

'How To' Guide

Running services after lock-down: ten ways you could do things differently

Safe Operation | Mission and Values  

This resource will be useful for: community transport operators of all sizes who are beginning to re-start their services after lock-down.

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact across all areas of our society. Community transport providers have been no different as you have faced significant financial challenges whilst still doing your best to support your passengers. As you begin to recover and restart, here are 10 things that you can do which may consolidate and strengthen your services in the future.

1) Going Cashless

In recent years, we have increasingly heard that we are entering into a [cashless society](#). Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen many shops and services only accepting card payments to help reduce the need to handle potentially contaminated cash. Whilst we know that the use of cash is probably going to continue to decline in the future, we also need to make sure that [people do not become excluded](#) as a result. Examples such as Hay on Wye Dial a Ride's '[Bank Bus](#)' show just how important access to banking services can be and that the journey is just as important as the destination. However, it may still be a good idea for community transport operators to start exploring different payment options for passengers and preparing for the future.

Cashless payment options

[SumUp](#)

- £29+ VAT for a Sum Up Air card reader which connects to a smartphone or tablet.
- £99+ VAT for a Sum Up 3G card reader which is a standalone device (comes with a built-in SIM card with free unlimited mobile data and Wifi connectivity).
- 1.69% fee per transaction.
- No other fixed fees or subscriptions.
- Money deposited into your bank account within 1-3 business days.

[iZettle](#)

- £59+ VAT for a card reader which connects to a smartphone or tablet.
- 1.75% fee per transaction.
- No other fixed fees or subscriptions.
- Money deposited into your bank account within 1-2 business days.

[Square](#)

- £19 + VAT for a card reader which connects to a smartphone or tablet.
- 1.75% fee per transaction.
- No other fixed fees or subscriptions.
- Money deposited into your bank account usually the next business day.

Please check the company websites to make sure you have the most up to date information about exact costs and fees. You may also wish to research other providers to fit your specific needs.

2) Digital Fundraising

Many charities rely on fundraising to help them to continue delivering valuable services. Through the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen many community transport groups launching online fundraising appeals to help mitigate against the loss of income, pay for fixed costs and to purchase essential PPE. Online fundraising platforms can make it simple for individuals to support your organisation. You can find some examples below, and a more comprehensive list of online fundraising platforms on the [Charity Digital website](#).

Digital fundraising options

[Just Giving](#)

- Monthly subscription of £15+ VAT.
- Processing fee of 1.9% + 20p (will collect Gift Aid for a 5% charge).

[Virgin Money Giving](#)

- One off membership fee of £150.
- Platform fee of 2% and processing fee of 2.5% (will collect Gift Aid for free).

[Givey](#)

- No one off costs or subscription.
- No fees (does not automatically collect Gift Aid).

[Total Giving](#)

- No one off costs or subscription.
- No fees (will collect Gift Aid).

3) New ways of fundraising

If possible, having numerous sources of income is always a good idea as it can help to make your organisation more resilient and sustainable. One way to do this is to think about your '[fundraising mix](#)' and how you can increase your income from activities such as [individual donations](#), [events](#) and [challenges](#). You should also consider all of the people within your network, such as trustees, staff, volunteers, passengers and other local community groups, who may be willing to make a donation or to help you promote to your cause.

Ideas for new ways of fundraising

[Donr Text Donations](#)

- Make it easy for people to support you, simply by sending a text.
- 5% fee for every donation. No other sign up costs or monthly subscriptions.

[Amazon Smile](#)

- Register your charity online for free.
- Amazon smile will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases made by people who have selected to support your charity.

[Legacies](#)

Legacies are gifts of money, property or other assets left to an organisation in a will. Whilst they can be a large source of income for a charity, legacies should be handled sensitively and ethically so it is important to do your research.

4) Engaging with local press

We've seen numerous examples of community transport groups being recognised in local news throughout Covid-19. There have been stories about [financial difficulties](#), [volunteers](#), [funding applications](#), [partnerships](#), the [impact of services](#) and many more. In the Summer 2020 edition of *Together*, CTA's quarterly membership journal, we featured an article about putting together an effective press release written by award winning PR consultant Sara Robinson.

"Journalists receive hundreds of emails every day," writes Sara, "so your press release is your opportunity to make yours stand out. Don't worry about puns or trying to be clever – the most important thing is that it tells your story."

