



The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

**Community
Transport
& COVID-19
NEWS No.15
29 July 2020**
Edited by John Atkins

TAS is currently supporting the CT sector at a time when unprecedented demands are being placed upon it. Our initial information sheet was circulated on 6 April – this newsletter provides updates. For previous information, newsletters, and further debate on the current crisis, please see TAS website:

<https://taspartnership.co.uk/TAS-news/>

Social Distancing & School Transport

We are aware of some CT operators attempting to grapple with the forthcoming school term and the fact that some local authorities have not allowed for social distancing to be maintained on contracted buses. Official DfE guidance updated on 27 July says: "Pupils on dedicated school services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and tend to be consistent. This means that the advice for passengers on public transport to adopt a social distance of two metres from people outside their household or support bubble, or a 'one metre plus' approach where this is not possible, will not apply from the autumn term on dedicated transport." Of relevance to operators are the following points in the guidance: "It is important to consider:

-) how pupils are grouped together on transport, where possible this should reflect the bubbles that are adopted within school
-) use of hand sanitiser upon boarding and/or disembarking
-) additional cleaning of vehicles
-) organised queueing and boarding where possible

-) distancing within vehicles wherever possible
-) the use of face coverings for children (except those under the age of 11), where appropriate, for example, if they are likely to come into very close contact with people outside of their group or who they do not normally meet."

Not all education authorities are taking this line, however. Some, for example, are requiring a forehead temperature check on each child before they get on the bus to identify any symptoms. This guidance leaves a dilemma for the CT operator who prefers to play safe – does it deploy two vehicles instead of one if it can? What is clear is that many children with additional needs are at particular risk, so it would be reasonable to require specific safety requirements for SEN transport. DfE acknowledges that "We know that travel to school patterns differ greatly between schools. If those patterns allow, schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school." How far this can be accommodated by the usual transport capacity remains to be seen.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>



**Department
for Education**

Community Transport Association – Updated Guidance

CTA has expanded and updated its guidance materials for CT operators.

Downloads now include advice on:

-)] Restarting your services safely
-)] Risk assessment and risk management
-)] General information on restarting services
-)] Returning drivers checklist
-)] How-to guide: supporting volunteers as services restart
-)] Resource: running services after lock-down – ten ways you could do things differently

<https://ctauk.org/covid19-guidance/>



DfT Guidance for Transport Operators in England

This guidance was last updated on 25 July and is worth checking regularly for updates, though much of the content is aimed at conventional bus and rail services. More recent additions to the guidance include:

-)] The implications of local lockdown areas, in which only essential travel should be made – this obviously has implications for journeys from outside as well;
-)] Maintaining accessibility – “Passenger assistance should be a normal part of the offering that passengers can request at the point of need. Service providers have duties to ensure individuals with protected characteristics, for example disabled people, the elderly and pregnant women, are able to access transport networks. Everyone should be supported to access transport and comply with social distancing”.
-)] Face coverings – now extended to stations and transport hubs. There is a six stage process of escalation when dealing with passengers who are not wearing a face covering without sufficient reason;

-)] Consider emerging evidence which shows that black and minority ethnic (BME) communities are disproportionately affected by coronavirus. Health inequalities for BME should be considered for both staff, volunteers and passengers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>



Eat Out to Help Out Scheme

With the reopening of cafés, pubs and restaurants, CT users would be able to take advantage of the scheme which is designed to boost the hospitality economy by subsidising the cost of a meal out. The scheme details are

-)] a 50% discount on food or non-alcoholic drinks to eat or drink in (up to a maximum of £10 discount per diner)
-)] every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday between 3 and 31 August
-)] as many times as you like

The discount is applied automatically to the bill but is only available in participating outlets. These can be searched here:

<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/eat-out-to-help-out/find-a-restaurant/>

It would be a good idea for CT operators to find out which eateries are part of the scheme locally and publicise lunch trips to passengers.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-a-discount-with-the-eat-out-to-help-out-scheme>



Community Transport Around the UK

Dundee Community Transport (Community Cars) has partnered with Dundee Volunteer & Voluntary Action to provide 'Everyday Packs' to its users. The packs contain sanitiser and face masks.

<https://www.facebook.com/DundeeCommCars>

DUNDEE VOLUNTEER & VOLUNTARY ACTION

'EVERYDAY PACKS'



Each pack will contain 1 small bottle of hand sanitiser and 1 re-usable washable face mask or 5 disposable masks.

