



Community Transport Association

*Promoting Excellence in Community Transport*

# DRT

A guide to Demand Responsive Transport for rural  
Community Transport operators

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# Introduction

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## About this guide

The CTA is the national representative body for the community transport sector. It is the UK's biggest provider of training, advice and information on accessible, voluntary and community transport provision. It exists to support, advise, develop and represent not-for-profit transport operators, including voluntary organisations, local authorities and other public sector operators. It also seeks to promote high standards, best practice and progressive policies throughout the transport industry, which are derived from the experience of its members and constituency. The CTA provides information, advice, support and development services to hundreds of groups throughout the UK. These include transport operators, community associations, statutory agencies, local councils, voluntary organisations and individuals.

This Guide forms part of a set issued by the CTA as part of its Rural Transport Initiative in England, which is funded by the Countryside Agency.

It is intended for use by **rural Community Transport schemes** in England as a guide to **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)** services.

The aim of the guide is to give you a better understanding of:

- Similarities & differences between CT & DRT
- The components of and principles behind DRT services
- Important practicalities to consider in setting up DRT services
- What legal and other obligations are involved

It is also available for download from the CTA web site, [www.communitytransport.com](http://www.communitytransport.com)

# Community Transport (CT)

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**Community Transport (CT) is the term used to describe a range of non-profit passenger transport services in urban and rural areas developed by local people recognising a need in their community to provide transport for people who, for a variety of reasons, find it difficult or impossible to use conventional public transport.**

## Components of CT

CT services include:

- Minibus services – including individual door-to-door services for passengers who may have mobility problems & shared transport for groups.
- Community Buses – providing a registered, timetabled bus service with volunteer drivers.
- Car schemes – organised car sharing, which matches volunteer drivers, using their own cars, with passengers who have no other means of travelling.
- Car clubs.
- Ferries.
- Furniture recycling – collection and redistribution of household goods.
- Community recycling projects.
- Wheels to Work Schemes – providing low cost, usually, two-wheeled transport to allow young people to access work or training.

## What's special about CT?

- People. CT is first and foremost about people, not transport.
- Access to transport is something most people take for granted; without it, people become isolated and excluded from society. CT can help redress such isolation and exclusion. CT schemes aim to fit services to the people who need them, rather than vice versa.
- It works. CT provides local, needs-based transport solutions.
- It's non-exclusive. CT is available to those who need it most.
- It puts the passenger first. Many people need a door-to-door service.
- It reduces isolation. People can get out and about.
- It's about quality of life. CT links people into resources and services that are often taken for granted by the rest of us.
- It can be fun - even on a wet morning in November!

The importance of CT goes way beyond the basic role of getting people from A to B. The combined efforts of volunteer drivers, organisers and committee members can make a real difference to the lives of those they help. And that can make the community itself a much better place in which to live.

# Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

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## So, what is Demand Responsive Transport? And how does it differ, if at all, from Community Transport?

DRT is concerned primarily with transport for individuals, as are some elements of the door-to-door Minibus Services, Community Buses and Car Schemes operated by CT organisations. Transport may be provided in a range of vehicles, from single to multiple occupancy.

Effectively, DRT can be a subset of CT - a CT scheme could provide DRT itself or be a partner in a DRT scheme.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has recognised the potential of DRT; pointing out, *“Uncertainty and long waits are typical of the problems faced by users of public transport.*

*Demand-responsive transport can overcome these problems. While commercial companies cannot run profitable services on minority routes, there exists at least one example of a commercial demand-responsive service in the UK, run in the West Midlands. It covers its operating costs, but is partly dependent on grant funding for the purchase of vehicles, and on contract operations to cover some of the overheads.*

*The development of technology has increased the possibilities for demand-responsive services (not-necessarily door-to-door services). Such transport approximates more closely to the convenience of a car than scheduled services can and could lower the initiative to own private transport.”<sup>1</sup>*

DfT recommended an investigation of *“...the possibilities and economics of demand-responsive transport for socially excluded people.”<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Social Exclusion and the Provision and Availability of Public Transport - A Summary Report*

<sup>2</sup> As above

# Defining DRT

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The **VIRGIL** project, set up to research different ways of addressing the transport of people and goods in rural areas, defines DRT as

*“services that adapt their itinerary and timetable to suit a particular transport demand.”<sup>3</sup>*

They note further *“this includes different levels of responsiveness. Thus it includes fully demand-responsive services such as taxis, as well as bus services which are mainly regular but which will divert off certain sections of their route if requested.”<sup>4</sup>*

**SAMPLUS** was a collaborative European research project dealing with Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) systems and services for passengers in urban and rural areas. It involved partners from six EU countries and took place from March 1998 to November 1999.

