



Newsletter

Issue No. 1 Spring 2006

Welcome

CTAI awarded INTERREG funding to establish cross-border advice & information service.

THE COMMUNITY Transport Association of Ireland and the Community Transport Association UK have joined together to manage a new cross border advice and information project, based in Stradone, Co. Cavan. The two year project is funded by ICBAN – the Irish Central Border Area Network through the EU INTERREG IIIA Programme with funding of €195,861 of the total project cost of €261,148 and started at the beginning of October 2005.

The geographical area covered by the project is Donegal (South & West), Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan (North), Fermanagh, Omagh, Armagh, Cookstown and Dungannon & South Tyrone. However, services will also be provided to groups and organisations throughout Ireland.

The project involves supporting local transport operators through handling advice and information enquiries, organising a programme of quality audits, developing advice notes, good practice guides, training materials and a training programme and improving co-operation across the border.

The Project Team consists of Graham Lightfoot, Advice & Information Officer and Damien O'Neill, Project Assistant. Graham

has had nearly 30 years' experience of working with community-based and public passenger transport schemes in Ireland, Britain and Australia. His work in community transport has been at all levels, as project volunteer, project co-ordinator, local and national committee member, local authority officer, national development officer and consultant.

Damien will continue to work part time as the co-ordinator of the South West Cavan Rural Transport Initiative and his past experience includes running his own transport company for 12 years operating both passenger and freight services in the border area.

The Steering Group comprises Gerry O'Brien (CTAI Chairperson and Manager of Accessible Transport Southside, Dublin), Molly Buckley (CTAI Treasurer and Executive Chairperson of the Irish Wheelchair Association), Laura Ward (CTAI Company Secretary and Manager of Clare Accessible Transport), Tony Regan (Transport & Mobility Consultants – Ireland), Bryan Myles (CTAUK Director for Northern Ireland) and Mary O'Neill (Chairperson of CTANI and Manager of Dungannon & District Community Transport).



The project team comprises Graham Lightfoot, (left) Advice & Information Officer, and Damien O'Neill, (right) Project Assistant, seen here with Keith Halstead, (centre) CTAUK Chief Executive during CT Week in Northern Ireland.

Contact details:

Stradone Community Centre,
Stradone, Co. Cavan.
Tel/fax: (+353) (0)49 432 3849
E-mails:
advice@communitytransport.ie
Graham@communitytransport.ie
Damien@communitytransport.ie
www.communitytransport.ie (under construction)

CTAI Annual General Meeting

Thursday 9 March at 6pm

City West Hotel, Saggart, Co. Dublin
Followed by 5th Anniversary Dinner at 7.30pm. (More details soon)

Community Transport Training Day

Friday 10 March 0930-1600

City West Hotel, Saggart, Co. Dublin
Coincides with *Access & Mobility Exhibition 10/11 March*
See back page for details

NI Mobility Exhibition 06

Friday/Saturday 19/20 May

The Odyssey Arena in Belfast
Details of CTAIS & CTAUK
Training sessions to follow.

Department of Transport launches draft Sectoral Plan

THE DEPARTMENT of Transport launched its draft Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005 at Dublin Castle on 13 January. This coincided with a conference on accessible transport with speakers from the Department of Transport, the Taxi Commission, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and the Department for Transport in Britain.

The draft Plan covers all forms of public transport with the exception of urban based demand responsive door to door transport services, which, according to Ed O'Callaghan from the Department of Transport, are not deemed to be the responsibility of the Minister for Transport. However, other speakers outlined how such services have been considered as part of the mix of public transport elsewhere in Europe and North America. Indeed many of the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) groups, funded by the Department of Transport, provide demand responsive door to door transport services. In Northern Ireland such services in Belfast and Derry are funded under the Transport for People with Disabilities Programme administered by the Department of Regional Development, which is responsible for public transport funding, including the Rural Transport Fund.

Organisations operating these services, such as Vantastic and Accessible Community Transport Southside, are currently funded by the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform and/or under the Social Economy Programme. The Taxi Commissioner outlined that there is likely to be a category of accessible taxi and one of accessible hackney. It might be possible for the door to door transport services to come into the latter category and the Taxi Commission is the responsibility of the Minister for Transport.

