Community Transport Campaigning

CTA Guide

2024

www.ctauk.org

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Introduction – Campaigning

At the CTA, we understand there can be bumps in the road and hurdles to navigate when running a community transport organisation. On some occasions, these challenges may not be under your direct control. For example, there could be a situation where a political decision may negatively impact your operations. In scenarios like this, where you may have little or no direct control, you may need to work with external actors or campaign for an organisation/individual to address an issue.

CTA has designed this Campaigning Guide with this and similar situations in mind. It will take you through several key areas of campaigning, such as developing key messages, providing evidence, selecting who to target and how to put your case to them.

It aims to support you and provide campaign ideas if you find yourself in a position where such actions are necessary.

This document is designed for England members, particularly the Who to Target section. However, many areas will also be useful for organisations across the UK.

What is Campaigning?

Campaigning is about an individual or organisation undertaking a series of activities in an organised way to achieve a desired outcome. It is typically undertaken for a political or social purpose. For community transport, this could mean a campaign to the local council to protect funding or make a policy change that makes operating easier.

There is no one set way to campaign. Campaigners have been successful through a range of different methods, such as contacting politicians, organising events and protests, conducting surveys, and, increasingly, through online platforms.

Why Campaign?

There are several reasons that you may engage in campaigning. In some instances, it may be one of the only tools available to influence a decision that is not under your direct control. The reasons for setting up a campaign can differ vastly. However, there are a few common core reasons for campaigning, and these include:

- To raise awareness of an issue or topic
- To change something which may be causing a problem.
- To stop a change from happening, which could have negative consequences.

A few examples in the context of community transport could include:

- Raising awareness of the services community transport delivers in the area and passengers they support with the local transport authority to encourage them to include it in their local transport plan.
- Campaigning with partners against Community Transport budget cuts proposed by a local authority that could lead to vital services closing.

Setting Goals

Summary – Setting campaign goals is essential to direct and focus work. They support decision-making around what tasks need to be undertaken. Using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timebound.) is an excellent way to set goals that consider all the important aspects a good goal should contain.

One of the most important parts of successful campaigning should happen right at the very beginning. It is vital to take the time to think about the problem you are interested in and identify precisely what needs to change. You should look to set a clear and specific goal. An excellent way to think about setting a goal is using SMART.

- **Specific –** Ensure that your goal is not too broad. Having a clear and specific goal helps to direct all your campaign work and key messages.
- **Measurable –** Having a measurable target is helpful for evaluation monitoring and makes it straightforward to see whether you have achieved what you set out to do.
- **Attainable –** This section is about ensuring that your goal is possible to achieve. It does not mean that your goal can not be aspirational and ambitious, but it helps you to think about what is possible and what you can achieve with the budget and resources available.
- **Relevant –** This is about taking a step back and ensuring that the goal relates to your organisation.
- **Time-bound -** It's essential to think about the timeline for a campaign. Is there a date that a decision you want to influence is taken? Additionally, having time-bound targets acts as a motivator to get activities in motion.

Once you have set a goal, this goal should guide everything that you do within the campaign. Every activity you undertake within the campaign should be related to and contribute to achieving the overall goal. You should regularly review your campaign activities to ensure you have kept focus on the goal and are not beginning to drift.

Having a goal will also enable you to think about setting objectives. Setting objectives is about breaking down the goal and thinking about the specific things that need to happen to achieve your goal. Similarly to the goal, these objectives should be SMART targets. Objectives could cover areas like getting a politician to support your campaign and getting an article published, but this will vary depending on the goal and the campaign. Setting objectives should support you

in thinking about what activities and actions you need to take to work towards the campaign being successful.

Collaboration

Summary – It's important to look out for organisations campaigning for similar changes to you. Joining together and combining your voice can strengthen a campaign and increase the reach of key messages. However, be sure you consider that your goals are compatible with those of any organisation you are considering collaborating with.

Once you have your goals, but before fully setting up your campaign, it can be beneficial to research whether other organisations are campaigning or are looking to campaign on similar issues. If other organisations are working in the same space as you plan to, working together on the campaign could be helpful. Having multiple organisations combining voices around one ask can add additional strength to the ask and show that it is not just the feelings of one organisation but is a shared sentiment supported by many. Furthermore, it will be able to amplify the reach of key messages and calls to action as there will be several additional networks to tap into.

