-to-door service providers, it is only board members who could be said to be volunteers, the operation itself relies entirely on paid staff. In many other cases, and these are usually relatively small community car schemes, there are no paid staff at all. However, many community transport organisations fall between these two extremes – a common model has a volunteer management committee, one or two paid administrators and an all-volunteer operations staff.

Whilst not suggesting that the use of paid staff dilutes the community transport concept, it is nevertheless true that community transport was established firmly within England's traditions of volunteering and self-help.

Our research suggests there are at least 60,000 community transport volunteers in England. Almost half of the respondents to our survey are operated entirely by volunteers. This figure is based on the responses to our survey plus an estimate to compensate for those organisations that didn't respond. As mentioned earlier, we believe small community car schemes may be underrepresented in our data so it is likely that the actual figure for the number of volunteers is significantly higher.

Paid employees also have an important role to play in the community transport sector. We estimate there are 10,600 employees in the sector. Again, this figure is based on the responses to our survey plus an estimate to compensate for those organisations that didn't respond.

It is important to note that community transport provides valuable training and jobs in places where these are sometimes scarce. While most community transport organisations will only have a handful of paid

staff there are three very large organisations in England with several hundred staff.

Figure 5 shows that 277 organisations described themselves as purely volunteer-operated without any full-time or part-time paid staff. The next highest proportion of organisations have between 1 and 5 paid staff working for them. Over 90% of the organisations that responded have between 1 and 50 volunteers undertaking a range of duties including management, driving, administration and passenger assistance.

## **(6) Finances**

The financial section of the survey aimed to assess how stable the current provision of community transport is and how sustainable community transport services are, individually and collectively.

Tackling this issue has been frustrated by the usual data collection issues. However, 248 respondents were able to provide financial information. To avoid skewing the results, we have not included figures from West Midlands Special Needs Transport in this analysis.

We asked respondents to break down their income into four different sources:

- fares or charges to passengers
- local authority grants
- contracts (won through competitive tenders) and service level agreements (a negotiated agreement on the level of payment which is based on an agreed level of service)
- other sources.

The average annual income of the 248 organisations who were able to provide income data was £48,800. Of these, only 104 were able to provide a breakdown which included income from contracts and service level agreements, with the average income from this source being £77,535 per organisation.

Fares or charges to passengers are the second largest income source (32%), amounting to an average of £63,168 for each organisation.

**FIGURE 4 NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ORGANISATIONS**

TYPE OF MEMBERS	TOTAL NO OF MEMBERS	NO OF RESPONDENTS WITH THIS TYPE OF MEMBER	AVERAGE NO OF MEMBERS FOR EACH RESPONDENT
Individual members	429,496	355	1,210
Group members	41,897	235	178

**FIGURE 5 TYPE AND SIZE OF WORKFORCE**

	PAID STAFF		VOLUNTEERS	
	No of responses	% of responses	No of responses	% of responses
0	277	46.55%	0	0%
1 to 5	149	25.04%	124	22.80%
6 to 10	59	9.91%	81	14.89%
11 to 20	54	9.08%	119	21.88%
21 to 50	41	6.89%	158	29.04%
51 to 100	12	2.02%	48	8.82%
101 or more	3	0.50%	14	2.57%
TOTAL RESPONSES	595		544	

Another major income stream is from local authority grants, averaging £42,509 per organisation and consisting of 22% of the respondents' total income.

It is important to note that as only 248 respondents were able to answer this section of our survey this information may be biased towards the larger organisations which have financial data at their fingertips. Small, local community car schemes may be more reliant on passenger fares and receive very little income from contracts or local authority grants.

In contrast with what the bus industry as a whole derives from passenger fares and concessionary fare reimbursement (72%) (Source: DfT Public Transport Statistics Bulletin, October 2010), community transport derives a relatively small proportion of income from these sources (32%).

Figure 8 shows the total income community transport organisations received in 2009/10. 56 organisations received income of between £10,000 and £50,000 and 53 received income between £100,000 and £250,000. 49 received income between £250,000 and £1,000,000 while only 10 received income over £1m.

**FIGURE 6 AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME BY SOURCE PER COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ORGANISATION**



**Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG)**

BSOG enables operators of local bus services (including section 22 permit holders) and section 19 permit holders to receive a rebate of most of the duty on fuel they use for eligible journeys. BSOG is the single source of funding across England which many community transport organisations are able to claim. We know that the total value of the claims for BSOG from community transport organisations in the 12-month period (April 2009 to March 2010) was just over £3.7m, which was claimed by 662 organisations.

