

A stylized, colorful illustration of a community. At the top left is a yellow building with a red cross in a white circle, representing a hospital. Below it is a white van with a red and yellow checkered pattern on its side, carrying a driver and a passenger. To the right is a blue bus with a Wi-Fi symbol above it, carrying several passengers. In the center is a blue building with a 'cta' sign and a person icon. To the left of the bus is a grey building with a sign that says 'I ♥ CT' and three stylized human figures in yellow, red, and blue. At the bottom right is a red building with a sign that says 'POLLING STATION' and two stylized human figures in red and blue. The background is a mix of blue and yellow horizontal bands with various geometric shapes and icons.

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A BETTER FUTURE FOR TRANSPORT:

National Challenges,
Community Solutions

CTA's Manifesto for the
UK General Election 2024

A MANIFESTO FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

In this Manifesto, we outline what the Community Transport movement expects the next UK Government to do to ensure that everyone can access transport which meets their needs.

Whoever forms the next UK Government, they must take transport seriously and value Community Transport fully. They must focus on Community Transport in the same way as other parts of our transport system, like bus or rail. If

they do not, it will come at a high price for our economy, our society and our environment. Our transport infrastructure and services are currently failing too many people and communities across the UK.

Our next government has an opportunity to embrace the cost-effective, flexible and innovative solutions of Community Transport, to remove transport barriers and help nurture a thriving economy and an inclusive society.

WHO WE ARE

The Community Transport Association is a UK charity and membership organisation leading a thriving Community Transport movement. We provide leadership, training, advice and operational support to local charities, community groups and social enterprises in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We support and advocate on behalf of our members, enabling and empowering them to deliver community solutions which achieve social, economic and environmental change.

We promote excellence in the Community Transport sector through training, resources, publications and advice, as well as hosting events, providing consultancy and offering project support. We amplify the collective efforts and voice of our sector, fostering collaboration and building stronger communities.

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WELCOME TO CTA'S MANIFESTO



Our Manifesto for the 2024 UK General Election calls for a new and dynamic partnership between the UK Government, CTA and the Community Transport sector to deliver community solutions to the biggest national challenges we face – a shrinking bus network, an ageing population, the future of the NHS, climate change, the cost-of-living crisis and levelling up.

Community Transport is all about removing transport barriers and providing community solutions to meet unmet transport needs. We know that existing bus services, whether public or commercial, are unable to provide for the needs of everyone equally and equitably. We believe in local, user-led solutions to removing transport barriers. With the right infrastructure support, we can work with our partners in the public and private sectors to help urban, rural and island communities all over the UK to connect and thrive.

Our transport system today excludes many people and communities, especially older people, disabled people, rural residents and deprived households. Many local bus services are inaccessible, unaffordable or unavailable. Community Transport is therefore essential to breaking down exclusion and helping people with mobility needs or protected characteristics to access healthcare, education and social opportunities.

From local buses and dial-a-ride to volunteer car schemes and car clubs, Community Transport plugs gaps in our transport system with cost-effective, flexible and innovative solutions. Our members connect people and communities across the UK through a diverse range of adaptable, cost-effective and innovative services, which are always for a social purpose and never for profit, reinvesting any surplus into their causes and communities.

This Manifesto focuses on 5 priority areas:

1. [Modernising for Growth](#)
2. [Improving Access to Health and Social Care](#)
3. [Investing in Community Solutions](#)
4. [Accelerating Community-Led Climate Action](#)
5. [Delivering a Fair Deal for Volunteers](#)

For each of our priority areas you will read about real life challenges facing our members and their passengers, as well as how they can be solved by the next UK Government. We urge every candidate standing in 2024 to take this opportunity to think about our transport infrastructure more innovatively – the cost of not doing so will be detrimental both for a thriving economy and an inclusive society.

We believe everyone should have access to local transport which meets their needs. If the next UK Government can deliver on the five priority areas and actions outlined in this Manifesto, in five years' time we will be so much closer to that goal.

