



CTA Manifesto 2024

Discussion Paper #5

Delivering a Fair Deal for Volunteers

February 2024

www.ctauk.org

Delivering a Fair Deal for Volunteers

National Challenges

The Community Transport sector has always involved a fruitful and powerful collaboration between paid staff and unpaid volunteers. Community-led organisations are well placed to harness the enthusiasm, knowledge and skills of volunteers from a wide variety of backgrounds, who step up and serve the communities they know and love day in and day out.

Community Transport depends widely on volunteers. Almost three-quarters of Community Transport operators rely solely on volunteer drivers. They are the lifeblood of our sector.

This is especially true for community or volunteer car schemes, which play a vital role in providing non-emergency patient transport to hospitals, GP surgeries and vaccination centres and improving access for disabled people and older people.

However, a volunteering crisis threatens the provision of these essential services. Many operators are struggling to recruit and retain volunteers due to the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. A third of our members have had to [cut back services](#), leaving people and communities without the transport they need to keep an appointment, stay active or live independently.

In 2022, three out of every five operators were recruiting and retaining fewer volunteers than six months previously. This reflected a wider [fall in the proportion of the UK population formally volunteering](#) for any community group and volunteer-involving organisation, especially among people under 65.

The decline in number of volunteers has been most significant in the working-age population, leading to a need for younger volunteers. **Since 1997, newly qualified drivers have not automatically received the D1 licence entitlement needed to drive a minibuss.** Consequently, older drivers who leave our sector are not being sufficiently replaced by younger people who can drive a minibuss. [Two-thirds of our members agree that removing the D1 requirement would significantly increase the supply of volunteer drivers.](#)

Volunteering should be accessible, affordable and attractive for everyone – regardless of their age, background or income. But the cost-of-living crisis is also reducing the ability of many people, especially those in lower income households, to absorb some of the costs which can be associated with volunteering.

Inflationary pressures have a significant and negative impact on volunteer numbers. Higher childcare, food and housing costs mean many people must work more hours or take on more jobs to raise their incomes and, as a result, have less time to volunteer. [Fewer volunteers can increase pressures or workloads for those who continue to volunteer.](#)

The rising cost of insurance is increasingly a barrier to volunteering. However, there are also reports from across the voluntary sector about **volunteer drivers struggling to secure or keep insurance** despite [commitments from the industry](#) to not charge extra for volunteer driving.

Overall motoring costs have risen by 47% in a decade, but the outdated Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate, which is used to reimburse volunteer driver expenses, has been [unchanged since 2012](#). **An AMAP uplift is required to ensure no volunteers are left out of pocket for driving for Community Transport**, encouraging and enabling more people to give back to their community and help their neighbours.

Our call for a fair deal for volunteers has been [backed by MPs from all parties and from across the UK](#). Change is also backed by bodies like the [Association for Tax Technicians](#) and trade unions like [Unison](#), as workers generally are hit by rising motoring costs.

Research and analysis by the RAC Foundation suggests that the [AMAP rate should now be 63.4p per mile](#) rather than stuck at 45p.

Community Solutions

We're calling on the next UK Government to work with the NHS and social care providers 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 vehicle in the course of their duties, 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.

Join the Campaign for Change

Make Your Voice Heard

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

Show Your Support

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

Get In Touch

If you'd like to talk or collaborate, email us at policy@ctauk.org to arrange a conversation with one of our team about how we can work together.

Community Transport Association

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