In their review of DRT services, researchers at the SAMPLUS project said:

*“Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services cover a wide range of transport services ranging from informal community buses through to well organised service networks that **match the service offer to the actual travel demand in close to real-time mode.**”<sup>5</sup> (our bold type)*

The SAMPLUS researchers also describe a vision for DRT as *“fully flexible multihire ‘anywhere-anywhere’ services which:*

- *Allow people to travel from anywhere to anywhere if desired, for the appropriate fare, rather than limiting such services to specific zones or sectors*
- *Use the new types of vehicles currently emerging, which combine the low running cost and manoeuvrability of the taxi with low floor, easy access, comfortable seating, and a seating layout allowing friendly interaction with the driver.*
- *are open for the general public to use (with special groups receiving appropriate subsidies based on a percentage of the fare)”*

***“...services that adapt their itinerary and timetable to suit a particular transport demand...”***

<sup>3</sup> [www.bealtaine.ie/virgil](http://www.bealtaine.ie/virgil)

<sup>4</sup> as above

<sup>5</sup> [www.europrojects.ie/samplusmainweb](http://www.europrojects.ie/samplusmainweb)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.europrojects.ie/samplusmainweb/>

# The need for DRT

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## Problems with mainstream provision

Patterns of transport need have changed over the last few decades and mainstream passenger transport has not been able to change sufficiently to meet these changes. The fixed costs (both economical and environmental) of a timetabled route remain the same; it must run, even if it carries no passengers. It is easy for a particular timetabled service to fall into a downward spiral: changing passenger needs lead to lower usage, which leads to higher cost, which results in service reduction, which in turn leads to lower usage. The eventual result is withdrawal of the service “because nobody is using it”; but the reason nobody is using it is because it doesn’t meet passengers’ needs.

The commercial bus network, therefore, is increasingly concentrated on main routes, because the level of usage cannot sustain more penetrative services.

The way that bus services are run can create a number of barriers to personal mobility for significant numbers of people.

## Social exclusion

Lack of reliable and easily accessible transport services leads to social exclusion, the irony being that those people most likely to be isolated already (older people, disabled people, people on low incomes on isolated housing estates, minority ethnic groups, for example) are most likely to be further isolated by lack of transport. CT schemes have long recognised the role of transport in addressing social exclusion. Transport planners are now looking to DRT services to address some of these issues.

### **Access to services & facilities**

Local shops, banks & post offices continue to reduce in number or disappear altogether. Retail and leisure facilities are increasingly concentrated on fewer sites, usually out of town. This has had a marked effect on people’s travel patterns, making accessing services increasingly difficult for those who do not have access to a car

### **Access to Healthcare**

Rationalisation and merging of GP surgeries and health centres, along with a devolvement of many aspects of healthcare from General Hospitals to local GP practices, means that access to some aspects of healthcare without a car can be difficult, even if the General Hospital is on a bus route.

### **Access to Employment**

Many more people are employed in service industries in relatively low-paid jobs, which involve anti-social hours and seven-day working. Workplaces in the service sector are often concentrated in the out-of-town sites mentioned above, away from bus routes. Walking to work is a thing of the past for most of these people, and access to work for those without a car has become increasingly difficult.

## Accessibility

Mainstream passenger transport (in the main, bus services) is arranged so that the passenger comes to the transport, rather than vice versa. Despite improvements, mainstream bus services can be difficult or impossible to use for anybody with a mobility impairment.

### **Getting to the service**

The walk to a bus stop can be difficult or impossible for people with mobility impairments.

In isolated areas, poorly served by mainstream provision, the nearest bus stop is not within practicable walking distance.

### **Waiting**

Older or disabled people may not have the physical strength to endure a long wait at a bus stop.

In inclement weather with no shelter, waiting at a bus stop can be difficult and unpleasant for anyone, especially when combined with unreliable services.

## Solutions

Demand Responsive Transport is a response to the needs outlined above. Of course, it is not the answer to everything, and is not a replacement for the mass transport facilities offered by conventional bus services. In fact, as part of an integrated system of transport provision, it can boost usage of mainstream transport systems, by acting as a feeder service.

By operating smaller vehicles, DRT can achieve better penetration at lower cost, into areas inaccessible to conventional buses. DRT has a number of advantages over mainstream bus services:

- The fixed costs are lower than for a timetabled service; if there is no demand, the service doesn't need to run.
- It can operate door-to-door, avoiding the problems associated with the passenger getting to the transport and risks to personal safety.
- The fact that it operates door-to-door can make it an attractive alternative to the car.
- Vehicles are physically accessible to disabled people

### **Travelling**

Once the bus arrives, it may prove difficult or impossible for older or disabled people to board.

Fear of falling during the journey may act as a deterrent to people with mobility impairments using mainstream (usually one-person-operated) bus services.

### **Personal safety**

In certain areas, the walk to, and the wait at, a bus stop might involve a significant degree of personal risk, especially during the hours of darkness.

### **Uncertainty**

The unreliability of some mainstream services means that passengers can never be certain that the bus will arrive. This may result in people deciding not to travel at all.

# DRT & CT

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**The underlying ethos & principles of DRT closely match those of Community Transport Schemes. Indeed DRT services have been a component of some schemes' existing services for many years.**

However, there are some differences, both in form and function. The **SAMPLUS** researchers point out that *"many people in the transportation sector (operators, authorities and policy makers) didn't really understand the advances in DRT. The idea of 'Dial-a-Bus' where you telephone days before you travel, or the Post Bus that carries the pensioner around the countryside still seem to come to mind."*<sup>6</sup>

The two most common components of CT schemes that deal with transport for the individual are **Dial A Ride** and **Community Car Schemes**; at first sight, they might be thought to be Demand Responsive Transport. Both offer a service tailored to individual need, with travel provided from door to door. However, there may be some differences between such schemes' current modes of operation and emerging models of DRT.

