



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/>

BSOG for CT



DfT has extended the submission date for claims to the period ending 31 March that would normally be due on 30 June. It has informed CTs that “Any claims received after this date would normally be rejected as late unless, following appeal, there are exceptional circumstances which are upheld. However, in light of the current COVID related crisis the department accepts that the current deadline places an unnecessary burden on Community operators to adhere to this requirement during a very challenging time. We therefore propose to extend this deadline to 31/07/20 in order to allow operators enough time to compile their claims in the normal manner and the ability to have their claim audited and signed off by an approved signatory.”

Face Coverings Compulsory on Public Transport in England

From 15 June all passengers in England must wear a face covering Grant Shapps has announced. This will equally apply to CT vehicles. News story here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52927089>

Lockdown Updates

June 1st saw some relaxation of the lockdown rules – larger than previous social gatherings have been permitted, recreation and exercise has been extended and some children have returned to primary schools in England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have different variations on this. In theory this would suggest an increase of demand for public transport, although the Govt. is still discouraging its use. For CT operators, this may be the time to revise policy on which trips will be accepted, as “essential” is clearly going to be a changing concept. We would recommend communicating your position with users. Useful summary by BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-52530518>



NHS Parking Concession

There is now a website to enable NHS staff and volunteers (critical care workers) to access free car parking (some pre-booked). This may be of use to any CT service or car scheme that is undertaking NHS journeys but drivers should check if they qualify. <https://www.nhs-freeparking.co.uk/>

Changes to Furlough Arrangements

There are coming changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: "From 1 July, employers can bring back to work employees that have previously been furloughed for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim CJRS grant for their normal hours not worked. When claiming the CJRS grant for furloughed hours; employers will need to report and claim for a minimum period of a week. The scheme will close to new entrants from 30 June. From this point onwards, employers will only be able to furlough employees that they have furloughed for a full 3 week period prior to 30 June. This means that the final date by which an employer can furlough an employee for the first time will be 10 June, in order for the current 3 week furlough period to be completed by 30 June. Employers will have until 31 July to make any claims in respect of the period to 30 June. From August 2020, the level of government grant provided through the job retention scheme will be slowly tapered to reflect that people will be returning to work. That means that for June and July the government will continue to pay 80% of people's salaries. In the following months, businesses will be asked to contribute a modest share, but crucially individuals will continue to receive that 80% of salary covering the time they are unable to work." <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#history>

FLEXIBLE FURLOUGHING



VAT & Deliveries

Following a query from a CT operator involved with food and prescription deliveries regarding the VAT situation, TAS has looked into it more closely and concluded that if a CT is charging for the delivery, is acting as a third party carrier of goods, and is VAT registered, then VAT at standard rate will probably be due. However, circumstances may differ and we

suggest this is investigated on a case by case basis. As a precaution, however, it would be prudent to either levy a 20% additional charge for VAT, or be prepared to pass on this portion from your current charges to HM Revenue & Customs.



Volunteers Week & CTA

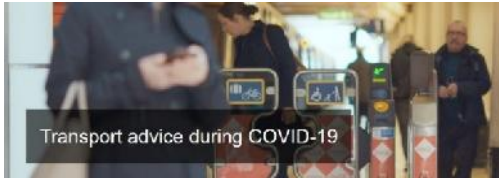
Volunteers Week runs from 1-7 June and Community Transport Association is celebrating the brilliant work of CT volunteers. "All week, we want you to tweet photos of your volunteers with #VolunteersWeek and #Thankyou alongside a message about why they're so important." The CTA website has two posters which can be downloaded here: <https://ctauk.org/volunteers-week-2020-get-involved/>



Transport Focus

Transport Focus has provided a range of guidance materials for passengers and has continued to survey public transport users. Over the past four weeks surveys have unsurprisingly indicated very low use of public transport. Fleet News has commented: "Before the outbreak, 43% nationally used public transport at least a few times a month, while 80% used the car. But just 2% of respondents said they had used a bus in the past week, which has

remained unchanged since Transport Focus began its weekly survey.” This indicates something of the challenge that faces transport operators – both practical and attitudinal – in restoring passenger confidence. The CT sector often provides services for those with fewer transport alternatives, but prospects of getting “back to normal” may be equally distant.