Dr Victoria Armstrong
Chief Executive Officer


MODERNISING FOR GROWTH


Community Transport has a proven track record of success since the Transport Act of 1985, as well as significant growth potential. However, our diverse and dynamic sector needs a new regulatory framework which is fit for purpose and fit for the future.


Modernisation of the operator licensing regime, reform of the driver licensing regime and greater use of digital technologies are long overdue.




We're calling on the next UK Government to:

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Grant D1 licence entitlements to B licence holders to tackle minibus driver shortages with the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) as the recognised and mandatory standard.
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Create a new requirement for all drivers across public transport, Community Transport and the wider voluntary sector to complete high-quality and recognised accessibility training to raise standards of equity, inclusion and safety.
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Clarify operator licensing guidance for Community Transport to improve the governance and regulation of our sector, including a review of Section 19 small vehicle permits, to meet the needs of our sector and the communities we serve.
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Invest in Community Transport's data and digital capacity and infrastructure to improve efficiency, integration and the passenger experience through Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT), Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and, potentially, Connected and Autonomous Vehicles.

TESTIMONIAL



Name: Sandra McCrory
Position: Charity Manager
Organisation: Larkhall and District Volunteer Group (LDVG)
Region: South Lanarkshire
Nation: Scotland



THE CHALLENGE

"Our Community Transport relies 100% on volunteer drivers, most of whom are retired. Many younger drivers don't have the D1 entitlement on their license, causing us issues with our minibuses and putting pressure on our older drivers to remain with us."

THE SOLUTION

"Granting D1 entitlements to B license holders would open up a much bigger pool of potential volunteer drivers to us. It would also widen the range of people able to hire our buses which would have a positive impact on our self-generated income, which is vital for securing and investing in our charity's transport future."

THE IMPACT

"Having the ability to recruit younger drivers would ensure the sustainability of our services. We need to be able to recruit younger volunteers to fill the places of our older volunteers who would rather step back."

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Community Transport is at the heart of healthy communities. It helps people to live well for longer in their own homes and to access GP surgeries, hospitals, hospices, vaccination centres and care homes.

Yet there is a chronic lack of public investment in and partnership working with Community Transport services. Together we can improve individuals' quality of life, prevent missed appointments, cut NHS waiting lists and save taxpayers' money.



We're calling on the next UK Government to:

- ✓ Deliver a more joined-up, strategic approach to non-emergency patient transport and hospital discharge, which is backed by long-term planning, genuine partnership working and statutory public funding for the Community Transport sector.
- ✓ Create Transport Coordinator roles in the NHS to work with patients, communities, operators and partners to remove transport barriers and ensure everyone has affordable, fair and sustainable access to NHS services and sites.
- ✓ Expand social prescribing partnerships with Community Transport to tackle exclusion, isolation and loneliness and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing.

TESTIMONIAL

Name: Matt Roberts

Position: CEO

Organisation: CT Sussex

Region: South East

Nation: England



THE CHALLENGE

"Our dealings with health tend to be reactive rather than planned. Often, we are asked to provide costs for the provision of a service or project at very short notice, without full information on how long it will last and what funding may be available. We can strike up a relationship with a commissioner, only for them to move on and the whole project we've been working on just fades away."

THE SOLUTION

"A single point of contact and coordination of transport within an NHS Trust or Integrated Care Board would enable us to work proactively and plan services. It could not only save the NHS vast sums of money through reducing missed appointments, but also enable Community Transport to build capacity in the communities served by the hospitals."

THE IMPACT

"A small, targeted investment in Community Transport, led by a coordinated transport team or person to commission projects, would be transformational for patients and the NHS. It would reduce administration time, reduce waiting times for discharge, improve the patient experience and save taxpayer money."

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Small-scale, short-term and fragmented sources of income have created a funding treadmill for Community Transport, which diverts valuable time and resources, and makes it difficult to plan for the long-term or retain and invest in staff and volunteers.