## Immediacy

DRT is designed to respond to bookings made at short notice - the type of "at once" booking we make when we call a taxi.

Dial A Ride and Community Car Schemes operate primarily on an advance-booking basis.

## Availability to the general public

One of the primary attributes of DRT is its availability to the general public.

CT schemes, while aiming to provide safe, accessible and affordable transport, will often be legally restricted in the ways they can do so. For the majority, this will mean that they are prohibited from providing services to the general public using paid drivers, unless they hold a PSV Operator's licence. See the "Practicalities" section for further information.

A DRT scheme could, however, be flexible enough to accommodate a range of different ways of working (*see The Call Centre below*).

# DRT - principles & components

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DRT therefore, describes a range of passenger road transport solutions united by a number of common factors:

- **The service comes to the passenger (or at least meets them halfway), rather than vice versa.**
- **The service is available to the general public**
- **The service is provided to the passenger on demand.**

## Cost & Flexibility

SAMPLUS researchers (see diagram below) have positioned DRT halfway, in flexibility and cost terms, between mainstream public transport and taxis.

**Mainstream Public Transport** costs the least, but in passengers' terms, is probably also the least flexible.

**Taxis** cost the most but, in passengers' terms, are the most flexible.

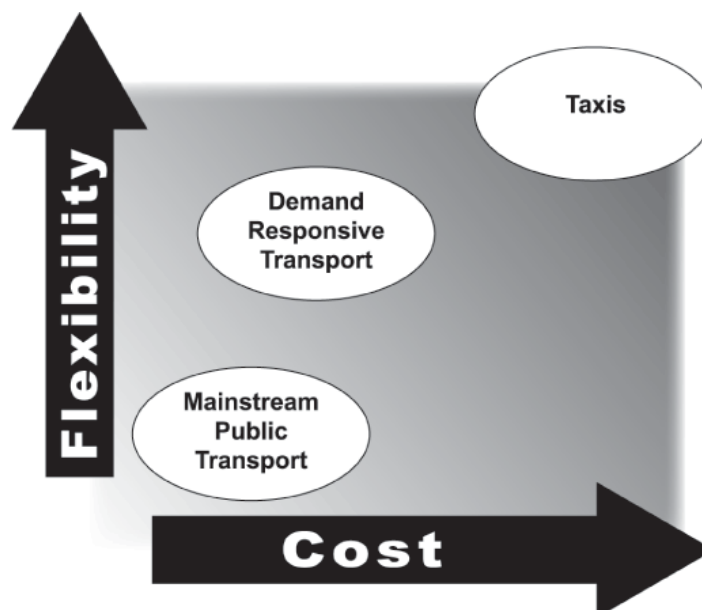
DRT services, which may use a combination of transport solutions, fall somewhere in the middle, giving a (hopefully) satisfactory balance between cost and flexibility. DRT is in its infancy in many parts of the country, but the signs are that it will grow in popularity.

## Vehicles

DRT services can be provided by a range of vehicles - from the large low-floor accessible bus, which deviates as necessary from a fixed route to collect passengers to a shared taxi, which provides a true door-to-door service.

DRT services can also be provided by the same range of vehicles one might find operating in CT schemes; cars, Multi Passenger Vehicles (MPVs), minibuses.

These vehicles will be liable to one of two regulatory frameworks, depending on how the operation is constituted. See "Practicalities" for further detail.



# The call centre

The key to DRT services is, as we have seen, that the response to the need for transport is rapid, in close to real-time mode. For this to happen, there needs to be an effective method of:

- Taking the passenger's booking
- Allocating that request for transport quickly and efficiently.

In order to measure and monitor the effectiveness of the service, there will also need to be a method of recording and analysing pre-and post-trip data.

One way to combine the allocation, booking and data recording functions is in a central Call Centre.

This is a centralised facility, using trained operators and dispatchers, which deals with all aspects of bookings, scheduling and statistical analysis of usage.

Passengers only need to call one centralised number, but a call centre **could** have access to a range of transport solutions, including

- Taxis or licensed private hire vehicles
- DRT scheme minibuses
- CT vehicles
- Dial A Ride services
- Local Authority Social Services transport
- Hospital transport - (non-emergency patient transport services)
- Mainstream bus services (with the capability to deviate from routes by a pre-determined distance)

The passenger's trip, therefore, could be with any one of a number of types of operator, allocated by call centre staff according to availability, suitability and cost.

Call centres can vary in complexity, from a one-person operation using paper-based scheduling of a small number of vehicles and control by mobile phone, to a large centre co-ordinating the transport fleets of a number of partners by radio control, using GPS vehicle tracking linked to computerised scheduling.

Whatever the size, the principles remains the same. The centralisation of booking benefits both the user - who gets the quickest and most appropriate trip with just one telephone call - and the transport providers involved - where spare capacity can be used effectively and duplication of effort can be avoided. Car Schemes and Dial A Rides that wish to can maintain their advance bookings, and "dip in" to the call centre to use spare capacity.

# Monitoring & evaluation

## Statistics

The statistics recorded by the call centre can be manually logged and analysed, or recorded and analysed automatically, as part of a computerised booking/dispatching service.