[CTA members can read the full article on page 18 of the Summer 2020 issue of *Together* here.](#) We know that community transport operators continually go above and beyond to help some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Effectively communicating that impact beyond our sector is essential for ensuring that community transport receives the funding and support it needs to thrive. Below you can find some links to recent coverage community transport providers have received in the press.

Examples of positive press coverage



[Dial-A-Ride supporting vulnerable in Denbighshire during Coronavirus](#)



[Green Community transport are looking forward to reuniting with their passengers](#)



[Exmouth lifeline bus service to stop loneliness appeals for funds](#)



[Community car scheme to help isolated in the Amman Valley](#)



[Northampton charity in need of financial help](#)



[Spice 4U fundraiser for Ryedale Community Transport](#)

5) Using Social Media

Social media is a brilliant way of sharing important information about your organisation as well as celebrating the work that you do. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen incredible stories being shared about the difference that community transport is making.

Social media is also another way that you could raise funds. [Setting up a Twitter account](#), or [registering your charity on Facebook](#), is a great way to get your message out there and make it easy for your staff, trustees, volunteers and community to ask people to support your cause.

Examples of impactful social media posts



6) Continuing new services

The Covid-19 lockdown meant that many operators had to pause their usual services. [Recognising that there was still a need to provide support to passengers, where it was possible, organisations started to offer new services, such as deliveries of food, shopping and prescriptions.](#) As some normality starts to resume and the demand for emergency support decreases, you may have a greater capacity to think strategically about whether you want to retain some of these services and if so, how they can be operated cost effectively.

Some key questions to consider:

- Does the service fit with the aims and strategy of your organisation?
- Will there still be a demand for the service as lockdown measures are eased?
- What learning can you take from your activities during lockdown to inform the design of the service?
- What is the best way to deliver the service?
- How can you consult with your beneficiaries and stakeholders? (e.g Zoom, Skype).
- What are the risks? (Considering financial and operational risks as well as Covid-19).
- What will the impact be? What are your targets?
- Have you got the capacity?
- Are there other organisations you can work with?
- How much will it cost to deliver?
- How will you recover those costs?
- Can you operate the service safely and legally?

7) Engaging volunteers

We've seen [huge numbers of volunteers](#) coming forward throughout Covid-19. National campaigns, such as the NHS Responders scheme, and locally based calls for support have shown that many people are willing to support their communities. [Moving forward](#), we need to ensure that we can engage more effectively with individuals who are willing to give up their time, whilst also continuing to support valuable existing volunteers. Volunteering opportunities should be [flexible](#) and easily accessible with a [simple and straightforward](#) signing up process. Appropriate checks, safeguarding and training still need to be in place, but this shouldn't feel burdensome and overly complicated to prospective volunteers.

Some key questions to consider:

- What is a prospective volunteer's first experience of your organisation?
- What roles have you got available? Is it just drivers? Or could you recruit administration support, fundraising assistance, social media help or new trustees?
- Are you communicating your values and cause effectively?
- Where are you advertising your opportunities? (e.g. [Volunteering matters](#)).
- What kind of commitment are you looking for?
- What process will a volunteer need to go through?
- Could the process be made more straightforward without compromising safety?
- How will they be valued, supported and trained?

8) Working in partnership

Through the pandemic, community transport groups have found new ways to provide support to those who need them most.

Examples include partnerships with [food banks](#), [local authorities](#), [supermarkets](#), [local businesses](#), [pharmacies](#), [health boards](#) and other [voluntary sector organisations](#). These partnerships have been key to ensuring that support can reach those who need it most. Moving forward, you may wish to consider how these partnerships can be maintained and developed. This could help to open up new income streams, be an opportunity to share resources and could help you to reach more people.

Setting up a successful partnership:

- 1. Purpose** – A partnership should be created with a clear need and purpose.
- 2. Expectation** – The roles and responsibility of each partner should be made clear and structures should be put in place so that there is an understanding of how decisions will be made.
- 3. Management** – There should be regular communication between partners to maintain a trusting and mutually beneficial relationship.
- 4. Evaluation** – There should be ongoing monitoring to ensure the partnership is effective and achieving the desired outcomes.