In the face of a shrinking bus network, our sector needs fair funding to keep services affordable, meet rising costs, respond to growing demand and pay all Community Transport employees at least the real Living Wage.



We're calling on the next UK Government to:



Work with devolved and local governments to deliver fair, adequate and multi-year funding for the Community Transport sector, which keeps pace with inflation, contributes to core operating costs and sets flexible conditions, to give more confidence and security for operators, staff, volunteers and passengers.



Ensure Community Transport is part of key government schemes and partnerships, like national strategies, Bus Service Improvement Plans and the £2 bus fare cap.



Enforce the 2012 Public Services (Social Value) Act to ensure the procurement of public services, including transport contracts, considers and evaluates the social, economic and environmental value delivered by Community Transport.



Support and provide start-up funding for local community-owned buses to replace lost routes when commercial, municipal or supported services are withdrawn.

TESTIMONIAL



Name: Jason Donaghy

Position: Manager

Organisation: Fermanagh Community Transport

Region: County Fermanagh

Nation: Northern Ireland



THE CHALLENGE

"Our funding is received from the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland on a year-to-year basis, and often the allocation is not confirmed until well into the financial year for which the funding relates."

THE SOLUTION

"We'd like to see 3-to-5-year funding allocation for Community Transport operators to give us the confidence and ability to improve and plan our provision over the longer-term for the benefit of our passengers, staff, volunteers and the wider transport ecosystem."

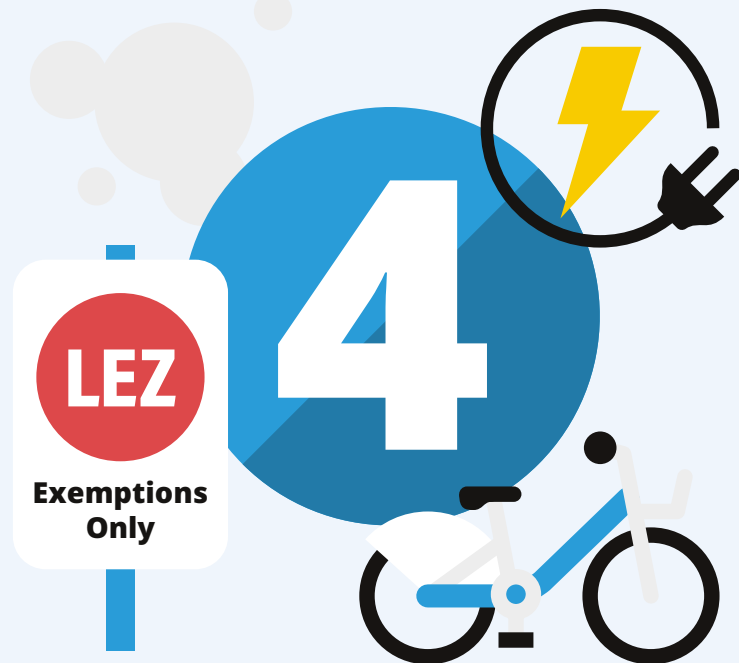
THE IMPACT

"It'd offer confidence and certainty to our highly vulnerable and isolated passengers for whom Community Transport is a lifeline service. We'd be able to collaborate with partners and make longer-term investments and commitments."


ACCELERATING COMMUNITY-LED CLIMATE ACTION


Community Transport will be a key partner in decarbonising transport and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Our sector can make a major contribution by transitioning to electric buses, minibuses, cars and vans, as well as empowering people to travel more sustainably.


We need greater investment in zero-emission fleets, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and community-led climate action, from car clubs to cycling classes.




