

# OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR TRANSPORT

The Community Transport  
Movement's Manifesto  
for the 2026 Scottish  
Parliament Elections



**cta**  
community transport  
association



# What is Community Transport?



Community Transport is all about community solutions to unmet transport needs. Local charities, community groups and social enterprises across Scotland have stepped up to deliver accessible, affordable and sustainable transport services which plug gaps in our transport system.

From buses in Glasgow and dial-a-ride in Orkney to car clubs in Ayrshire and patient transport in the Borders, Community Transport serves all kinds of communities, from our biggest cities to our most remote villages, and every part of society, from older people and disabled people to children and young people.

Community Transport utilises all kinds of modes, from coaches, buses and minibuses to bikes, cars and MPVs, and enables all kinds of journeys, from commuting to work and attending healthcare appointments to visiting family and friends.



Photos from South Ayrshire Community Transport

# Who are the Community Transport Association?

The [Community Transport Association](#) (CTA) leads a thriving Community Transport movement. We believe everyone should have access to local transport which meets their needs, no matter who they are or where they live.

CTA is a UK charity, a membership organisation and a designated permit-issuing body, which offers expert advice, information and support to our more than 200 members in Scotland.

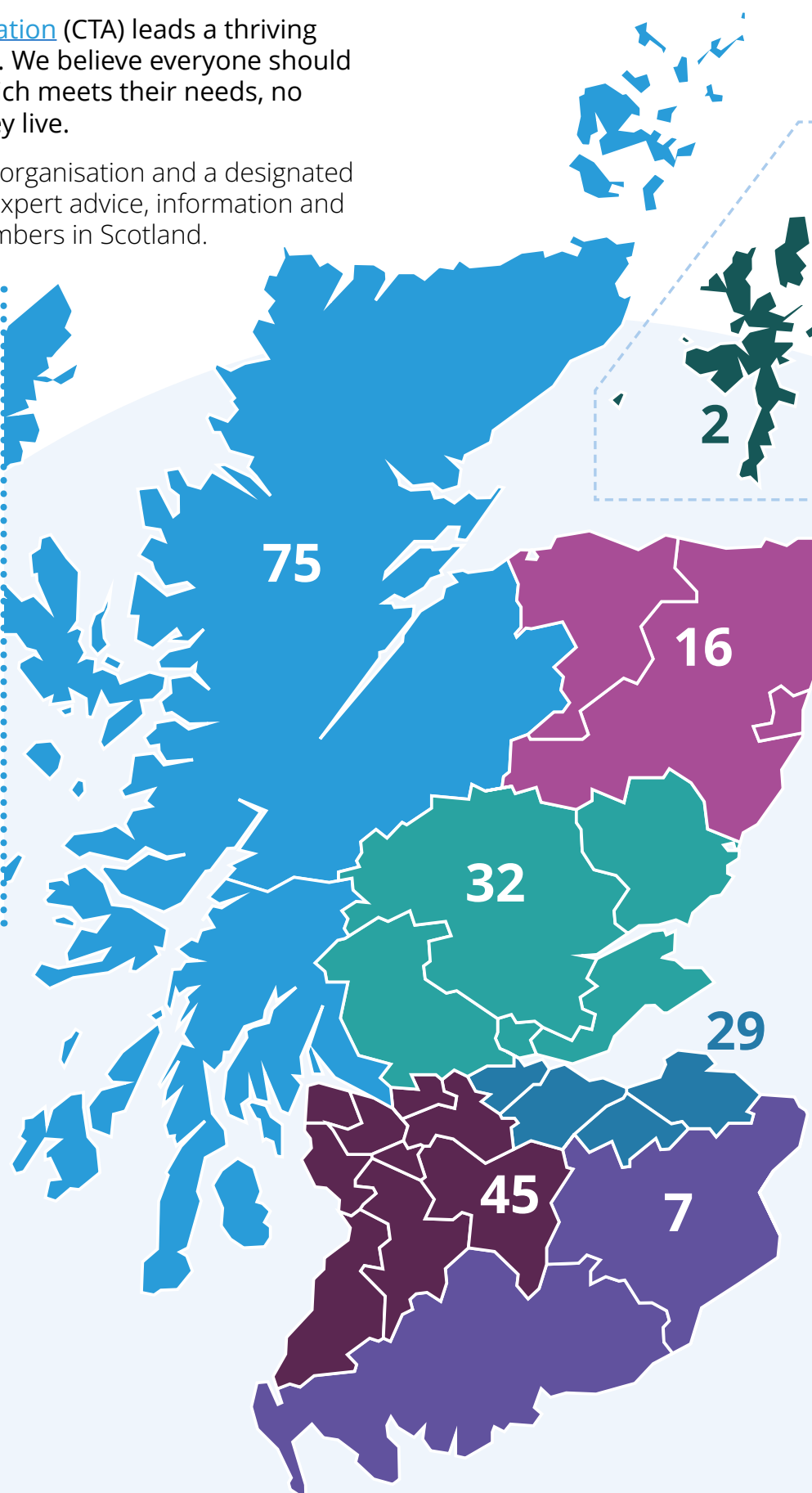
## Our Priorities

Scotland's Community Transport movement is calling on Members of the next Scottish Parliament and Ministers in the next Scottish Government to work with us to:

1. Invest in Community Solutions
2. Improve Access to Health & Social Care
3. Accelerate Community-Led Climate Action

## CTA Members Across Scotland

Highlands & Islands	75
West / Strathclyde	45
Tayside & Central	32
South East	29
North East	16
South West	7
Shetland	2



# Invest in Community Solutions



Community Transport grows local economies and builds community wealth. It helps people to earn and spend money locally through access to schools, colleges, universities and workplaces, as well as high streets and town centres. It retains local control and ownership of transport while creating quality jobs and volunteering opportunities. Yet many operators are struggling to keep their services affordable for passengers due to rising equipment, fuel, labour and vehicle costs.