<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/coronavirus-transport-user-information/> & <https://www.fleetnews.co.uk/news/fleet-industry-news/2020/06/02/coronavirus-public-transport-still-too-risky-for-travellers>

Transport Scotland – Sustainable Travel Fund

Scottish Government has announced: “A third round of funding to increase walking, cycling and sustainable travel has been allocated £2 million from the Scottish Government’s active travel budget for 2020/2021. Paths for All’s Smarter Choices Smarter Places Open Fund has now opened for applications. It will continue to support projects which help people make sustainable travel choices. This year, the fund will support the Transport Transition Plan which is part of the Scottish Government’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak. For the first time, the fund will support projects which encourage staying local, making fewer journeys and promoting home working opportunities. This is in addition to the walking, cycling and public transport journey planning initiatives which are typically supported. Grants available are between £5,000 and £50,000 and need to be match funded by public, community and third sector organisations who wish to encourage healthier and greener travel choices.”

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/third-round-of-sustainable-travel-fund-now-open/>



Coronavirus Community Support Fund

Applications are now being accepted (from 20 May) for this significant funding stream. CTs in England may well qualify: “This new funding stream makes available £200m in Government funding that will be aimed primarily at small to medium organisations in England. The Fund has two key objectives:

-) To increase community support to vulnerable people affected by the COVID-19 crisis, through the work of civil society organisations.
-) To reduce temporary closures of essential charities and social enterprises, ensuring services for vulnerable people impacted by COVID-19 have the financial resources to operate, and so reduce the burden on public services.

Grants will allow organisations to meet service costs, where they are experiencing increased demand and/or short-term income disruption. Grants will also allow organisations to refocus services to address more immediate beneficiary needs in light of COVID-19.”

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/news/press-releases/2020-05-20/statement-about-the-coronavirus-community-support-fund>

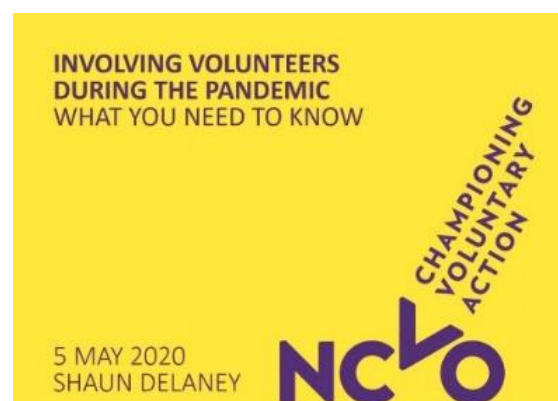
Volunteer Support & Coronavirus

National Council for Voluntary Organisations has produced some useful guidance on how to recruit and support volunteers during the crisis:

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/coronavirus/involving-volunteers>

and YouTube webinars here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=X8Urb64KPhI&feature=emb_logo



Notable CT Responses from Around the UK

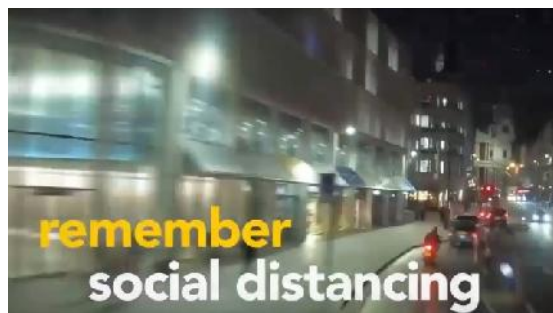
Community Action Decorum has posted a great Volunteers Week tribute to its community transport volunteers on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ty2plrTZWwk>



Bristol Community Transport (HCT Group) has also a COVID-19 themed promotional video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRxzdr5ITq8>



Blackburn & Darwen Community Transport have a short video on YouTube explaining their emergency parcel distribution work with Benefit Mankind

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RT0VKROq6Q>



Driving Licence Expiry Extension
DVLA has extended the validity of driving licences. It has announced that "photocard driving licences that expire between 1 February 2020 and 31 August 2020 will be automatically extended for 7 months from the expiry date. Drivers do not need to take any action as the extension will be automatic and they will be sent a renewal reminder before their 7 month extension ends."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/drivers-granted-7-month-photocard-licence-extension>



Grants Online

We have mentioned Grants Online in a previous edition of the newsletter. It has now updated its list of grant sources with a large number of additional funding programmes "to assist local organisations in responding to the challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic."

Grants Online

<https://www.grantsonline.org.uk/coronavirus.html>

TAS

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