Cambridgeshire County Council
Office of Environment & Community Services

Guidance Notes for Voluntary Car Schemes

Issued by
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Cambridgeshire County Council
Passenger Transport Services Team, Office of Environment & Community Services

Guidance Notes for
Voluntary Car Schemes

These notes are issued with the intention of providing advice and guidance for Voluntary Car Scheme Co-ordinators.

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These additional documents and forms referred to throughout this document are highlighted using Underlined Text, and are all available from the Community Transport Officer:

- CCS2 Claim Form
- CCS3 Driver Registration Form
- CCS4 Insurance Form
- Procedures on Drivers Aged 80 or Over
- Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure Checks - Frequently Asked Questions
- Additional Notes on submission of Claims for Social Car Schemes

1. Introduction

Cambridgeshire County Council recognises the autonomy of each car scheme to determine the criteria for passengers wishing to use the scheme and the rate to charge passengers or reclaim expenses, and in no way seeks to dictate how each scheme should operate. Hence, these notes may be used as a reference document, and should act as a guideline to assist in informing schemes of procedures they may wish to undertake. In addition, schemes can also seek advice from Care Network Cambridgeshire, who can provide assistance, advice, networking and support to new and existing car schemes (see last page for contact details).

Whether you are new to the scheme or an existing co-ordinator, these notes are not exhaustive and there may well be questions and situations that are not addressed. Please
do not hesitate to contact the Community Transport Officer or Care Network Cambridgeshire for assistance or information if you are in doubt on any matter. Please inform the Community Transport Officer (see last page for contact details) that you have taken over – if you are the contact to which cheques for reimbursement of subsidy are sent to, please inform us in writing.

The Passenger Transport Services Team of Cambridgeshire County Council supports over 50 voluntary car schemes throughout the county, each varying in size, the area covered and the number of drivers available. Voluntary car schemes are an extremely valuable addition to the conventional passenger transport network providing over 75,000 journeys each year with the help of around 850 volunteer drivers. Many schemes concentrate on meeting the mobility needs of elderly, disabled or disadvantaged passengers who are, for whatever reason, unable to use conventional public transport. These schemes may be used by anyone living in Cambridgeshire who meet the eligibility criteria set by each scheme.

Conventional passenger transport is not able to serve everyone’s needs. Your scheme may be in an area where provision is low or passengers may be unable to use conventional transport for other reasons. In rural or urban areas a voluntary car scheme can help to keep people mobile, through providing a door-to-door service. Cambridgeshire County Council views voluntary car schemes as playing an important role in complementing conventional forms of passenger transport.

Any parish, community group or individual can organise a voluntary car scheme: both Cambridgeshire County Council and Care Network Cambridgeshire can provide help, advice, information and support to anyone considering a new scheme.

2. The role of the Scheme Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator is the “key” person in the scheme!

The co-ordinator should be the first point of contact with any passenger who requires a journey. They are also the point of contact between the drivers and passengers.

As a co-ordinator, you are free to determine how much or how little time you devote to running the scheme but you will need to be keen and enthusiastic for the scheme to be successful. Cambridgeshire County Council can provide a mobile telephone, and this contact number would be advertised in the area covered by the scheme. You may wish to advertise that you are only available to take calls during restricted hours, with the mobile telephone answering machine taking messages (i.e. recording journey requests) at other times when you, or anyone else with the mobile telephone, are not available. Otherwise, you may say that calls are accepted strictly between certain hours. Cambridgeshire County Council can reimburse the cost of telephone calls in relation to the car scheme.

It is a requirement that records are kept of all the volunteer drivers within your scheme – details are logged on CCS3 Driver Registration Forms, which are available from the Community Transport Officer.

As from 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2008, Cambridgeshire County Council requests that each scheme co-ordinator undertakes annual checks to ensure that drivers and their vehicles meet statutory DVLA requirements, including full driving licenses, that the driver’s own
motor insurance has been renewed, and that the vehicle is roadworthy (i.e. MOT test) and regularly maintained.

You will need to know when each volunteer is available to drive for the scheme and the type of journeys they are prepared to undertake. It would be an advantage to have some local knowledge of the area your scheme covers.

When a passenger requires a journey they will contact you on the advertised contact number. You will need to establish the passenger’s eligibility and to take details of the journey - date, time, where from and to etc - and give the passenger some idea about the cost. It is advisable that you enquire whether the passenger has any special needs or if they need to bring any equipment with them, i.e. walking aid or wheelchair, and whether a relative or friend might be accompanying them. You will then need to contact one of the drivers - two or three calls may be required to find an available driver. When you have arranged the journey with a driver you will need to call the passenger back confirming the details.

