

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

Thursday 13 February 2014

**Bill Freeman
CTA Chief Executive**

Today's session

- Introduction to CTA
- What is community transport?
- Big challenges and possible solutions
- Some questions

The Community Transport Association (CTA)

- National membership body for community transport. Around 1,600 members (10 per cent in North West).
- Members are primarily charities/voluntary groups but also include local authorities and companies that supply/support community transport.
- We want to see thriving community transport in all parts of the UK, which enables people to live independently, participate in their community and to access education, employment, health and other services.
- Offices and 28 staff in all four countries of UK.

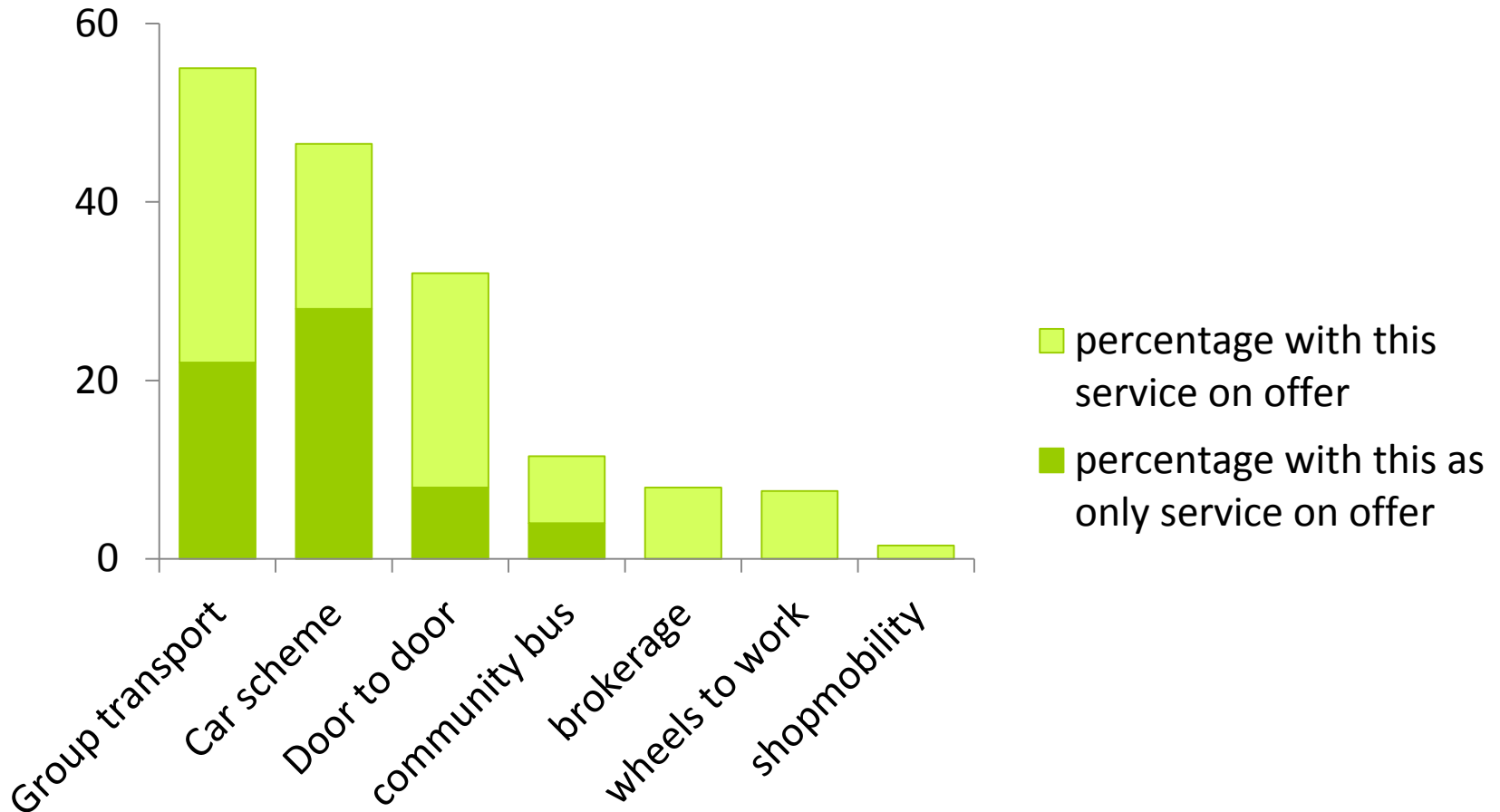
The Community Transport Association (CTA)

