

The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

Community Transport & COVID-19 NEWS No.5

14 May 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/>

Govt. Guidance for Transport Operators

The Government has issued a specific guidance document (12 May) for transport operators – this is a very general document and not especially enlightening for CT providers. However, it states that “Government guidance is for passengers, if they can, to wear a face covering if they need to use public transport”. A face covering, it is noted, does not mean a surgical grade mask. Otherwise, much of the document covers workplace management issues, an service bus operations. There is no guidance on cash handling or ticket issue, let alone how more specialist services can offer assistance to passengers.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safer transport – guidance for operators

Safer working principles and risk assessment for transport operators and organisations

12 May 2020

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

Request for Information – Contactless Payments

The need for cash-free, contactless transactions on fare paying services will be understood by all CT operators. Some already had contactless systems in place prior to the COVID-19 crisis, whilst others have adopted new measures at short notice. Whilst it is fairly straight-forward to retrospectively charge known members on account (as might suit a s19 Dial-a-Ride service) the situation on a s22 Community Bus may be more difficult to introduce, especially with the need to offer tickets or receipts. TAS is interested to learn of any systems that CTs may have adopted for any kind of service, be they software-based products, card readers or more ad-hoc solutions. Please contact John Atkins john.atkins@taspartnership.com.



Insurance Issues

We have had feedback from several operators about the importance of informing your vehicle insurers of any kind of activity or use change. John Phillips of Go Start Community Transport (Suffolk) advises: “Check insurance not just for vehicles but for liability in respect of any other services being provided. Our insurer is adding ‘delivery of prescriptions’ as an activity. No charge as far as I am aware.” If your public liability is with a separate insurer, they should also be kept in the loop.

COVID-19 Protection System for Minibuses



EVM featured in the trade press extensively last week launching a range of COVID-19 protection measures "which can be retrofitted to its vehicles and added to new vehicles in built. All components will be available to customer for the end of May" <https://www.evm.ie/covid-19/> & <https://www.facebook.com/pg/EvmDirectLtd/posts/> & <https://www.route-one.net/news/evm-designs-covid-19-protection-measures/>

Courtside Conversions are offering a range of safeguards including: Driver Protection Screens, Passenger Protection Screens, Air Sanitisation, Anti-Microbial Films, PPE Storage, and Signage. <https://www.courtsideconversions.co.uk/info-page/home.aspx>

Community Transport Association

TAS has worked with CTA to produce operational guidance. CTA is providing regular information updates here: <https://ctauk.org/covid19-guidance/>

Serving the Community: Community Transport During Coronavirus



CTA has published a new report which looks at the impact of coronavirus on the CT sector based on feedback from 200 members. <https://ctauk.org/report-ct-during-coronavirus/>

Furloneering!



We have already considered the issues around furloughed staff and their ability to undertake volunteering activities. There is now a website where people on furlough can be connected with charities and vice versa. <https://www.furlonteer.com/>

Notable CT Responses around the UK

Slough Community Transport has been praised in the local press after making its 2000th delivery of food and prescriptions. Chief Executive George Howard is now calling for more volunteers to increase the seven day a week service.



https://www.sloughexpress.co.uk/gallery/slough/158360/slough-community-transport-providing-shopping-and-medicine-collections-for-those-in-need.html?refresh_ce

Stockport Car Scheme has benefitted from celebrity volunteers in the shape of Manchester comedians Jason Manford and Justin Moorhouse. Manager Sue Peck explained: "Jason filled in a volunteer driver request through our website at the start of this pandemic and I got in touch with him from there. He takes people to medical appointments with all the necessary PPE which I provided by Stockport Council and as he has a recent DBS we got him up and running very quickly. He also collects prescriptions for us and is available wherever we need him apart from one

morning per week when he records his radio show.



He is a great asset for us and takes all request without fuss or issue and never has any problems just taking things in his stride. He recommended Justin Moorhouse who is now driving for us and as with Jason he also cheers the clients up when he helps them and very often make their day."