Claim forms, recording all journeys run by the scheme in a given period, are completed and sent to Passenger Transport Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, at Shire Hall. A cheque or payment by BACS for expenses and mileage support payments will be sent to your scheme. As from 1st April 2009, each volunteer driver will receive fifteen pence (15p) for every mile they have driven for the scheme since the previous claim.

3. How it all works

The co-ordinator recruits drivers, keeps a record of their details, and when they are available. The scheme telephone number can be widely publicised in the area, through individual leaflets, articles in parish newsletters, posters on village noticeboards, and so on. Anyone needing transport for an essential journey contacts the co-ordinator who records details, confirms eligibility, advises about charges and locates a driver for the journey.

Passengers should be encouraged to give at least 24 hours notice of any journey.

On the day the journey takes place the driver collects a contribution from the passenger based on the mileage starting from the drivers’ home back to the drivers home.

4. Drivers and documentation queries

Driver recruitment and retention can, in some areas, be one of the more difficult aspects of Voluntary Car Scheme operation. For established schemes word of mouth maybe a good method of gaining additional drivers. For new schemes a leaflet advertising both the scheme and its need for drivers may be the best way. A door-to-door leaflet drop and / or posters in the area can achieve this. Cambridgeshire County Council can design and produce publicity material to your specification (see section below).

Drivers need a car, and a four-door model is preferable. They can devote as much or as little time as they wish. It is not necessary for drivers to be on call at all times and there is no compulsion to accept any journey. For example, some drivers may not be available during the day whereas others may prefer not to go out at night.
Drivers must complete a CCS3 Driver Registration Form and sign the declaration. They must inform their motor insurance company before performing any voluntary driving, as well as sending a completed CCS4 Insurance Form to their respective insurance company. Copies of both the CCS3 Driver Registration Form and CCS4 Insurance Form are available from the Community Transport Officer.

Drivers must hold a FULL driving licence (a provisional license is not sufficient). Schemes may choose not to accept prospective volunteers with more than one endorsement for any offence that implies suspect driving (including speeding). Schemes may wish to set a minimum period of driving experience, but any decision is at the discretion of the scheme co-ordinator or committee.

Drivers should be informed that it is their own motor insurers who would be responsible for any claim as a result of an accident while on car scheme business (but see Insurance section below).

Cambridgeshire County Council sets no age limit for volunteer drivers although it should be borne in mind that an elderly driver may not always be physically able to assist another elderly or mobility impaired person. However the driver should check with their motor insurance company if they impose any age restriction on volunteer driving. Cambridgeshire County Council can only offer full additional insurance cover to drivers under 80 years of age – please refer to the Procedures on Drivers Aged 80 or Over document available from the Community Transport Officer.

Since 1st April 2007, it is Cambridgeshire County Council’s policy that anyone involved in working with children or vulnerable adults should have an enhanced CRB check (plus subsequent re-check every 3 years) undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council. The disclosure check system is an important method of ensuring that we do not employ people who are unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. The Council’s policy is in line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which has made the undertaking of background checks on all individuals who work with, or have contact with, vulnerable adults of children a legal requirement. For further information, please see the Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure Checks - Frequently Asked Questions document. Please also note that Cambridgeshire County Council requests that prospective volunteers and scheme co-ordinators wait until the CRB clearance has been received before undertaking journeys on behalf of the car scheme.

ID Badges for Volunteer Drivers - Since April 2010, Cambridgeshire County Council requests that all volunteer drivers carry a current ID badge when driving on behalf of their car scheme. A new style purple badge produced by CCC is available to all drivers with a current CRB clearance. If you do not already have a new-style ID badge, please send in a passport-sized photograph to Gavin Moulton, Transport Services, Box CC 1301, Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP, with your name written clearly on the back of the photograph. Photos and electronic scans of photos can also be submitted by e-mail to Gavin at gavin.moulton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. We will then have a badge produced and sent out.
5. Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, including mileage rates

In terms of reimbursement of expenses incurred by the volunteer driver, this is made up of two elements. Firstly, Cambridgeshire County Council reimburses drivers at a rate of fifteen pence (15p) per mile for journeys made by drivers whilst driving on behalf of their scheme. The second element comprises the rate charged to the passenger, which is set by the scheme. However, the combined rate of reimbursement, per mile, from Cambridgeshire County Council and the passenger’s fares, should not exceed forty five pence (45p) per mile – this new rate takes effect from 6th April 2011 (please see page 9 of this document for further details). This is because if there was any profit element, the driver would be liable to pay Income Tax on any amount exceeding 45p per mile, and the driver’s insurance policy would become void, as the insurer might consider the driver to be driving on a “Hire and Reward” basis, i.e. the same as a taxi. Therefore, rates should be set below Inland Revenue profit thresholds to avoid any such liability.