Packs are intended as a helping hand until you are in a position to get additional supplies in.

Are you:

- aged 55+
- socially isolated
- digitally excluded
- your general wellbeing will be improved as a result of receiving this.

To make a referral/self referral please contact:

Shirley on skyles@number10.org or
Georgie-Ann on 01382 305721 (10am - 1pm only)
Dial OP can also be contacted on 01382 305757

This partnership project with Dundee Community Transport, Grey Lodge Settlement, HOPE (Helping Older People Engage) and GetLocalSupport.org volunteers has been made possible due to funding received from the Big Lottery Supporting Communities fund.



Dundee Volunteer and Voluntary Action is a Registered Charity (No. SC090487) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No. SC093088) Registered address: 19 Clarendon Road, Dundee DD1 1LL

In the Bristol Post, Sprint Community Transport (Bristol) has reassured its users as it resumes its services in the Knowle area. Angela Perrett said: "Everything stopped when the pandemic hit, and it's been a struggle getting back on the road...People tell us they are glad we're back because they weren't keen on venturing too far, or onto regular buses. We've made sure we've done everything we have to with regards to social distancing and coronavirus - and in fact we're going further. In all the buses, we've taped off seats, and because of the way we work, we can put people in different seats depending on where and when they are getting off, so that cuts down on people passing each other...The feedback we've had is that people tell us they are glad we're back. For us it's like a huge family and we want to get the message out there that we're back

up and running, open for new members - anyone can sign up if they live in the catchment area, and they can get out and about with the confidence that this is a unique service and we are wiping down seats after every journey, and going that extra mile." Angela appears in a video message to the community (contained in link below) in which she explains to users the sanitisation and social distancing measures that Sprint has put in place.

https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/bristol-bus-service-picks-you-4333891?utm_source=linkCopy&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=sharebar



Cotswold Friends has been featured in the Ludlow Advertiser. The service has supported over 1,000 people a week since lockdown with shopping, medicine delivery, telephone befriending and transport for critical medical appointments. Amanda Howard said: "As the Government lifts lockdown, including the end of shielding on July 31, many people are feeling a little anxious about losing their Covid-19 support. For those people who will no longer receive food parcels and those people who have relied on community volunteers to shop for them and deliver their medicines, this could be a difficult time." The service is also seeking volunteers: "Now more than ever we need people to come forward and volunteer. We need drivers, befrienders, shopping supporters, people to provide carers with a much-needed break so they can attend their own medical appointments and enjoy some time away from their caring responsibilities. Many carers look after someone who is shielding and have not been able to leave their home for months." <https://www.ludlowadvertiser.co.uk/news/regional/18601268.still-says-cotswold-friends-boss/>



A new CT initiative in Ross-Shire has been in the news as a potential solution to the loss of a number of Stagecoach services affecting residents of Contin, Strathpeffer, Marybank and Garve. The Ross-Shire Journal reports: "Two public meetings have now been set up to discuss ideas and gauge support and demand for various options. The unexpected reduction in timetables, announced last December and taking effect from February, have created serious problems for many without access to cars...Contin, Strathpeffer and Marybank Community Councils and Garve and District Development Trust teamed up to form a steering group to investigate solutions, enlisting Edinburgh-based transport consultant Derek Halden to advise on how community-run transport might work...Potential solutions being mooted range from scheduled community buses and mini-buses to community cars." Although the longer-term impact of the pandemic on the bus industry has yet to be felt, it very likely that many communities will be faced with fewer services and will need to investigate community-led solutions.

<https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/villages-hit-by-cuts-to-bus-services-to-hold-outdoor-meetings-to-discuss-solutions-206184/>



Chelmsford Community Transport has been "going strong throughout the Covid-19 pandemic! We are proud to continue providing door-to-door transport using our wheelchair accessible minibuses throughout the current pandemic. We have been helping those who are unable to use public transport because of age, physical or mental disability or rural exclusion. Our team of drivers have been carrying out shopping tasks, collecting prescriptions and transporting vulnerable patients to medical appointments. Our office team have made over 1000 welfare calls to every passenger, making sure they are well and helping them with their needs. Now we're back up and running our fabulous team of volunteer minibuss drivers are back on the road doing what they do best!"

<http://chelmsfordct.org/>



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988

or email

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