The raw usage statistics can be used, in conjunction with customer satisfaction surveys, to produce measures of value for money.

## Value for Money

There are three issues to consider when deciding whether a passenger transport service provides value for money:

1. How many people does it carry?
2. What does the service cost?
3. How well does it meet passengers' needs?

**Cost per trip**, the result of dividing item 2 by item 1, is a crude measure of **value for money**. This can be quite a useful measure - for example, a major transport authority replaced failing bus routes with DRT services using shared taxis. Despite what some may expect, the cost per trip for the DRT service was lower (in some cases by a factor of 50%) than for the timetabled bus service, due in part to a large increase in patronage on some services.

Of course, cost per trip also needs to be qualified by a **quality measure** - this means asking passengers how suitable the service is for their needs.

In the example quoted above, the DRT services were rated very highly indeed, particularly on grounds of convenience, personal safety and value for money. The services clearly met the needs of passengers who were using them.

# Types of DRT services

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**DRT encompasses a variety of modes of journey. All can be accessed from a centralised booking number, and could also be combined.**

## Door-to-door - *wholly flexible*

The vehicle picks up a passenger is collected from their agreed pick-up point and taken directly to their agreed destination. The route will be determined solely by the requests for trips received; passengers can be picked up from a variety of places and dropped off at a variety of destinations

**Example 1:** Elderly Mrs A wants to travel to visit a friend in a neighbouring village. She uses a walking frame and a wheelchair, so couldn't get to a bus stop even if there was one. The call centre dispatcher, having examined the available options, sends an accessible taxi, which takes her to her friend's house. On the way, it may divert to pick up other passengers, but all will be dropped off at their requested destinations.

## Semi-flexible service

The passenger is collected from her/his requested pick up point, and taken to her/his choice of fixed destination(s).

**Example 2:** Mr & Mrs D live on a remote housing estate with infrequent and unreliable public transport. The bus company don't operate during the hours of darkness because of assaults on drivers and there have been attacks on passengers waiting at bus stops. Mrs D works shifts at a factory on the outskirts of a large town, eight miles away. Their one car has just broken down, which would have meant that one of them might have to give up work because they cannot get there. However, there is now a DRT service, funded by the County Council. Departure times are broadly fixed (say every half hour, for example) Mrs D, who is working nights, calls to book a pick up on the 22.30 journey. The bus collects her from home and takes her, and ten other people from the estate, to work at the factory. The bus comes back to collect them the next morning at 06.30,

and takes them back to the estate, in time to collect Mr D for his early shift, along with ten other people who work in the town.

Such a service, if operated 24 hours a day, can provide safe transport at all hours, enabling shift workers, for example, safe and economical transport.

## Feeder service - *semi flexible*

The passenger is collected from their agreed pick-up point and taken to a "feeder point" or interchange on the route of a mainstream service. This could feeder service could be operated by a single-or multi occupancy vehicle. In the case of the latter, pick-ups on the feeder service will need to be scheduled to allow effective interchange with the mainstream service.

**Example3:** Mr B wants to go shopping at the superstore in a nearby town. He lives in a small village with no regular bus service to the nearest town. However, there is a regular, and accessible, bus service, which runs along the main road, four miles away. Mr B books a place on the regular minibus feeder service, which collects him from his home just outside the village, and takes him, along with five other people, to rendezvous with the scheduled bus service at a pre-determined point.

For feeder services to work effectively passengers must be

- allowed to remain on the feeder vehicle until the main service arrives, otherwise there is a risk of re-introducing the barriers listed in "Accessibility" above.
- able to buy a "through ticket", valid for the whole journey.

## Semi-scheduled route

A bus, or minibus, runs on a pre-determined route. However, it may deviate from that route by a pre-determined amount to collect passengers who have booked through the call centre. Services such as these are sometimes referred to as a PlusBus.

**Example 4:** Ms C, a mature student and a single mother, needs to get to the College of Technology in the county town, six miles away from the village where he lives. She needs to take her toddler with her so he can be looked after in the college crèche. Ms C telephones the Call Centre, where the dispatcher arranges for the local PlusBus, a 25-seater low-floor bus, to deviate from its regular route to call and pick her up from her home. Mrs C wants to make the journey every weekday, but on two days out of five, classes don't start until midday. The dispatcher uses tailor-made scheduling software to divert the PlusBus each weekday.

## Flexibility is the key

It is important to realise that the trips Mr & Mrs D, Ms C, Mr B and Mrs A wanted to make could have been carried out by any one of the range of transport solutions available to the DRT Call Centre. **Mrs A**, for example, might have been accommodated at short notice by spare capacity on a **Dial A Ride** vehicle. Ms C could have been sent a **minicab**. The important point is that the passenger's transport needs are fulfilled, their choice of when and where to travel is not limited by the service options available (so the service fits the passenger, rather than vice versa) and the booking process is simple.

If a passenger has a particular preference or need, the Call Centre can do its best to accommodate that preference. But the centralisation of control avoids the *passenger* having to make those calls to a variety of different agencies.