Collaboration also brings additional benefits behind the scenes, such as the potential to share the workload of running the campaign, resources, and staff expertise.

Collaboration may not necessarily need to be with other community transport organisations. Collaboration with other sectors could also be beneficial as it demonstrates that the highlighted issue has a broad impact that is not just limited to one sector.

However, while there are clear benefits of collaborating on campaigns, before making the decision, it's vital to ensure that the relevant campaign goals of all organisations truly align and there is a level of agreement between all on how the campaign should progress. Getting involved with other organisations can have risks; it could bring in new priorities and aims, which could lead to a drift away from the initial goal you have set. So, do collaborate, but only when the goals and interests are aligned, and you trust the organisations you are set to work with. Sometimes, where similarities are shared, but goals are not necessarily aligned, a more distanced supportive relationship may be the best path.

[Click here](#) to go to the NVCO website for further discussion of collaboration in campaigning.

CTA's approved mileage allowance payment (AMAP) Campaign is an example of collaboration. As part of this campaign, CTA has reached out to other charities that feel similarly that the low nature of AMAP is hurting volunteers and, therefore, charities. The coalition formed now represents over 20 million volunteers and has received political support from members of all mainstream parties. While CTA is yet to see the change to AMAP, working as a coalition has added strength to the CTA call and enabled us to share data, resources, and expertise.

A simple form of collaboration which may not require a close working relationship is to produce an open letter and invite other organisations to co-sign to express their support for what the letter says. This method is similar to petitions but directed more towards support from other organisations rather than members of the public. [Here is a recent example from NCVO](#) addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt MP. The letter focused on charity funding and was signed by 1,407 organisations.

Names and Key Messages

Summary – Choosing a campaign name and crafting key messages are crucial for effective communication. Clarity and conciseness are essential. You should avoid overwhelming audiences with too much detail. Tailor messages to different audiences, including calls to action and why they should act. Key messages should be central to all campaign communications, reinforcing the campaign's purpose.

Choosing a campaign name and developing the key messages for a campaign is vital for all communications. They help you to communicate consistently and put across to others what you want them to hear and remember.

You must be clear and concise when developing a campaign name and a key message. It can be tempting to include lots of detail, but while these details are important to have available for those who want to know more, too much detail can make a message seem confusing to the public. It is best to have a name and key message that succinctly summarises your campaign.

You can have several key messages, and you should tailor them to the different audiences you are directing them at. It would help if you also included a call to action within these so people know what you are asking them to do, such as signing a petition. It is also a good idea to include 'the why' - Why should someone take the action you call for them to take?

A few simple examples of key messages are below -

Save the School Bus

General Public –
Do you want to support the education of young people in your area? Then, join our campaign to save the school bus by signing our petition!

Politician –
Show your commitment to young people's education. Vote against cutting the school bus!

You could even embed key statistics to strengthen your message, for example -

Protect the Education of Children in Your Community! The Council's proposal to cut the school bus service will abandon 70% of users who have no alternative transport options to reach school. Stand up for our children's education – join our campaign to save the school bus by signing our petition today!

The key messages you develop should form the basis of all communication work around your campaign. Communications should work to push key messages and any calls to action that you have widely and repeatedly.

Who to Target?

Summary – When it comes to choosing who to target, there are a lot of options. However, it's essential to make sure you are targeting the right people who have the power to influence or make the change you want. This section looks at a range of local and national targets, including Local Councillors, MPS and Ministers that you may want to aim to influence in your campaign.

Once you have a key message or ask you want to make, you need to decide who to contact and target with this message. There are many options, and it can be confusing as to who is responsible for what. This section aims to take you through who, as a community transport organisation, you may want to contact about a policy issue you face.

Community Transport Association (CTA) and Community and voluntary sector representatives.

Firstly, as a member or even a non-member community transport organisation, you should always be able to contact the CTA. Our team has specialist community transport knowledge and is here for you. You can contact your development officer or the advice team, who would be happy to discuss and offer specialised and tailored advice to any challenges you face. If your challenge is policy-related, you can contact the CTA policy email at policy@ctauk.org.