Figure 9 shows the regional breakdown of BSOG claims for April 2009 to March 2010. It indicates that over half of the claims (55%) are derived from organisations based in

**FIGURE 7 TOTAL INCOME OF SECTOR ACCORDING TO SOURCE**



- Passenger fares 32%
- Local authority grants
- Contracts/SLAs 40%
- Other 6%

**1,200**

is the average number of individual users for each community transport organisation in our survey

**10,600**

is at least the number of employees in the sector

**1%**

of BSOG claims are made by community transport organisations

three of the nine regions: North West, West Midlands and South East. Each of these three regions has a large operator, such as West Midlands Special Needs Transport (in West Midlands) which can skew the regional total.

We are aware that some smaller organisations find claiming BSOG to be too onerous and this may be a significant factor in the difference in distribution of claims across the country compared with our numbers of operators in different regions.

If the large claims (of over £100,000) for the two larger operators are excluded from the total then the average claim per operator is £4,200.

The contribution that BSOG makes to the commercial bus industry (£393m across 998 operators), represents 9% of the industry's total income. (Source: DfT Public Transport Statistics Bulletin GB: 2010).

In the community transport sector, BSOG claims vary from very small claims of £36 per annum to one or two large claims of over £100,000 per annum. A large proportion of annual claims (40%) for community transport operators are still under £1,000. The total annual BSOG claim from community transport organisations represents just 1% of that of the total bus industry in England.

**(7) Vehicles used by community transport organisations**

Minibuses (9-16 passenger seats) are the most common type of vehicles that are owned or leased by community transport organisations. However, when the number of cars made available through community car schemes are taken into account, there are more cars than any other type of vehicle.

According to the responses from 457 community transport organisations, we have identified 250 large vehicles (conventional and accessible), 3,159 minibuses (conventional and accessible) and 6,283 cars that are involved in community

**FIGURE 8 NUMBER OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ORGANISATIONS ACCORDING TO INCOME**



**FIGURE 9 BUS SERVICE OPERATORS GRANT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT CLAIMS FROM APRIL 09 TO MARCH 10**

REGION	BSOG TOTAL
North East	£145,187.12
London	£196,030.19
Yorkshire and the Humber	£260,520.95
East Midlands	£282,009.74
South West	£349,853.72
East of England	£310,348.81
South East	£597,310.44
North West	£747,051.99
West Midlands	£776,237.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,664,550.84</b>

“The annual BSOG claim from community transport is £3.7m”

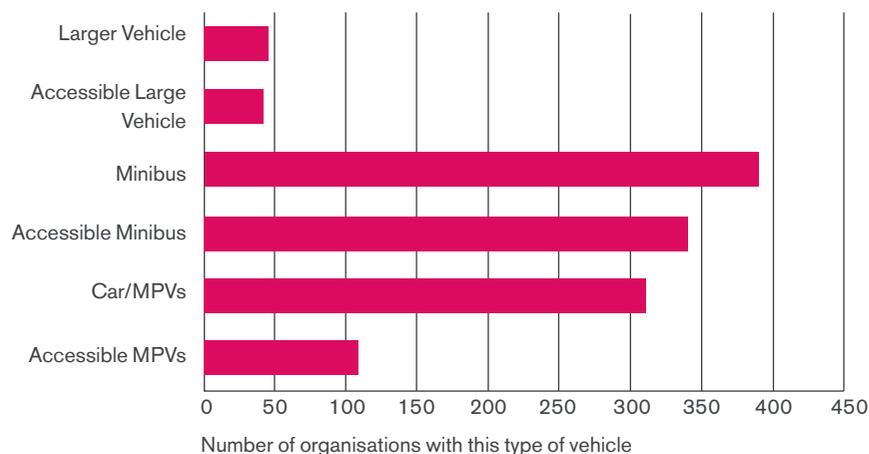
transport services. A majority of the large vehicles (more than 16 passenger seats) and minibuses are wheelchair accessible while the percentage is much lower among cars and MPVs (up to eight passengers).

**(8) Permits**

Most community transport organisations run under section 19 or section 22 permits, which were introduced in the Transport Act 1985. The number of permits in existence gives some idea how many vehicles there might be in operation in England. From 6 April 2009, the new section 19 permits issued are time-limited, normally for five years, which means that the reporting of the number of vehicles operated by community transport organisations will be more accurate in the future.