## Examples

Two examples of services currently being funded by a Transport Authority and operated from a centralised control centre involve taxis and accessible minibuses:

### Shared taxi service

This is a service funded by **Rural Challenge Grant**, which replaced a bus service funded by **Rural Bus Grant**. It provides transport for people in rural areas, picks them up at home and drops off at the local centre and interchange point where they can connect to trains or buses to nearby towns and a major city. This is a new scheme and serves a large rural area, which means it takes some time to pick up all passengers. Funds have been provided by DTLR for an accessible vehicle.

### Minibus service

These are demand responsive evening bus services operated in the evening by a Community Transport scheme, with subsidy from a Transport Authority. Two operate as semi-fixed routes and one operates as entirely demand responsive. They are operated under an operator's licence rather than a S19 permit or a private hire licence. Two of these are funded from **Rural Challenge Grant**.

# Practicalities

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## Running services for the public

One of the distinguishing features of DRT is its availability to the general public. A minibus operated for “Hire or Reward” (*important note: hire or reward means operated for any benefit to the operator, not just fares - see “Minibuses and the Law” for further details*) is legally considered a **PSV (Public Service Vehicle)**. Ordinarily speaking, the operator of such a vehicle is, by law, required to obtain a **PSV Operator’s Licence**. (This is covered further in “Definition of public service vehicle” and “The PSV Regime” below.)

The majority of CT schemes’ vehicles are, therefore, legally considered to be PSVs.

However, CTs generally take advantage of legal concessions, granted to not-for-profit operators in the 1985 Transport Act, which give exemptions from this requirement, and operate their vehicles under one or both of two types of **Minibus Permit**.

These licensing arrangements may preclude many CT schemes from participating in DRT schemes under current legislation.

**Important note:** The DTLR is currently reviewing the legislation underpinning Community Transport operations; particularly the position of Minibus Permits, so this situation may change. The CTA Advice Service and web site [www.communitytransport.com](http://www.communitytransport.com) will have details of any changes as soon as they emerge.

### Minibus Permits

Most **Dial A Ride**-type schemes operate vehicles under the exemptions granted by a **Section 19 Small Bus Permit**. This allows the scheme to provide only for particular individuals or groups with a particular connection to the scheme.

To comply with the terms of the permit, passengers must:

- fall within the classes of passenger specified in the permit of the scheme, and
- their travel purpose must reflect the objectives of the organisation that make it eligible to hold the permit.

This is an important distinction, because “A vehicle operated under a Section 19 Permit cannot be used to carry the general public. This rules out timetabled or demand-responsive services for general public use.”<sup>7</sup>

**Community Car Schemes**, as non-profit-making car-sharing schemes, are exempt from the requirements of PSV, Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle legislation. However, this exemption is granted specifically on the conditions that:

- Fares paid for a journey do not exceed the running cost of the vehicle for that journey;
- The journey and agreement to pay a fare are pre-booked
- Vehicles do not “ply for hire” (pick up casual passengers)

<sup>7</sup> page 14 - Minibuses & the Law - CTA 2001

## Minibus Permits (cont'd)

A **Section 19 Large Bus Permit** allows the use of a bus with a capacity exceeding 16 passengers (excluding the driver) to be operated with exemption from PSV Operator and driver licensing requirements, but with similar conditions attached as for a Small Bus Permit.

However, there are additional conditions to the use of vehicles under these permits; drivers must have full D (not D1) driving entitlement, and the fact that “recreation” is not deemed an eligible purpose, along with their restriction to “co-ordinating bodies” and more stringent maintenance requirements makes them less common.

A **Section 22 Small Bus Permit** does allow CT schemes to run what are effectively public bus services on registered routes. However, it must be a not-for-profit operation, and drivers may not be paid for driving.

Nevertheless, the Section 22 Permit does allow a degree of flexible routing, and there is no requirement for passengers to book in advance.

# The PSV Operator's Licence

As explained above, an operator wishing to provide services for **hire & reward to the general public using paid drivers** (*i.e. not under a section 19 or 22 permit*) will usually need a PSV Operator's licence.

## What is a public service vehicle?

The law makes a clear definition of what constitutes a Public Service Vehicle.

The following extract from the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 sets out two categories

- 1) *Subject to the provisions of this section, in this Act 'public service vehicle' means a motor vehicle (other than a tramcar) which -*
  - (a) *being a vehicle adapted to carry more than eight passengers, is used for carrying passengers for hire or reward; or*
  - (b) *being a vehicle not so adapted - is used for carrying passengers for hire or reward at separate fares in the course of a business of carrying passengers.*

This has implications for both minibuses and Multi Passenger Vehicles (MPVs)

### *Minibuses*

Minibuses are generally adapted to carry more than eight passengers, and so any minibus used for carrying the public for hire or reward therefore come into **(a)** above.

### *MPVs*

If a vehicle with a passenger capacity of less than nine is to be used for a service in which passengers are charged separate fares, it too will be considered as a PSV, falling into category **(b)** above.

Section 1(iv) of the same Act does make it possible to charge fares on a non-profit basis. In any other situation such a vehicle may be subject to taxi, private hire or even PSV legislation. This legal framework for 'car-sharing' - which is used extensively in the community transport sector- is discussed in the CTA's book, *Community Car Schemes*.