To use an example, on the day a journey takes place, the passenger will asked for a contribution to the driver of up to thirty pence (30p) for each mile involved in the journey. The mileage charge starts from the drivers’ home then to the passengers’ home and on to the destination. On the return journey the mileage runs from the pick up point back to the passengers home and return to the drivers home. Perhaps the best way to measure the distance is with the trip meter if the car is fitted with one.

Drivers waiting time may cause some concern. If the type of trip provided means that the driver will have to wait for the passenger at the destination then it needs to be established if the driver is prepared to wait or will return later. If the driver is not prepared to wait, during perhaps a visit to a relative, then the passenger will have to pay for the additional mileage involved. The passenger should be informed of this additional cost when arranging the journey, as drivers cannot claim the subsidy from Cambridgeshire County Council for ‘double journeys’, i.e. in cases where drivers decide to return home temporarily and make the same journey again to collect the passenger.

Drivers should be made aware that any information they gain during the course of their duties should not be divulged to any other passenger or third party.

6. Eligibility of users

Anyone, old or young, able bodied or disabled, and resident in Cambridgeshire may use a voluntary car scheme for an essential journey.

The decision as to whether a particular person or journey is eligible is made by the scheme co-ordinator. Each decision will depend on the circumstances of the individual requesting transport. The following guidelines should be taken into account;

- Journeys should be for essential purposes, but special consideration should be given to the social needs of the elderly and mobility impaired.
- Journeys should be impractical by public transport services including taxis and ambulance / hospital transport services - except at the discretion of the co-ordinator.
- Where public transport is available for part of the journey, passengers should be taken to the nearest bus or rail service if appropriate.
- Journeys should be co-ordinated where possible and regular shopping or hospital visiting trips shared if possible.
7. Eligible Journeys

It is reasonable to assume that many day-to-day activities qualify for inclusion in the list of criteria for the use of Voluntary Car Schemes. **Please note that, due to budgetary pressures, Cambridgeshire County Council will now only reimburse schemes for local trips.** The Passenger Transport Services Team defines a local trip as a journey within Cambridgeshire to the nearest appropriate facility for the journey purpose. The exceptions to this rule only apply to residents of parishes that look to surrounding towns or facilities and services (i.e. health) just outside of Cambridgeshire, for example the Queen Elizabeth II hospital at King’s Lynn, or supermarkets, shopping and other services in Royston, Haverhill, Peterborough, and so on. Cambridgeshire County Council will not reimburse long-distance journeys, for example holidays, although journeys to connect with public transport services (i.e. trains, coaches), are allowed if and where appropriate. Here are a few typical journey purposes that are in keeping with the above definition of a local trip, but this list is by no means exhaustive and therefore is provided for guidance only;

- Shopping and personal business including post office, banks and building society etc.
- Trips for medical purposes, such as hospital, clinic, GP, dentist and opticians appointments, including collection of prescriptions, where there is no alternative transport
- Visits to relatives or friends at home or in hospital
- To link with nearest public transport services

Journeys to work, school, and day care are not normally undertaken.

When assessing the need for any journey, the following should be considered;

- Has the passenger got access to private transport?
- Is there conventional public transport that could be used for the journey?
- Could the time or day be changed to use some other form of transport?
- Is the passenger entitled to ambulance or hospital car service?
- Could the passenger reasonably use a taxi for the journey?

Other Journeys

Journeys requested by individuals or third parties such as Social Services or other agencies arranging transport to day centres, or holiday locations, cannot be financially supported from the Passenger Transport Services budget. Schemes may undertake such journeys but should seek reimbursement directly from the individual, organisation or department making the request.

8. Frequency of Journeys

It is difficult to state categorically how often a person may need to travel for a particular purpose, and each request must be assessed on its merits, and driver availability. For instance a terminally ill patient in hospital may require visits from relatives (i.e. the passenger seeking transport) on a daily basis. For a patient who is recovering well, visits may be required less frequently. Shopping trips may be required weekly, as would trips to post offices for pension collection, etc. Visits to the doctor, dentist or optician may be provided as necessary. Visits to friends and relatives at home can be provided as circumstances permit.