Figure 11 uses information from the Department for Transport along with the Traffic Commissioners' annual report and adds the number of permits issued by the CTA. We have not been able to confirm the exact number of section 19 permits issued by other designated bodies (those bodies that can issue permits), which apart from CTA the majority of which are issued by Age UK and the Scout Association. Additionally, we know that VOSA, on behalf of the Traffic Commissioners, during 2009/10, issued section 19 and 22 permits to an estimated 883 organisations. ■

**FIGURE 10 TYPE OF VEHICLES OPERATED BY COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ORGANISATIONS**



**FIGURE 11 NUMBER OF SMALL, LARGE AND COMMUNITY BUS PERMITS ISSUED IN ENGLAND IN 2009/10**

YEAR	SECTION 19 SMALL BUS PERMITS ISSUED BY:				SECTION 19 LARGE BUS PERMITS	SECTION 22 COMMUNITY BUS PERMITS
	TRAFFIC COMMISSIONERS	LOCAL AUTHORITIES	DESIGNATED BODIES	CTA		
2007-08	1190	1475	1027	403	24	1
2008-09	1130	1950	780	410	29	10
2009-10	1862	1043	Not known	822	35	37

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY

### Definition of community transport used in this survey

We have defined community transport at the beginning of this publication. However, it is necessary to describe the definition that we have used for this research.

The focus of this report is on third sector organisations providing passenger transport services to local communities for which the operation of community transport services is a constitutional primary purpose of the organisation. The report is solely concerned with passenger transport functions and not with community transport services involving the movement of goods, deliveries or training. It is also not concerned with passenger transport operated by third sector organisations where transport is not a primary constitutional purpose or local authority-run transport services.

However, in these situations, we do include them if the organisation provides transport (a) to other organisations and/or (b) to individuals other than their own members. This enables the study to include organisations such as Manchester & District for Sick Children and WRVS.

### Methodology

#### Data sources

The main data source for the survey was the CTA database which contains the information

and details of the majority of the community transport organisations across England. To compile the sample of nearly 1,700 organisations, this database was cross-referenced against a number of other data sources including local authority community transport directories, section 19 minibus permit and section 22 community bus permit records, Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) claimant records, and Guidestar Data Services records of organisations with community transport as primary purpose.

The financial section was supplemented with information drawn from the annual reports submitted to the Charity Commission.

### Survey methods

Three approaches were adopted: an online survey, telephone survey and postal survey.

**Online survey:** All community transport organisations with an email address were invited to participate in the survey by an introductory email sent during September 2010 which explained the purpose of the study and the questionnaire.

**Telephone survey:** Those community transport organisations without an email address were contacted by telephone. These were mainly small community car schemes rather than larger, well-established

organisations with paid staff. On average a telephone interview took around 10 minutes.

**Postal survey:** For organisations that preferred to participate using a hard copy, a questionnaire was posted.

### Response levels

1,692 organisations that fall within the definition of community transport were contacted and 594 responses were received, representing a response rate of 35%. Rates for formal and medium/large community transport organisations were considerably higher than those for community car schemes. Although the response rate is at an encouraging level, we believe that there are a number of reasons for incomplete or nil responses. Some organisations did not provide community transport services according to the research definition; some organisations had closed down or ceased trading; some organisations provided wrong contact details and correct details were not available; some organisations declined to participate due to their limited resources or reluctance to disclose information. For others there was a lack of available time to collate and submit the data, particularly for those organisations which were volunteer-run. The reduced level of record keeping by many of the smaller organisations also resulted in the survey process becoming difficult.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CTA is indebted to a great number of people who have assisted in the publication of this State of the Sector report. Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the part played by the staff and volunteers of many community transport organisations across England who patiently completed our questionnaires and supplied us with their data. Without their co-operation it would not have been possible to produce this report.

We would also like to thank Philip London at the Department for Transport for his assistance in accessing information on BSOG and permit data; Gordon Stokes

formerly of the Commission for Rural Communities for his advice; and Duncan Sloan at RBS for sponsoring the publication.

Many staff in the CTA assisted in the report's compilation and production and we gratefully acknowledge their contribution.

The survey was carried out by Bryan Myles, Cara Patrick and Yue Yao, with assistance from Anthony Finn, Bill Underwood, Scott Rosser, Norman Rides, Ann Shepherd and Barbara Jameson Taylor. It was edited by Julie Pybus at Society Media and designed Sarah Blick at Glock.



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