## Once a PSV, always a PSV

It is important to remember that, once a vehicle has been used as a PSV, in law, it will remain to be considered as such; the relevant section of the act stating:

- 2.) *For the purposes of sub section (1) above a vehicle used as mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) of that sub section if it is being so used or if it has been used as mentioned in that paragraph and that use has not been permanently discontinued.*

This makes it clear that once a minibus has been used for hire or reward, it will be considered to be a public service vehicle at all times, not just when it happens to be carrying passengers. The only way to avoid this is to permanently discontinue its use in terms of these provisions. In practice, convincing evidence would be needed to show that this discontinuance was, in fact, permanent.

## The PSV Regime

There are a series of requirements for PSV Operators; the most important of which are that they should:

- Obtain a **PSV Operator's Licence** from the Traffic Commissioner - these can be of various types.
- Have someone with a **Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC)** if transport is their main activity or if they intend to run more than two minibuses
- Have qualified drivers with **Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) entitlement** for D (any buses) or DI (minibuses), which will mean taking a second driving test
- Obtain from the Vehicle Inspectorate a **Certificate of Initial Fitness (COIF)** for each bus used under an Operator's licence for which the fee is considerable.

There are additional operational, maintenance and administrative requirements placed on PSV operators, but further details about the PSV regime are beyond the scope of this guide. However, any scheme considering DRT-type operations must ensure that their current licensing arrangements permit them to do so.

There are stringent penalties for both the organisation and the driver if a prosecution for illegal PSV operation results. Remember that, without a PSV Operator's Licence, **unless you are operating under a Section 22 Permit, with unpaid drivers, you are not allowed to operate services for the general public.** If in doubt about any proposed plans you may have, check with the CTA advice service.

The whole issue of Minibus Permits and Driver Licensing is covered in detail in the CTA publication "Minibuses and The Law".

Further information about PSV Operator licensing is to be found in the DTLR guide, PSV 437, available from Traffic Area Offices and CTA.

## Cars and Multi Passenger Vehicles

Cars and MPVs used for DRT services, which serve members of the public, will be considered as operating for Hire or Reward, and therefore subject either to Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle legislation.

It would be illegal, for example, for a CT scheme simply to extend the services of its existing Community Car scheme to a DRT service, unless the relevant legislation was to be complied with.

The operation of cars used in DRT schemes seems likely to be mainly by companies already operating as Licensed Hackney Carriages (Taxis) or Licensed Private Hire Vehicles (Minicabs). Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle legislation is beyond the scope of this guide. Your local Traffic Commissioner should be able to give further information, if required.

# Other legal issues

Detailed information about further legal aspects of licensing and operation cannot be covered in detail here. As an established CT operator, you should already be familiar with the legal aspects of running your scheme.

However, as an aide-memoire, the following list identifies the main areas of the law that will impact upon the operation of your minibuses:

- Driver licensing
- Driving licence categories
- Driving tests
- Driver's hours
- Driver's conduct
- Operator licensing (Small Bus Permits)
- Motor vehicles
- Vehicle definitions and classes
- Hire or reward
- Using trailers with minibuses
- Vehicle registration and taxation
- Insurance
- Minibus maintenance
- Construction and use
- Vehicle weights and overloading
- Vehicle inspections
- Vehicle markings
- Seat belts fitting
- Children and seat belts
- Seat belt use
- Passengers in wheelchairs
- Duty of care
- Driving a minibus abroad
- Speed limits
- Breakdown and accident procedures
- Bus lanes
- Parking (and Blue badges)
- Carriage of dangerous substances
- Vehicle horns and reversing beepers
- Alcohol on minibuses

The above issues are all covered comprehensively in the CTA's publications "Minibuses and the Law" and "Minibus Management."

# Safety

Anyone driving or operating a minibus has a duty to ensure that it is operated safely; operators have a duty of care both to their passengers and to other road users.

You need to be aware of what the risks of operating your service are, in order to ensure these are reduced or minimised - this is not tempting providence or succumbing to pessimism, it is good practice for your scheme, your users and the general public. RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) and CTA identify seven risk factors to be taken into account in managing a minibus service. These are:

1. The vehicle's driver
2. The management system
3. The vehicle itself

4. The passengers
5. Other road users
6. The nature of the highway and traffic conditions
7. The weather

It is beyond the scope of this guide to examine assessment and management of each of these risk factors in detail. Existing and potential schemes are strongly advised to obtain copies of the forthcoming RoSPA/CTA publication "Minibus Safety" and the CTA publication "Minibus Management" and study them carefully.

# Getting started

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For schemes that are interested in starting Demand Responsive Transport services, this section takes a very brief look at some of the areas you might like to think about.

## Quantify the need

Before you can begin to think about delivering DRT, you will need to have evidence of the need. This means breaking down what might be a generally accepted need for transport into specifics, by finding out exactly what people want. This is often done in the form of a survey or questionnaire.

You will need to consider questions such as:

### **Who wants to travel?**

Are they male, female, young, old, disabled. Or a mix of all? If so, what ratio?

### **How many?**

How many people want to travel? Is it mainly groups, or individuals? Or a mixture of both?

### **Where do they want to go?**

To work? Shopping? Visiting friends or relatives? Going out for the evening?

### **How far?**

Into the nearest town? To relatives on the other side of the county? Down to the local pub?