It may be the case the challenge is facing multiple other organisations regionally or even nationally. As the national representative of the sector, we can help by tackling the challenge at a national/regional level for and alongside the sector.

You could also get in touch with your local community and voluntary sector infrastructure organisation (CVS/VA), which may be able to support you with local issues. You can find a list of some local CVSs on the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action's (NAVCA's) website here. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the national representative of third-sector organisations, may also be able to help in some instances, particularly if the issue you are facing is being faced by charities nationally.

Health Representatives

At CTA, we know that health-related journeys comprise a large part of all community transport journeys. If your challenge concerns health journeys, getting in touch with your local health systems may prove beneficial. To

understand how to best engage with health, it is essential to understand local health structures, including NHS Foundation Trusts and the components that make up Integrated Care Systems.

Integrated Care System (ICS)

Integrated care systems were legally established in 2022 to deliver a more joined-up approach to health by bringing together local care partners to deliver better patient outcomes. The UK has 42 ICSs you can find yours [here](#).

According to NHS England, ICSs are made of:

- **Integrated Care Boards (ICB)**
  These manage the NHS budget and arrange for the provision of health services in the ICS area.
- **Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP)**
  Produce a strategy for the ICS area.
- **Local Authorities**
  Responsible for social care and public health functions.
- **Place-based partnerships**
  Groups that lead the detailed design and delivery of services in various areas. The partnerships will involve the NHS, local councils, community and voluntary organisations, residents, people who use services, their carers and representatives and other community partners with a role in supporting the health and wellbeing of the population.
- **Provider collaboratives**
  Provider collaboratives will bring providers together to achieve the benefits of working at scale across multiple places and one or more ICSs.

NHS Trusts
An NHS Trust or Foundation Trust is a provider for an area. They are linked to the ICS areas they work within. The Trusts have their budgets set by the ICS and are responsible for delivering services according to ICS plans. NHS Trusts often run hospitals. You can find your local NHS Trust [here](#).

ICB and NHS Trusts Near you.

CTA is working on guidance concerning the structure of local health services in each region of England.

Local Government

Many local services and decisions are devolved and are, therefore, the responsibility of a local council. However, local government structure and establishing who is responsible for what can be confusing.

There are 318 local authorities in England, making up several distinct local government structures. Some areas of England are divided into two tiers: a lower tier comprising district authorities (City and borough Councils) and an upper tier of a county council. In other areas, the two tiers are combined into one tier that covers both responsibilities. The list of single-tier councils comprises Unitary Authorities, Metropolitan Borough Councils and London boroughs.

Local Transport is a devolved issue, with responsibility for transport planning, passenger transport and local highways falling to transport authorities. However, it is important to note that not every local authority is a Transport Authority. Your local Transport Authority will likely be your local County Council/Unitary Authority/ or Combined Authority, whichever your organisation operates within.

You can find your local council(s) [here](#), including what they are responsible for.

In some areas, transport responsibility is passed over to a separate public body. This is the case in London, where Transport for London (TFL) holds this role. This is also the type of set-up chosen by some combined authorities, such as Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, where Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM) and Transport for West Midlands (TFWM) hold responsibility for the area's local transport.

Local Transport Authorities are also linked together at a regional level through Strategic Transport Bodies (STBs). These include Transport for the North, Midlands Connect, England Economic Heartland, Transport East, South West Gateway, Peninsula Transport and Transport for the South East. These bodies are relatively new, and currently, only Transport for the North has a statutory role. However, most of these bodies produce transport plans for their regions to provide a regional direction for local transport authorities and influence the department for transport. CTA works to represent Community Transport at this level.

Local Councillors

The location (Ward(s)) that your organisation operates in will be represented by local councillor(s). If your organisation is in a two-tier council area, this will be from both your district and county council.

Let these councillors know if you have a challenge or are campaigning on an issue. If the problem is something their council is responsible for, they can raise it with colleagues and the whole council. If not, they may still be a helpful voice to have in support.

You should be able to find your local councillors and their contact details on the 'The Council and Democracy' and 'Find your Councillor' sections of your council's page. See an example of Manchester City Council's 'Find Your Councillor' webpage [here](#).

Council Executive / Cabinets / Committee Chairs

All councils have a set of councillors who lead on the council's specific responsibilities. For example, if the council is responsible for transport, the council will have a portfolio holder for transport (or for councils with a committee structure, a Chair of the transport committee).