The section of the draft Plan covering the RTI addresses two particular issues relevant to the operation of accessible vehicles. The first concerns the criteria for determining the threshold at which the lower VRT of €50 is charged. The current criteria are based on an assessment of the seating capacity of the vehicle. Vehicles with over 13 seats qualify for the flat rate of €50. Vehicles with 13 seats or less are assessed at the rate of 30% of their market value. The criteria do not acknowledge removable seats in an accessible vehicle. This assessment takes the seating capacity of such vehicles to below the number of seats at which the VRT rate for buses of €50 apply even though the buses might actually carry 13 or more passengers. The draft Plan states that the Department will consult with the Department of Finance on this issue.

The CTAI looks forward to a change in the VRT regulations to recognise the problem that the current criteria cause to groups trying to operate inclusive services for all. It will be proposing that the VRT regulation be revised to move the

VRT threshold for the charge of €50 for buses into line with the threshold between small and large PSVs, i.e. 9 passengers and to include removable seats where the sole use is to enable operators to provide an integrated service for people with disabilities including wheelchair users. This would mean that accessible taxis and hackneys would also qualify for the €50 charge.

The second issue concerns the Construction, equipment and use regulations. The draft Plan states that the Department will examine the scope for resolving an anomaly whereby vehicles owned by charitable organisations are allowed to use any seat configurations on their vehicles, whereas a vehicle used for commercial purposes must comply with precise PSV regulations as regards seat configuration.

CTAI will be proposing harmonisation of the Construction, equipment & use regulations which would also address other issues which need to be resolved to enable any passenger vehicle covered by the new regulations to be used for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. This will greatly assist the RTI groups and other groups in urban areas, which are exploring the potential availability of vehicles owned by voluntary groups as part of brokerage arrangements. ■

Biofuels feasibility study

CTAI has just completed an initial report for Clare Accessible Transport, which will be adapting two of its minibuses to operate with biodiesel. The feasibility study, funded by Clare LEADER, includes the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the two minibuses over the next few months. It will conclude with a report on the use of biofuels, which will result in the production by the CTAIS of a good practice guide.



This is being done in the context of both national and EU developments. The Irish Government has granted excise duty relief to a number of biofuel producers and the European Commission has proposed new legislation aimed at contributing towards the creation of a market for "clean" vehicles in order to reduce pollutant emissions in the transport sector. By requiring public bodies to earmark a quarter of their annual procurement requirements to such vehicles, the new European rules will make it possible to give manufacturers the assurances they need in order to develop these vehicles for a wider market. ■

Speed limiters compulsory on all buses

TRANSPORT MINISTER, Martin Cullen T.D., has announced Regulations extending compulsory fitment of speed limiters to additional categories of motor vehicles. The Regulations, the *European Communities (Installation and Use of Speed Limitation Devices in Motor Vehicles) Regulations 2005*, provide that speed limiters must be fitted to all passenger-carrying vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats.

The Regulations implement Directive 2002/85/EC on the installation and use of speed limiters in motor vehicles. Since 1994, in accordance with the *Road Traffic (Construction, Equipment and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 1993* (which implemented Directive 92/6/EEC) buses with a maximum mass exceeding 10 tonnes must be fitted with speed limiters.

Vehicles coming within the scope of compulsory speed limiter control for the first time as a direct

consequence of the *European Communities (Installation and Use of Speed Limitation Devices in Motor Vehicles) Regulations 2005* include passenger-carrying vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats with a maximum mass not exceeding 10 tonnes first registered on or after 1st January 2005.

Under the Regulations, speed limiters must be set so that passenger-carrying vehicles cannot exceed 100 km/h. However, the maximum speed limits applicable to these vehicles are lower than these values: single deck buses are subject to a maximum speed limit of 80 km/h with double-deck buses subject to a maximum speed limit of 65 km/h.

It is an offence to use a vehicle (as described above) in contravention of the Regulations. Both the driver and the owner of the vehicle found to be in breach of the Regulations face a fine of up to €3,000 or a prison term of up to 3 months or both. ■



A Speed limiter like the one shown here must be fitted to all passenger carrying vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats.

