

Community Transport

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What is Community Transport?

Community transport refers to forms of affordable transport run for and by the community. Though there are nation-wide associations for community transport providers, organisations generally operate from within the local community, therefore the types of community transport available may differ according to where you live.

The main aim of community transport is to combat the problem of 'social exclusion' – the problem of individuals being cut off from society and unable to take part in everyday activities that many take for granted.

Community transport organisations attempt to tackle this issue by dealing with one of the key causes behind exclusion and bringing affordable transport to those who have limited access to it, whether that is due to illness and lack of mobility, low income and no access to a car, or simply poor or non-existent public transport in the area. To put it short, community transport is there to help you get to the places you need to be when you have few other transport options.

Though community transport organisations are often supported by local councils, they work independently from both public and private organisations. They are non-profit organisations that put the interests and needs of the community above anything else.

Who Can Use Community Transport?

It is a common misconception that community transport is only for the elderly or disabled. Though they have services tailored specifically towards these people, this is not the full extent of their services. Community transport is not only for people who are physically unable to access other forms of transport themselves, but also for those who are unable to afford to run a car or public transport and taxi fares, and for those who live too far away from bus routes and other forms of public transport.

In addition to providing transport to those with mobility issues, community transport organisations have schemes in place to help children get to school and isolated adults to work and interviews. They even provide minibuses for community and voluntary groups, such as youth groups, to take their members on trips.

Community transport is there to help anyone struggling to access transport for any reason, whether the issue is age, mobility, income or simply distance.

Community Transport Schemes

As mentioned earlier, the schemes run by community transport organisations can differ as they are tailored to the needs of the community. However, common schemes across the United Kingdom include:

- "Wheels to Work" services – Motorbikes and/or scooters are loaned to those living in isolated areas to help them get to interviews, work and career training. This is generally targeted towards teenagers and young adults, but it is not exclusive to these people
- "Dial-a-ride" services – A door-to-door service which takes people from their house to destinations such as shops, doctor's appointments and other local facilities. In some areas, these services may even be available to take individuals to health and social activities, or to visit family members in prison or hospital. These services are generally intended for the weak, disabled and elderly, but are also available for anyone with trouble accessing transport.
- Community buses – Operating as a public transport service would in areas where bus timetables are irregular, infrequent or non-existent.
- "Community Car" schemes – Volunteers use their own cars to help others with limited access to transport reach their destination. This is demand-responsive and often for those who are

ill or struggle with mobility issues, but is also commonly available for others.

Community transport organisations may also provide contract services for specific bodies, such as schools or health services, which run regularly to take children to school or non-emergency patients to doctor and hospital appointments.



Is Community Transport Free?

Though community transport organisations are always non-profit, they will have expenses to pay. For example, volunteers operating community car schemes are paid their running expenses back, and money has to be spent to maintain and run any vehicles used by the organisation. For these reasons, community transport schemes often charge a fare for their services. They may also charge an annual administration fee, especially for contracted services

However, community transport is there for those who cannot afford public or private transport, and as they do not look to earn a profit, organisations aim to keep their fares small and affordable.

How Can I Find Out More?

As mentioned above, community transport is run from within local communities and tailored to their specific needs. To find out what forms of community transport are available to you, you must contact the organisation for your community. Your local council will be able to point you in the right direction, and in most cases have sections of their websites dedicated to community transport.

You can also find more information at:

- [Gov.uk/community-transport-services-shopmobility](https://www.gov.uk/community-transport-services-shopmobility)
- [ctonline.org.uk](https://www.ctonline.org.uk)
- [ctauk.org](https://www.ctauk.org)