Therefore, if the council has responsibility for the area that your campaign or issue relates to, you could contact the councillor with lead responsibility for this area.

You can find what each councillor is responsible for on the 'Your Councillor' page of local government websites.

Council officers

Alongside Councillors, Council officers play a large part in what goes on in a council. While the Councillors are the public and democratic face of a council, the council officers work behind the scenes and turn decisions into actions. If your organisation already has a relationship with a council officer, it would be good to contact them if the topic is relevant to their role, or they could signpost you to someone else if it does not fall under their responsibility.

However, if you do not have a relationship already, it would be best to go through the councillors first as, in many cases, officer contact details are unavailable, and a councillor may be able to put you in touch with someone.

It may also be helpful to speak to other community transport operators in your area to see what relationships they have and whether they could share these contacts.

It's essential to be aware that local authority responsibilities are split over many different departments that are not necessarily interlinked. For example, home-to-school transport can fall under the children's department, and daycare-related activities fall under social care. You may need to be prepared to talk to several different contacts within a council and not just a single person in the local transport team.

UK Parliament

While lots of decisions, particularly on transport, are taken at the local level, there are, of course, national decisions that can impact a community transport organisation, including Taxes, BSOG, and specific funding pots. You should contact your local MP, government department or minister if you are campaigning on national issues.

Your MP(s)

You can always contact your MP about a policy issue. However, they are unlikely to have the power to implement change if the topic area is the responsibility of a council, a decision made by the courts or a dispute between organisations.

You could, however, contact an MP to inform them about problems affecting their constituents and ask for their support with a campaign. This is particularly the case if the responsibility for whatever is causing the issues is the responsibility of the UK government.

There are many things that an MP can do if they choose to help, including:
- Making private enquiries of government departments on your behalf, for example, sending a letter to a Minister outlining your issue.
- Making an issue public by raising it in the House of Commons through questions, debates, and motions.
- Some MPs may also pledge their support to a campaign, lend their voice to events, or even write to local media.

When contacting an MP about a policy issue, it is essential to be clear about exactly what your problem is and the impact it is having. It is also crucial that you have a clear ask. Take the time to think about precisely what you want your MP

to do, whether it's a request for a meeting or for them to ask a parliamentary question.

You can find the MP(s) representing the area(s) in which your organisation operates [here](#).

CTA would recommend building relationships with your local MPs or councillors, even if you are not currently campaigning on an issue. Try sending an email introducing yourself and offering a visit or opportunity to get on a service with passengers. Having local politicians know your organisation and its work could make a difference if you ever need their help.

Government

As well as contacting your MP, you can also contact the government and ministers. To contact the government or a minister, you are best contacting the government department(s) that are most relevant to your issue or campaign. If you contact a minister at their parliamentary office, they are unlikely to respond unless you are a constituent of theirs.

When contacting a government department, you should receive a response within 20 days of your correspondence. The responses can include a statement of the government's position on the topic, what actions have already been taken or announced and any available support. In some cases, they may also offer to talk further about the issue; however, this may depend on the size of the issue and the publicity it has achieved.

You can find a list of government departments [here](#). All of the department websites contain contact information.

Select Committees and APPGs

Select committees are set up to report and monitor government work on specific topics. They comprise MPs or Lords who review government work, including spending, administration, and policies. The committees can run inquiries into areas of interest within their field and make recommendations to the government, who then must respond.

You can find more about select committees [here](#).

If you contract a select committee, they may look into your issue or include it within their work.

APPG or All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups formed by MPs or members of the House of Lords who share an interest in a particular topic. They may also permit non-parliamentary organisations or individuals to join. Whilst these groups do not have official parliamentary bodies and have no direct power, they do hold some influence. You can find the complete list of APPGs [here](#).

Both select committees and APPGS help indicate what specific MPs are interested in. For example, you can assume that the members of the APPG for Tackling Loneliness and Connected Communities would be interested in projects which aim to tackle loneliness and connect people to their community. Similarly, those on the Transport Select Committee are there due to their particular interest in transport.

You can use these groups to choose MPs to contact who may have a favourable view of your campaign.