Nidderdale Community Transport (North Yorkshire) has been busy in rural areas around Pateley Bridge. Executive Co-Chair Helen Flynn said: "I had seen from some national news that community transport providers were coming up with ways of helping the NHS, transporting equipment to where it was needed, so I got in touch with the local CCG, to offer our services. We started two weeks ago with transporting Deep Vein Thrombosis testing kits to local GP surgeries in Harrogate district, but this week we were given a task on a quite different scale!" On Monday, 95 computer tablets were delivered to Nidderdale Plus for onward delivery to every care home in Harrogate District. These tablets enable remote video consultations between GPs or other health professionals and residents of care homes, significantly cutting down the risks associated with coronavirus. Helen said, "It was quite a big task for small community transport scheme to take on, but we are on top of it, and using the car each day this week, and volunteer drivers, we will get them all out to the right places! We hope to continue to work with the local NHS so that Nidderdale can play its part in the crisis."

<https://www.nidderdaleplus.org.uk/local-services/>



Go Start Community Transport (Suffolk) chair John Phillips reports: "We have mothballed two vehicles - one because we could not manage to keep safe distances. We are continuing with three vehicles. We are operating a s22 route that we took over from large operator (who withdrew their service) on the day that lock down started. We could not have planned it better. Two five seater vehicles (with tail lift) are still operating primarily for hospital appointments and patients booking in for treatment. These vehicles are also available and being used for a prescription delivery service which we set up with a community group based in Town Hall. First pick-up was on the 7th of April and since then we have collected and delivered over 100 prescriptions. Local ones are being done on foot by volunteer driver, more distant ones to outlying villages use a vehicle. We also have a driver who is a keen cyclist so he is making deliveries on his bike. We have tried to provide safe working conditions for drivers. Gloves, hand cleaning surface wipes and all other recommend provisions have been made including fitting of 4 mm clear plastic behind the driver."

<https://gostart.org.uk/>



Upper Coquetdale Community Transport (Northumberland) is already familiar with offering services that reach some very rurally isolated communities. It has now partnered with Community Action Northumberland's 'Warm Hub' to provide a new 'On the Move' service.



The Northumberland Gazette has reports that "the team has now launched an on-the-move service, delivering almost 40 meals every Monday together with books, magazines, jigsaws and some treats, which included a toast for VE Day last week...The service developed [from] a community shopping scheme with Upper Coquetdale Community Transport, which started out delivering shopping for eight people, rising to 53 the following week and then 97, all bought from the Co-op in Rothbury. The decision was then made to deliver soup, a fresh bread roll and pudding or cake, which was made possible by a £127 donation from CAN to buy soup mugs and £260 from the Community Foundation for more soup mugs and pudding containers."

<https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/people/how-northumberland-lunch-club-continuing-through-lockdown-2850086>

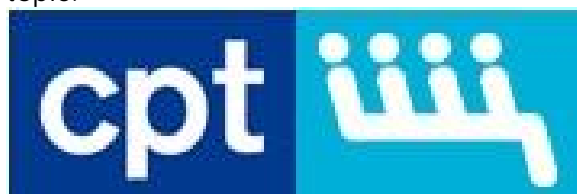
Planned Reopening of Schools

Whilst Govt. plans to re-open schools in June are still being debated, the implication follows that transport providers will be required to resume contract duties. The guidance states that: "Children, young people and parents are encouraged to walk or cycle where possible and avoid public transport at peak times. The government will shortly publish guidance on how to travel safely, which schools, parents and young people can refer to when planning their travel, particularly if public transport is required. Home to school transport provided or organised by schools, trusts or local authorities varies widely. Schools,

trusts and local authorities should work together and with relevant transport providers to put in place arrangements which fit the local circumstances, including the measures being put in place to reduce contact."



This latter issue raises the question as to how social distancing can be achieved. Confederation of Passenger Transport has asked its members for input on this topic.



CPT is "looking to assess the potential impact of the 2m social distancing policy for the capacity on home to school transport." As the CT sector is more involved with Special Educational Needs provision with small vehicles, the challenges are even more acute.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june> & <http://www.cpt-uk.org/index.php>



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email john.atkins@taspartnership.com