Irish Cross Border CT Forum

THE COMMUNITY Transport Advice & Information Service (CTAIS) has convened a cross border forum involving community transport groups in the Irish Central Border Area. The first meeting took place in the CTAIS office in Stradone, Co. Cavan on 24 January and was attended by staff from 6 of the 12 groups in the area. A number of issues were discussed and the CTAIS is now working with the groups to explore the potential for cross border services. ■



Members of the cross-border CT Forum

Training Needs Review

THE COMMUNITY Transport Advice & Information Service (CTAIS) has circulated a questionnaire to community transport groups throughout the Republic of Ireland and to the 6 rural community transport partnerships in the Northern Ireland part of the Irish Central Border Area. This is part of the preparation of its Training Programme for 2006-2007 and asks questions regarding training activities and training needs. It also includes questions on the skills of staff as the CTAIS is setting up a peer to peer network in order to develop a technical assistance network involving people within the CT sector. ■



Community Transport Training Day

10 March, 0930-1600 at the City West Hotel, Saggart, Co. Dublin



The Community Transport Advice & Information Service (CTAIS) is holding its first national training day to coincide with the *Access & Mobility Exhibition*. The programme for the day is set out below and a booking form is enclosed. The programme includes practical workshops and briefing seminars and is aimed at all of the various actors involved in making community transport

groups successful organisations. There will be time allocated to visit the Exhibition, which includes vehicle converters, software providers and equipment suppliers.

Delegate fees:

CTAI Members: €50 per person. Non Members: €75 per person
The fees are inclusive of tea/coffee and light lunch.

Programme

0930 - 1230

Workshop 1: Vehicle brokerage

This workshop will cover the issues around the sharing of vehicles owned by organisations with each other and with other groups which do not own a vehicle. It will look at the barriers and benefits and through role play will help participants to overcome the barriers and highlight the benefits on their way to establishing a formal agreement to make their vehicles more widely available, thereby spreading their fixed costs.

Target Group: Staff and/or committee members of local and community development agencies, community groups, community transport groups and voluntary groups operating transport.

0930 - 1230

Workshop 2: Fire and emergency evacuation

This workshop will demonstrate the principles of vehicle evacuation under emergency conditions with passengers of reduced mobility. It will cover the "golden" rules, risk assessment, fire prevention, a practical demonstration and a role play with a smoke machine.

Target group: Drivers and passenger assistants in community transport groups, voluntary organisations operating transport and private bus operators.

0930 - 1230

Workshop 3: Risk management

This workshop will show the best practice in assessing and evaluating risks on the road and the introduction of new road risk management schemes within organisations.

Target Group: Staff and/or committee members of local community transport groups, voluntary groups operating transport and private operators.

1230 - 1400 Light lunch and visit to Exhibition

1400 - 1600

Workshop 4: Manual handling

This workshop will look at 24 hour back care, basic anatomy of the spine, legislation and passenger assistance techniques with and without using items of handling equipment. Delegates will

be asked to complete a health declaration form before attending.

Target group: Drivers and passenger assistants in community transport groups, voluntary organisations operating transport and private bus operators.

1400 - 1600

Seminar 1: Mainstreaming rural transport

The Rural Transport Initiative will be mainstreamed from the beginning of 2007. This seminar will discuss how this might happen and will involve contributions from the RTI groups and other development groups in rural areas.

Target Group: Staff and/or committee members of local and community development agencies, community groups, community transport groups, voluntary groups operating transport and private operators.

1400 - 1500

Seminar 2: Social auditing for CT groups

Social audit is an important tool because it enables groups to evaluate their performance against their social objectives and plan for the future. It concentrates on the real effect on real people, including the service users, the staff, committee members and funders. This seminar will hear about the social audit process being developed by the CTAIS for use specifically by community transport groups.

Target Group: Staff and/or committee members of local and community development agencies, community groups, community transport groups and voluntary groups operating transport.

1500 - 1600

Seminar 3: Biofuels

The CTAI has been working with Clare Accessible Transport on a feasibility study for the use of biofuels in its minibuses. This seminar will cover the range of options considered, the implementation of the use of biofuels and lessons learned to date.

Target Group: Staff and/or committee members of community transport groups, voluntary groups operating transport and private operators.