The Opposition

If you are experiencing difficulties making headway with the sitting government nationally or locally, you can also look to the opposition parties who may challenge the sitting government on your behalf. Opposition parties will likely have members responsible for shadowing areas of government responsibility.

Methods

Summary - There is a vast range of methods you can use in a campaign, from contacting politicians to engaging the public, utilising media coverage, organising events, and participating in consultations. These methods may vary in effectiveness depending on your campaign's objectives and target audience. Each different way can offer unique opportunities to raise awareness, gain support, and influence decision-making.

There are a range of forms that campaigning can take, too many to talk about them all here. But this goes to show the sheer quantity of available options. The methods mentioned here are just a snapshot, so do look around and do some research of your own if you want details of further options.

Contacting politicians and departments

Contacting politicians is a crucial method of campaigning if the topic is policy-related, as on these matters, politicians either have a direct influence on a policy, contact with those that do, or the platform to highlight the situation.

As the section on who to target shows, there are a range of politicians you could contact, and it is important to target the right politician for the right issue. You can use the previous section of this guide to support you in making this decision.

The preferred method of contacting an MP or government department is writing a letter and sending it by email. This way, you will have a record of what communications you have sent to MPs and government departments.

When emailing a politician, it's advisable to be clear and concise so office staff can read and quickly understand the situation. Additionally, it is essential to include what you want the politician to do for you. There may be little value in emailing a politician to inform them of a situation. It would be best if you used the opportunity to ask them to take action in some way, whether this is a meeting, asking them to make a specific decision, for them to ask a question of someone taking a decision, use their connections to put pressure on a decision or put you in contact with other politicians closer to the decision.

If you manage to secure a meeting, it will be an excellent opportunity to talk to them about your campaign and the reason why you are doing it. If the politician is onboard, it would also be a chance to talk through what they can do for you and listen to any advice that they have for the future direction of your work.

Getting Public Involved

For some campaigns, working to gain public support may not be necessary, as it could be the case that simply letters and meetings with politicians and others of influence are enough to achieve the desired goal. However, in some cases, gaining public support and involvement could be crucial. Public support can add weight to the campaign and demonstrate that a wider array of people wants what you are calling for. After all, politicians are accountable to voters, particularly those who live in their constituency/ward. So, showing that there is support/opposition to a decision can pressure politicians to act to ensure they keep their voters on side and secure their position. This is particularly the case in the run-up to elections when political seats are up for grabs and politicians attempt to secure voters' support. However, you must follow the Charity Commission's campaigning and political activity guidance. This guidance is explained further in the legal considerations section of this document.

One common and effective way to demonstrate your public support is using a petition/E-petition. Petitions are requests for someone/an organisation to do something where other people who agree with your request can also put their name to / sign to signal their support. A few sites online enable you to set up a petition targeting a specific person/organisation for free. These sites include Change.org and petition.parliament.uk. These sites allow people to show their support for your campaign in a couple of clicks. You can share the link to the petition's webpage on social media and use a QR code for printed material.

You can see examples of successful petitions on change.org's website here.

The online nature of petition platforms like change.org removes many of the barriers that exist in traditional activism, making it easy for people who may not be able or have the motivation to get involved in a more demanding form of campaigning to engage with and support your campaign.

If you decide to organise a petition, you must use it. If the petition gets many signatures, you must ensure that the person/organisation you are directing the petition at is aware of it. So be sure to send them the petition explaining how what you are asking for has widespread support. In local politics, the number of signatories of a petition may not need to be in the tens of thousands as even a couple thousand votes could influence the result in a local council.

Simply setting up a petition may not be enough. If you want to have the public on board, you must share this round and ensure that as many people as

possible hear what you are doing. Again, many ways exist to capture and demonstrate public support for a campaign. There are traditional methods, such as using your existing network through word-of-mouth through friends, passengers, and their families. Additionally, you could use leaflets in prominent places in the community or go door-to-door. It is, however, more common now that a bulk of campaigning activities are carried out through social media, which has the benefit of being cheaper and has the potential to reach a wider audience faster than many traditional methods.

You can use social media to share your key messages through your pages and encourage followers to share your posts. Furthermore, you can use community groups and hashtags to expand the reach of your message further and promote interaction. You can also share videos focused on your campaign through social media, which can be more engaging for many audiences.