- We provide political leadership...
 - Raising the profile of community transport, ensuring that insights gathered from community transport operators inform the development of better strategy, policy, regulations and investment at all levels of government.
- ...and practical support
 - Advice, information, training and hands-on support.
 - Last year we dealt with over 10,000 advice and support requests.
 - Issued approximately 800 Section 19 permits.
 - Issued over 24,000 MiDAS certificates.
 - CT online.

What is community transport?

- Started as a response to needs identified by and within communities.
- Not-for-profit. Social purpose and values are paramount.
- Priority given to mobility of most vulnerable and isolated – those whose needs would be unmet by conventional services.
- High levels of volunteer involvement in governance, management and delivery of services.
- Types of organisations running community transport vary.
- Types of service vary.

Types of community transport services



Community transport in England

- 15 million passenger journeys per year (2012).
- 2,000 operators.
- 11,500 paid staff.
- 60,000 volunteers.

Types of income



- Fares
- Grants
- Contracts
- Other

Big challenges

- Rising demands with reducing income.
- Need for better collaboration within and between the sectors.
- Need for better data and evidence.
- Working to rules and systems that don't feel as though they are designed to get the best from us.

Rising demand, reducing income

- Funding model under strain
- CT expected to replace conventional services
- CT seen as last resort and a cheap option
- Pressure on our best partners

Rising demand, reducing income

- Possible solutions:
 - More entrepreneurial business model for operators.
 - New opportunities – health, young people, employability, greener transport.
 - Joint commissioning.
 - From ‘last resort’ to ‘first and best way to consider how to connect people and places’.

Better collaboration and integration

- Poor integration leads to...
 - Poor connectivity between different types of services and providers.
 - Empty vehicles and unmet needs – poor use of capacity.
 - Commissioners doing their own thing when investing in the same types of services.
 - Threats to smaller organisations that make a difference but can't compete alone.

Better collaboration and integration

- Possible solutions:
 - Brokerage between CT operators.
 - Strong leadership role for local authorities.
 - Promising pilot being conducted in Northern Ireland.
 - Exploring the Dutch 'Buurtbus' model.

Better data and evidence

- Need stronger evidence about value and contribution of community transport.
- Need to understand impact of cuts to conventional services on communities and how CT is responding.
- Show how investment in CT can lead to savings being made elsewhere...
- ...or how the absence of CT can lead to much bigger demands on the public purse.

Improving policy and regulations

- Community transport not able to be part of concessionary fare arrangements in all places.
- Changes to driver licencing post-1997 is impacting on next generation of volunteers and staff.
- Patchy involvement in working with and within health service.
- Social Value Act not being used to good effect in many places.
- Anti CT / Section 19 agenda.

Improving policy and regulations

- Future developments...
 - Opening up concessionary fares to CT in more places.
 - Making training to achieve D1 license more accessible and affordable.
 - Allowing use of smaller vehicles for scheduled services.
 - Opening up conversation with Department of Health about how CT can improve accessibility and reduce readmissions.
 - Guidance on social value considerations relevant to passenger transport.
 - Educating public and politicians about our record on working safely and legally and challenges some of the myths we see and hear.

Some questions...

What are some of the challenges facing passengers that a community transport approach might help with?

What are your vision and ideas for the contribution community transport can make in the future?

How can community transport integrate more effectively with other forms of passenger transport?

How can CTA help?

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