

Who are the CTA?

The **Community Transport Association** (CTA) champions, connects and supports the local charities and community groups of the UK's Community Transport sector, including over 160 members across Scotland. Our mission is accessible, inclusive and sustainable transport for all.

What is Community Transport?

The Community Transport sector is all about community-owned and -led solutions to unmet local transport needs. Our members help to connect people and communities through a diverse range of adaptable, cost-effective and innovative services, which are always for a social purpose and never for a profit.

Community Transport has a large presence in Scotland with schemes in urban, rural and island communities in 30 of Scotland's 32 local authorities. The sector serves over 100,000 people every single year – especially older and disabled people, and those in deprived households or marginalised neighbourhoods, who are most likely to be underserved or excluded by public transport or least likely to be able to afford or own a private car. Most Community Transport vehicles are wheelchair accessible and drivers are professionally trained to assist passengers with health or mobility issues.

Community Transport facilitates modal shift from private cars to demand-responsive shared transport services – such as dial-a-ride, electric car clubs, transport to health & social care, school transport, 'wheels-to-work', minibuss hire and bicycle or e-bike hire – as well as scheduled bus services on routes which are not commercially viable.

Accessibility, inclusion and sustainability are at the heart of Community Transport. Our members are practical and passionate problem solvers who deliver services which fight poverty and inequality; tackle isolation, exclusion and loneliness; and reduce carbon emissions.

As we recover from COVID-19, Community Transport is more important than ever!

What can you do?

We're calling on all candidates in May's Scottish local elections to commit to...

Protect funding for local Community Transport schemes

Many Community Transport operators receive essential financial support from their local authority through grant funding or being commissioned to deliver contracted services. The pandemic has severely impacted passenger numbers and fares income, so it has been vital that this support has been largely protected during the pandemic. Many services survive on small, short-term grants, and rely on committed volunteers and key workers, without the certainty, funding and support they need to develop, plan and thrive.

With rising fuel, labour and vehicle costs as well as growing demand from an ageing population, it is essential that local councillors protect this funding and ensure fair, adequate and multi-year funding for Community Transport to protect its long-term future.

Collaborate with Community Transport to deliver net zero

Local authorities must recognise Community Transport as a key partner in delivering their net zero targets. The sector is already leading the way to net zero by reducing private car use through shared transport services and reducing carbon emissions through zero-emissions vehicles.

Local councillors should support the sector's transition to accessible electric vehicles by ensuring that local and national funding and the public vehicle charging network meets its needs. Councils should partner with community groups and Community Transport operators to design and deliver sustainable transport solutions, from electric car clubs to e-bike hire schemes, which empower communities, accelerate modal shift and improve local air quality.

Build sustainable communities

Local planning policy must be fit for purpose for the Climate Emergency and aligned with the 20-minute neighbourhoods agenda. It must ensure that commercial and residential developments do not build-in car dependency or lock-in carbon emissions. Local councillors must make planning decisions which are compatible with net zero.

Local councillors should leverage Section 75 planning obligations to require developers to invest in sustainable transport and communities. Developer contributions could be leveraged to fund Community Transport schemes, like shared car schemes, in the new neighbourhood or local area. Every shared car takes 10 private cars off the road.

Find out more:

Find out more about Community Transport, or connect with your local scheme, by visiting www.ctauk.org, following us @CTAUK1 or contacting David Kelly, our Director for Scotland, via david.kelly@ctauk.org.

Invest in transport to health & social care

Transport to health & social care is a major focus for Community Transport. Many schemes support older people, disabled people and those with chronic conditions to access GPs, hospitals, dentists and pharmacies, but often without any public funding. During the pandemic, they have gone above and beyond to help vulnerable people to get tested, vaccinated and boosted.

Community Transport tackles exclusion, isolation and loneliness by helping older people to access amenities and services or visit family and friends. The sector's lifeline services enable people to live happier, healthier and more independent lives for longer in their own homes and communities, reducing long-term costs for councils through prevention and early intervention.

Local councillors should ensure that Community Transport is properly funded and integrated into the planning and delivery of services by Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs). Local councillors should push for transport coordinators in every HSCP and encourage their local GPs, dentists and pharmacies to signpost patients to local Community Transport schemes.

Reform procurement and commissioning

Community Transport tackles inequality by providing accessible, affordable transport for people and communities who are underserved by the commercial sector. Investing in community-led solutions builds community wealth, strengthens local economic resilience and supports inclusive growth.

Local authorities should review and reform their procurement strategies to prioritise not-for-profit providers and deliver social value in the commissioning of transport services.

What Next?

Shape your manifesto

Shape your local election manifesto to ensure your party is committed to working with Community Transport and giving the sector the support it needs – and deserves.

Show your support

Show your support for Community Transport by sharing our #CTpledge on social media:

I believe in sustainable transport for all. That's why I'm pledging to invest in #CommunityTransport to help [#Glasgow / #Stirling / #Highland / etc] recover from #COVID19, tackle inequality & deliver #netzero if elected on 5 May

@CTAUK1's #CTpledge: bit.ly/3pjUDhj