You could also consider using your existing networks to expand your reach. Email and newsletters are a great way to mobilise your existing networks and contacts because they are a direct line of communication. It can be as simple as email explaining your campaign and asking them to share it.

CharityComms publishes [blogs](#) aiming to guide and provide tips for charities using digital communication, and they also [highlight successful examples](#) that could be used for inspiration.

Developing a social media plan detailing when, what, and where you will post over a certain period can be helpful. Having a plan ensures communications through social media are consistent, making it more likely that your key message will stay in the target audience's mind.

Media

Whilst not integral to all campaigns, the media can play an essential part in a successful campaign. If you manage to secure media coverage, it can push out your message to a wide audience through often well-trusted outlets.

The most likely way to get coverage for a campaign is through local media. Local media outlets are always looking for stories that interest people in their area. These outlets include local print and online news media and local radio stations. You can find a list of local news outlets [here](#) and local BBC radio stations [here](#). These lists are not exhaustive, so do look around for further publications and local journalists if you know them.

When contacting a journalist, you should aim to make their job as easy as possible, so concisely inform them of the situation and what you want them to do. It is good practice to send a press release to online and printed news media. A press release is a short document containing a story an organisation wants the public to know about. The press release is then sent to journalists in the hope they will publish the story. CharityDigital has written a short guide to writing press releases [here](). You can find a range of other guides and templates online.

If you secure media coverage in any form, you should ensure that you use that platform to put across your campaign's key messages and make a call to action, such as signing your petition, attending an event, or asking people to contact their councillor/MP.

Media coverage played an important role in CTA's and Northern Irish operators' response to proposed funding cuts to the community transport sector in Northern Ireland in 2023. CTA's Director for Northern Ireland made several media appearances on TV ([BBC]() and [ITV]()) and Radio. Coverage on these platforms informed people of the situation, and the emotive nature of the operator's testimonies put additional pressure on decision-makers. This, alongside other campaign methods, helped ensure that the community transport sector's campaign succeeded and that funding was continued.

Events

While a lot of campaigning now takes place online and through social media, there can still be a lot to gain from organising campaign events. Campaigners still often choose to use this in-person campaign method, and they do so through a range of different types of events that have different specific aims. For example:

- Fundraising Event – can be used to obtain donations that can be used to finance campaign activities.
- Public meetings – can be used to invite local politicians and other people of influence to come and listen and discuss a topic with you and interested members of the public.
- Public Rallies - can be used to invite supportive members of the public and other supportive stakeholders/politicians to come to speak about a problem and listen to others. This aim is to motivate people to act.
- Demonstration – These are physical public expressions of opinion, and they can take the form of a group marching or standing together. They

are used to demonstrate a scale of public support for a cause or objection to something.

Any events will likely require a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that people know it is happening and are motivated to attend. Additionally, it is important to consider any additional requirements, such as acquiring the necessary licences. In some cases, you may need to inform local authorities or the police (Example – [Greater Manchester Police event reporting page](#)).

Organising events can be costly and time-consuming, and with the existence of online platforms, they are not necessarily needed for every campaign. Before committing to an event, you should consider whether it is necessary while keeping your campaign goals and objectives in mind.

Consultations

When making a decision, the government and local authorities may be required or may choose to carry out a public consultation. Consultations are often conducted when budget cuts are proposed. A consultation provides an excellent opportunity to have your position on a policy officially recorded. So, if the policy being consulted will impact your organisation, it is important to respond.

Most consultations will be published alongside an info document which sets out the proposed changes and asks a set of questions that they would like you to answer in the response. Do attempt to answer all the questions relevant to you, however you do not need to address all questions. Additionally, if you want to address something that has not been asked, you can add this to your response. In your response, you should keep a formal tone and talk about the impact of the proposal on your organisation and, importantly, your passengers and their families. It is also vital to ensure you provide evidence, such as key statistics, to highlight the overall impact and case studies to add context and a personal touch.

When submitting your consultation response, you can use this as an opportunity to ask for a meeting to discuss your response with those in charge of the consultation. It may also be beneficial to ask the supporters and beneficiaries of your organisation/campaign to respond to the consultation, as it would mean the authority receives more responses supporting your position.