### **When?**

At what time of day? During rush hour? Late at night? Early in the morning to catch a train?

### **How often?**

To get to work every day? For a regular doctor's appointment? A weekly shopping trip?

To be able to go out on the spur of the moment?

## Existing services

In addition, you will also want to look at existing services and whether they are meeting people's needs:

- What exists already?
- Are there potential partners for DRT provision?
- What needs does it meet?
- What needs doesn't it meet?
- Could it be adapted or improved?
- Could the existing service be altered in some way?
- Could it be incorporated as an element in a new scheme?
- Are there a range of services which, if combined and coordinated, might provide a more comprehensive service than as individual and separate operators?

The above is not an exhaustive list; you will probably have questions of your own to add.

## Planning - Do you know what you want to do?

This may seem a stupid question at first; after all, you've done your survey, you know what people need, so surely what you want to do is:

*"...provide affordable, safe and accessible transport for people in your area or village, whose needs aren't currently met..."*

...or something of that order.

But to be sure you achieve your **overall aim**, you need to be specific about what it means in *practical* terms. You need to **plan** what you want to achieve and how to achieve it.

Planning takes the mystique out of making things happen, because you set out a clear process of small steps that take you from the need (people need transport) to the solution (a DRT scheme). Planning is both an hierarchical and a cyclical process.

Taking the results of your survey and/or research, you can break the above statement of what your organisation is for (your **overall aim** or **mission statement**) down into a set of sub-**aims**, specifically covering areas of need identified in your research. These set out specific things you will do to meet the need you have found. They are the "bread and butter" of what you plan to do. They may be things like "provide door to door transport for people who find public transport difficult or impossible to use" or "provide vehicles for Group Transport at affordable rates".

You can then break these down further into specific operational **objectives**, such as "set up a PlusBus to go to town on Mondays and Fridays" or "set up a shared taxi service to serve three local villages in the evening and weekends".

This will then lead you to specific development **tasks** such as "ask the Passenger Transport Unit to incorporate a PlusBus in the next Rural Challenge Bid", or "write a grant application to the Community Fund to pay for a Co-ordinator".

The above is the hierarchical part of the planning process. The cyclical bit comes when you check what you're doing (the service you're providing) against what you said you wanted to do (your overall aim or mission statement) to make sure you are meeting the need you identified in the first place. This process is called **monitoring**. If what you are doing is actually what you set out to do, congratulations! If not, you enter the process again, and adjust aims, objectives and tasks accordingly.

Once you have established the need, and how your scheme plans to meet it, it is helpful to collate all of the information into a planning document. Usually referred to as a Business Plan, such a document will set out, in a clear and logical manner:

- why a project is needed
- how it will work
- how it will be managed
- what the beneficiaries will gain
- how achievements will be measured
- what it will cost and how it will be funded
- why your organisation should do it.

## Planning Income & Expenditure

You will need to show that your proposed scheme is financially viable and sustainable. Once you have decided on the services your scheme will provide, how you will deliver them, and how the scheme will be managed and operated, you will be able to calculate how much it will all cost. Remember to include both revenue (running) costs, (for example, salaries, rent, heat, light, postage, printing etc.), as well as the capital costs of vehicles and office equipment.

It is usual to estimate how much your service will cost to run over a three-year period; you will then need to show from where you plan to obtain the necessary funds. These projected budgets, broken down to show income and expenditure for each year, are then included as an integral part of your Business Plan.

There are many books available about planning; “Just About Managing” gives a clear and concise overview. Your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) may be able to assist directly, or point you in the direction of further help with financial planning.

# Further information

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## Contacts

The Community Transport Association  
Highbank  
Halton  
Hyde, Cheshire

*General enquiries 0870 774 3586; Fax 0870 774 3581*

*Advice Line 0845 130 6195*

[www.communitytransport.com](http://www.communitytransport.com)

CTA publishes a wide range of books about the practicalities of setting up and operating a Community Transport scheme. They also operate a national advice line for CT schemes, and run training courses covering various aspects of operation and management.

## Publications

### CTA Publications

**Accessible Minibuses** -Design Specification and purchase of 9-16 passenger seat vehicles; ISBN 1-903146-00-3; £10

**Community Car Schemes** - Organised lift-giving using voluntary drivers and their cars; ISBN 0 9522439 9 7; £10

**Let's get Going** - An action guide for community transport in rural England; ISBN 1 903146 02; £7.50

**Minibuses and the Law** - Compliance with legislation for non-profit minibus operation; ISBN 1 903146 03 8; £15

**Minibus Management** - Operation, maintenance & management of 9-16 seat vehicles; ISBN 1-903146-01-1; £25

### Other Publications

**The Voluntary Sector legal Handbook**, Sandy Adirondack and James Sinclair Taylor; Directory of Social Change, 2nd edition, 2001. ISBN 1 900360 72 1; Voluntary organisations £42, others £60 from Sandy Adirondack, bookshops or Directory of Social Change.

*Virtually everything you need to know about the law as it affects charities, community groups and other voluntary organisations—updated to early 2001*

**Just About Managing?** - effective management for Voluntary Organisations & Community Groups, Sandy Adirondack; London Voluntary Service Council, 3rd edition, 1998 ISBN 1 872582 17 6; £18.95 from Sandy Adirondack, bookshops or London Voluntary Service Council.