## We're calling on MSPs and the next Scottish Government to:

- **Deliver fair funding for Community Transport** through local government and public bodies which is multi-year, keeps pace with inflation, contributes to core operating costs and sets flexible conditions;
- **Accelerate progress towards bus franchising** across Scotland which integrates with Community Transport and involves a mix of public, private and non-profit operators; and,
- **Extend the National Concessionary Travel Schemes to appropriate Section 19 services** to end the unfairness of a bus pass in name only for many older people, disabled people and rural residents.

## Why it matters

**81%** of Scottish third organisations report financial challenges ([SCVO – 2025](#))

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**36%** of Community Transport operators in Scotland have a gross annual income of less than £25,000 ([CTA – 2022](#))

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**26%** of Community Transport operators are not confident they will survive the next 3 years ([CTA – 2025](#))



“For more than 40 years, Handicabs Lothian has provided essential, accessible transport for people in Edinburgh and the Lothians who are unable, or find it very difficult, to use other forms of public transport.

“Despite the rising costs of staff, fuel, vehicles, and maintenance, our Service Level Agreements with local authorities have not received any inflation-based uplift since around 2006. This has resulted in a real-terms funding cut of over 51%, placing the sustainability of our services at serious risk.”

Kelvin Cochrane, Chief Executive,  
Handicabs Lothian

# Improve Access to Health & Social Care



Community Transport reduces pressure on social care, cuts NHS waiting lists and prevents delayed discharge. It helps older people to live well for longer in their own homes by enabling access to GP surgeries, hospitals and day care centres, which improves quality of life, prevents missed appointments and saves taxpayers' money. Yet these essential services are underfunded, undervalued and at risk of being overwhelmed by rising demand.

## We're calling on MSPs and the next Scottish Government to:

- **Enforce the statutory duty of NHS Boards to work in partnership with Community Transport** to deliver non-emergency patient transport services under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019;
- **Integrate accessible transport into holistic, person-centred social care packages** to enable people to live well for longer in their own homes; and,
- **Expand the use of Community Transport within prevention and social prescribing** to boost mental and physical health and wellbeing, tackle exclusion, isolation and loneliness and extend healthy life expectancy.

## Why it matters

There are more than

# 1 million

people aged 65 and over in Scotland (NRS – 2024)

Patient transport provided by the Scottish Ambulance Service has fallen by

# 64%

 since 2017 (SAS – 2025)

Community Transport delivers more than

# half a million

journeys to health- and social care-related destinations across Scotland every year (CTA – 2025)

# 12 out of 14

NHS Boards are failing to comply with their 2019 duty to work with Community Transport (CTA – 2025)



“Since 2009, we have enabled access to vital healthcare services for those unable to use public transport or taxis. The demand for our services increased in 2024-25 by 71% and continues to rise.

“Despite our impact, funding remains a major challenge as many funders consider our work a statutory requirement. We urge NHS Boards to fulfil their statutory duty to collaborate with Community Transport and advocate for better integration of accessible transport into social care and public health strategies. This would help vulnerable people across Glasgow and beyond lead healthier, more connected lives.”

Margaret Clowes, Service Manager,  
South West Community Transport



# Accelerate Community-Led Climate Action



Community Transport tackles climate change and supports a Just Transition to net zero. It empowers people to make more sustainable travel choices by delivering local buses, shared cars and shared bikes in urban, rural and island communities, which reduce private car use, air pollution and carbon emissions. Yet a lack of ambition and support from government is holding back community-led climate action.

## We're calling on MSPs and the next Scottish Government to:

- **Expand community-owned sustainable transport options** in every community in Scotland;
- **Invest in Community Transport's transition to zero-emission fleets** and develop Scotland's EV charging network to meet the needs of local operators; and,
- **Reduce private car use** to tackle congestion, improve road safety and reduce carbon emissions, making our villages, towns and cities cleaner, safer and better places to live, work and play for everyone.

## Why it matters

# Transport

is Scotland's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions  
([Scottish Government – 2025](#))

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**77%** of Community Transport operators are taking climate action ([CTA – 2023](#))

.....

A lack of funding is preventing

**53%** of Community Transport operators from transitioning to EVs ([CTA – 2023](#))



"The benefits of community-owned shared transport like ours are massive and key to a Just Transition. LEAP Car Club reduces private car ownership and usage, cuts tailpipe emissions, increases active travel, saves users money, increases connectivity, reduces social isolation, and makes zero-emission transport accessible to more people."

"Greater investment into the sector can only lead to healthier, happier communities across Scotland."

Mike Callaghan, Charity Manager,  
LEAP Car Club





Photos from South Ayrshire Community Transport and Upper Tay Community Transport





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