See here for an example of [CTA responding to a budget consultation in Hampshire.](#)

Evidence

Summary – Backing up key messages, claims and asks with evidence adds strength and credibility to a campaign. It's good to consider a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data provides those key numbers and hard-hitting statistics, and qualitative data adds context and an emotive personal touch. You can source this data from a range of means, including secondary desk-based research and primary research methods such as surveys and case studies.

The voices of community transport are undoubtedly valuable in of themselves; however, having the evidence to back up what you are saying is vital in adding extra weight and credibility to what you are calling for. This evidence can come in various forms, and it's good to have a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to evidence something you want to say.

Through quantitative evidence, you can demonstrate the scale of an issue, such as what could be lost or gained overall through a change. On the other hand, qualitative research, such as case studies, can show how specific people are affected by something, allowing people to contextualise an issue and empathise on a personal level.

Different audiences may prioritise different types of evidence; for example, council officers are most likely to want numerical evidence of overall impact, whereas communication professionals may prefer the stories of people. So again, it's good to have a mix of different types of evidence available to share with stakeholders.

While some of the evidence you need may be readily available, other pieces may require further research. There are several ways you could get this evidence.

Firstly, you could conduct some secondary research to see whether the evidence you seek already exists due to previous work from others. For example, DfT and the Office for National Statistics regularly report on a range of general transport statistics. Furthermore, you could look at what CTA has available. CTA regularly collects data on the community transport sector, and we often share this openly. We also will be happy to point you in the right direction to find other useful secondary sources if we know of any.

You could also collect some evidence yourself by using tools like surveys and case studies and recording data on your service delivery. For example, if your

organisation is facing cuts to funding, you could survey your passengers about what the service means for them and how the loss of it would impact their lives. Members are welcome to contact CTA at England@ctauk.org if they require advice about collecting data.

Once you have the evidence, you need to use it and include it when communicating with key stakeholders like politicians and other communications like social media. Evidence will add credibility and strength to your messaging. Where possible, headline figures could be embedded into the key campaign messages.

Legal considerations

Summary – Charities are allowed to campaign and engage in non-party political activities that are related to their charitable purposes. However, you must follow the campaigning guidelines set out by the Charity Commission. This section will take you through the key points of the campaigning guidance.

In the UK, charities are allowed to engage in political activities and campaigning, but some regulations have been put in place to prevent the misuse of charitable status.

The Charity Commission provides guidance to help charities understand the legislation and navigate political activities and campaigning. Here are some of the key points:

Permissible Political Activities:
- Charities are permitted to participate in non-party political activities that support their charitable purposes. This can include advocating for specific policies, raising awareness on relevant issues, and engaging in public debate.

Non-Partisan Stance:
- Charities must maintain a non-partisan stance when conducting campaigns or political activities. They must remain independent and ensure that they treat parties and candidates equally. This means charities must avoid supporting or opposing any political party or candidate.
- For charities, activities that explicitly endorse political parties or candidates, such as donations or expressing support for a party, are restricted.

Campaigning Restrictions:
- Charities are not allowed to have a political purpose, meaning a charity cannot work to achieve its aims solely through political activity.
- Additionally, charities are only allowed to engage in campaigning or political activities if they are relevant to what the charity does and further the delivery of their charitable goals.

Political Activity During Elections:

- While the regulations on charities and political activity are always relevant, there is particular emphasis on these rules during the pre-election period, also known as Purdah.
- During Purdah, which typically begins six weeks before an election, charities can still campaign and influence views on particular issues or policies. However, they must be careful that their activity is not seen to be influencing voters' choice of party in any way.
- For example, a charity cannot compare its views negatively or positively with those of a political party or candidate.

Maintaining Charitable Status:
- If charities engage in political activities and do not follow the associated legal requirements, they risk losing their charitable status.

Charities must be familiar with the guidance before engaging in campaigning or political activities. Understanding and adhering to these laws is crucial for UK charities to effectively advocate for their causes while maintaining compliance with the law.

Read the full guidance from the Charity Commission here.

Further Information

Contact information:

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The Community Transport Association (CTA) is the UK charity that represents and supports providers of Community Transport. Our 1200 members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are local charities and community groups which provide transport services always for a social purpose and never for profit. We believe in accessible, inclusive and sustainable transport for all.