9) Working with other community transport groups

We know Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the economy and that financial challenges are likely to remain for the foreseeable future. It could be an opportunity for you to build relationships with other community transport operators or groups with similar values in your area to see if working more closely together could be beneficial. There is a [spectrum of options](#) to consider which ranges from informal partnerships to complete mergers. Often mergers are thought of as a consequence of failure. In reality, they are often a positive strategic move which can help your organisation continue its charitable mission more effectively. Mergers can help to provide greater financial sustainability, as well as helping you to provide a better service and avoiding duplication. Sharing resources can also help to reduce staff costs and back office costs. NPC has produced a [useful resource](#) which covers the benefits, risks and models of mergers.

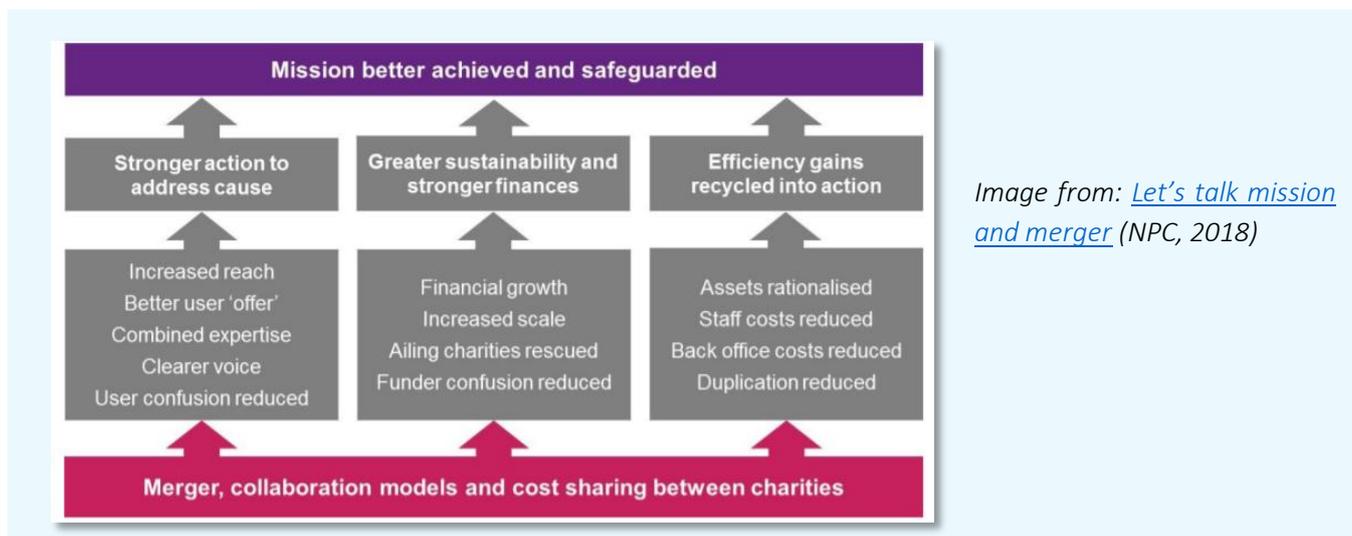


Image from: [Let's talk mission and merger](#) (NPC, 2018)

10) Campaigning and influencing

Another lasting impact of Covid-19 on our society is expected to be to the way which we travel. We have already seen [greater support for active travel](#) and have heard about the [impact on public transport](#). CTA has come together with a number of sustainable transport partners to make a [joint statement](#) about the future of transport post Covid-19. We have also worked with the Transform Cymru Coalition, to set out a [vision for transport](#) in post lockdown Wales. We have committed to continuing this work as we [re-imagine](#) the way that people view community transport going forward and ensure that our sector is part of conversations about the future of transport. As well as supporting CTA to do this, you could also campaign for the sector by lobbying your elected representatives and ensuring that the decision makers in your local community are aware of the difference you are making.

Who represents you?

Visit writetothem.com/ and type in your postcode to easily search for all of the elected officials which represent you. You can even use the website to send your message for you. When contacting an official consider:

- **What are you asking them to do?** - Be clear and specific and try to avoid jargon.
- **Don't expect them to be experts** – Politicians have to deal with a wide range of issues so you may have to help them to understand the value of community transport.
- **Politicians react to their constituents** - Try to get your passengers and beneficiaries to speak up as well.

This list is designed to provide you with some ideas about how you can strengthen your organisation as we emerge from lockdown. Although Covid-19 has been incredibly challenging for the community transport sector, now is an opportune time to capitalise on your strengths and to explore new opportunities. You can always find CTA's latest advice and information on coronavirus at ctauk.org/covid19-guidance/ and if you would like to discuss any of these ideas with us, please email advice@ctauk.org.