We're calling on the next UK Government to:

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Work with and invest in Community Transport to design and deliver local sustainable transport solutions which harness the full potential of community-led climate action to increase modal shift, reduce private car use and reduce carbon emissions.
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Invest in Community Transport's transition to zero-emission fleets and engage with the automotive industry to prevent the development of electric minibuses and electric Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles from lagging behind.
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Reform and strengthen the planning system to secure developer contributions for Community Transport, such as community-owned shared bikes and cars, in new neighbourhoods to prevent forced car ownership, reduce car dependency and encourage sustainable and active travel.
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Ensure that local authorities planning Clean Air Zones or Low Emission Zones work closely with Community Transport to develop their plans – including consideration of appropriate exemptions and investment plans for fleet replacement.

TESTIMONIAL



Name: Sachá Petrie

Position: Community Development Officer – Sustainable Transport

Organisation: Awel Aman Tawe

Region: Cwmllynfell

Nation: Wales



THE CHALLENGE

“It is essential that people are supported to shift from private cars to more sustainable options if we are going to save the planet, but the competitive project funding approach pits communities against each other.”

THE SOLUTION

“We need to develop new schemes in partnership with the communities that will use them, and with the experts already in the community who will deliver them, to tackle transport deserts, connect communities and reduce carbon emissions.”

THE IMPACT

“We’re already delivering a step change in low-carbon transport options in our local area. By receiving strategic investment and support from the UK Government, we would be empowered to deliver change and climate action on a much bigger scale, locally and nationally.”

DELIVERING A FAIR DEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Highly-skilled and professional volunteers are the lifeblood of our sector. Many Community Transport operators rely on volunteer drivers. However, a crisis of volunteer recruitment and retention threatens the provision of essential services.

Volunteering builds skills, brings people together and strengthens communities. It should be accessible, affordable and attractive for everyone – regardless of their age, background or income.



We're calling on the next UK Government to:

- ✓ Work in partnership with the voluntary sector, ensure all government departments and agencies understand the value and impact of volunteering and commit to fund the next phase of England's Vision for Volunteering.
- ✓ Conduct an urgent, fair and transparent review of the outdated 2012 Approved Mileage Allowance Payment rate, which is used to reimburse volunteers for the use of their own vehicles, to ensure it reflects the real costs of motoring in 2024.
- ✓ Launch a UK campaign alongside employers, the devolved administrations, local government and civil society to promote, recognise and value Community Transport volunteering and its positive role in our society and our economy.

TESTIMONIAL



Name: Debbie Blowers

Position: Manager

Organisation: Bungay Area Community Transport (BACT)

Region: East Suffolk

Nation: England



THE CHALLENGE

“We have a real shortage of volunteers for our community car scheme, with under 50% of the drivers that we had back in 2019. Volunteers are saying that the AMAP rate means they are losing money and that they are considering giving up. It’s not just the fuel, all other costs for motoring have risen significantly.”

THE SOLUTION

“Raising the AMAP means we can reimburse our volunteers more. It would help attract new volunteers to us and help to retain the ones we have. We feel that passengers do understand and would be prepared to pay more. For those people who struggle to pay, we can normally find additional funding to help them.”

THE IMPACT

“We would have less drivers leaving and be more attractive to new volunteers. We would be refusing less trips of getting people to the hospital or the hairdresser. Many of our passengers say they have no other way of getting places. We are constantly told we are a lifeline for many elderly and vulnerable people. They would be very isolated without our very precious volunteers”.

CALL TO ACTION

Show Your Support

Spread the word and show your support for our Manifesto by sharing it on social media. Remember to tag us [@CTAUK1](#) on X and use the hashtag [#CommunitySolutions!](#)

Join Our Campaign

Visit www.ctauk.org/manifesto2024 to learn more about how you can be part of our campaign for change.

Find Out More

Go to www.ctauk.org/manifesto2024 to dig into the detail and download our discussion papers on each of our five priorities.

Get In Touch

If you've got questions or you'd like to talk to us about collaborating, email policy@ctauk.org to arrange a conversation with one of our team.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thank you to all of our members, stakeholders and supporters who supported the development of our Manifesto.

CTA takes responsibility for all of the content of the Manifesto, including any errors.



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