# Appendix

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**This section gives information about and contacts for European Research Projects & Studies involving DRT. This is mainly taken verbatim from the web-sites of participating organisations.**

## The ARTS project *(Action on the Integration of Rural Transport Services)*

<http://www.rural-transport.net/>

“We test and demonstrate the most effective ways of providing rural transport services and, consequently, produce a set of recommendations to serve as a guide for the planning and implementation of rural transport systems. This goal will be achieved principally with the help of demonstration and research programmes that will cover 10 experiences.

The main goal of ARTS is to test and demonstrate the effective provision of innovative transport services in the rural environment. It will identify the barriers that may inhibit the development of such services and will provide possible ways of overcoming them. It is an applied project that describes the functioning of systems based on a limited but comprehensive number of 10 demonstration cases.”

There are two Demonstration Sites in the U.K.

### West Highland and Rural Transport - Scotland/UK

The demonstration will focus on very low-density rural locations, which have proved unviable for conventional modes. The demonstration will develop and investigate a number of small-scale transport projects, which will be linked through The Highland Council transport co-ordination structure. The transport projects will focus on opportunities for:

- brokerage of existing resources
- unconventional solutions
- developing and supporting communities' own efforts

The Council's passenger transport structure has recently been reviewed and a recommendation accepted for it to be restructured so as to integrate management of non-commercial public transport, social work transport, education transport, fleet management and support for community transport. Moreover, improved links are to be created with taxi policies and licensing, and with health agencies.

This restructuring will be under way shortly and it is anticipated that the initial co-ordination will be in place for the start of the demonstrations. Consequently, it will be possible to assess the barriers to co-ordination and the benefits from co-ordination as regards deep rural and unconventional services.

In particular, the balance between the benefits of scale and access to information from centralisation and the benefits of decentralised co-ordination and local liaison, will be considered

## CYMRU Wales/UK

The demonstration will be funded by the National Assembly for Wales with EC support and specified and evaluated by Transport & Travel Research Ltd (TTR). The demonstration will build on current initiatives funded by the WA such as:

- Newtown (Powys) region rural integrated transport strategy (funded by the agency at a total cost of £1,467,000, £370,000 in 2001) including trial innovations of taxi-buses, multimodal rural interchanges and community initiatives.
- Rural intermodality on the Mid-Wales railway line. Rural rail and bus grants of £1,010,650 including a large stakeholder consortium, Powys/Carmarthenshire councils, community transport fora, operators, etc
- and current grants being processed such as Powys community transport. The actual demonstration would combine 5 key elements:
  - The identification of new operational, organisational, legal and business models for the participation of stakeholders in providing integrated, inter-modal rural mobility services - combining public, private and community sector interests in Mid-Wales.
  - To identify an integrated package(s) of mobility services combining innovative operational modes (e.g. demand responsive, flexiroute, combined-modes) with necessary supporting physical measures (e.g. rural interchanges) and innovative schemes for car use.
- To maximise the potential of rural railway development in Mid-Wales (Heart of Wales line, Cambrian coast line, the potential of seasonal tourist lines, etc).
- To identify and demonstrate a cost effective telematics architecture to support innovative operational models for management, information, scheduling booking and payment of mobility services.
- To integrate passenger and goods movements and to recognise the varied requirements of indigenous and visitor/ tourist markets.

# The VIRGIL Project

<http://www.bealtaine.ie/virgil/>

VIRGIL is a research project funded by the European Commission DG VII – DG XIII as part of the “Research for Sustainable Mobility” programme, and is entitled ‘Verifying and strengthening rural access to transport services’.

The VIRGIL website gives information and contact details about various projects; it also contains links to other websites which you may find of interest.

The overall aim of the VIRGIL project is to find out about different ways of addressing the transport of people and goods in rural areas.

## **The brief includes specific research and analysis of:**

- Regular services
- On-demand or demand-responsive services
- Integration of goods and passengers transport
- Integration within multi-purpose services
- Integration of special services across agencies
- Use of Telematics  
By *telematics* is any *use of information technology* to allow the trip maker to access, directly or indirectly, the transport service in question or to obtain information about it. It can also refer to the *technology applied to running the operations* themselves, e.g. special operating software.

## **Research is being undertaken across Europe to**

- help identify past and present practices, including those abandoned for various reasons
- enable in-depth analysis of a number of existing practices, particularly looking at cost
- operational effectiveness

Consultation will be undertaken with

- key stakeholders, including:
- rural development agencies, local authorities, voluntary and community organisations
- transport operators
- other service providers (e.g. hospitals, education, post, shops)

The consultation with key stakeholders will help to identify and validate a number of research needs for the future, which will also be discussed at round table seminars held in each of the participating countries. It will also assess the role of transport in local development and its importance for rural regeneration.

**Finally, the findings of VIRGIL will be disseminated by various means including:**

- a handbook describing a number of ‘best practices’, including in-depth analysis of success
- the VIRGIL website
- a comprehensive database giving details of past and present practices in rural transport
- the holding of an international seminar to validate the results of the research
- the holding of a round table seminar in each partner country, to tackle the issue of how to improve service level and access to transport services in rural areas.