Co-ordinators may use their discretion as to the frequency of journey provision. However driver availability will be a major consideration when deciding this.
9. Legal & Insurance Queries

General motoring law

Participation in a Voluntary Car Scheme (or any other form of car sharing) is subject to the normal rules and regulations which govern private motoring as well as being an exempted form of public transport operation. Drivers need to comply with all the legal requirements they should comply with in everyday motoring. The main points are set out here for clarity:

- The vehicle must be properly licensed and must display a valid tax disc.
- The use of the vehicle must be properly insured
- The driver must hold a valid full driving licence
- The vehicle must have a test certificate, if it is over the age limit (a valid MOT)
- The drivers eyesight must be up to standard (able to read a number plate at 25 yards)
- The vehicle should be kept in a roadworthy condition
- Seat belts must be used
- The vehicle should be driven safely and with consideration for all other road users

The legal position of car sharing and Voluntary Car Schemes

Under normal circumstances the carriage of passengers for fares is classed as “hire and reward” and would be subject to either Public Service Vehicle, Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Car licensing laws, i.e. those governing taxi operation. Voluntary Car Schemes are specifically exempted from all such requirements by law under Section 1 (4) of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981, which allows for the carriage of passengers at separate fares NOT to be treated as being made in the course of a business provided that;

- the fare or aggregate of the fares paid for the journey do not exceed the running costs of the vehicle for the journey
- the arrangements for the payment of fares by the passenger or passengers were made before the journey began

The running costs of the vehicle are taken to include an appropriate amount in respect of depreciation and general wear and tear.

Insurance

Insurance issues probably give rise to the largest number of queries. Drivers covered by either a fully comprehensive or third party insurance may drive for a volunteer car scheme. As long as everyone follows a few simple rules there should be no difficulties. Contributions received by drivers must be on a non-profit making basis for the scheme to remain legal. This is closely related to Inland Revenue rates for volunteer drivers in that if the rate received by the driver is below taxation thresholds then there cannot be any profit element, and therefore there should be no insurance problems.

The British Insurance Association and Lloyds Motor Underwriters Association announced in 1978 that;

“The receipt of contributions as part of a car sharing arrangement for social or other similar purposes in respect of the carriage of passengers on a journey in a vehicle insured under a private car policy will NOT be regarded as constituting the carriage of passengers for hire and reward (or the use of the vehicle for hiring) provided that:”
• the vehicle is not constructed or adapted to carry more than seven passengers (excluding the driver)
• the passengers are not being carried in the course of a business of carrying passengers; and
• the total contributions received for the journey concerned do not involve an element of profit”.

In practice few insurance companies or brokers are aware of this agreement, or Section 1 (4) of the 1981 Public Passenger Vehicles Act. Because of this, all drivers MUST return a completed CCS4 Insurance Form (produced by Cambridgeshire County Council, and available from the Community Transport Officer) to their insurance company, and request written confirmation from their insurance company before undertaking any driving on behalf of their scheme. **Drivers must repeat this process if they change insurers.**

Drivers must be made aware that it their own motor insurers who would be responsible for meeting any claim for accidents and injuries that may occur during their volunteer car driving. Drivers must check that their insurance company do not impose any age limit on volunteer driving.

Cambridgeshire County Council provides additional insurance on behalf of Voluntary Car Schemes. The journey must fall within the County Council criteria to qualify for the additional cover, which comprises:

- Personal accident cover for volunteers under 80 years of age
- Public Liability for the scheme
- Loss of No Claims Bonus for volunteer drivers
- Excess Protection for volunteer drivers

Copies of the policy documents are available from the Community Transport Officer.

**10. Submitting Mileage and Expenses Claims**

According to revised HMRC Authorised Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP) rates, from the 6th April 2011, drivers may receive up to forty five pence (45p), plus an additional 5 pence (5p) per additional passenger (see below) for every mile involved in the journey from their home back to their home. To use a typical example, on the day that the journey takes place the passenger may be asked to pay up to 30 pence (30p) per mile to the driver. The other fifteen pence (15p) to make the 45 pence comes from a subsidy paid by Cambridgeshire County Council. Many drivers are prepared to wait until the end of the claim period for the additional 15 pence. However if they are not prepared to wait for reimbursement, the scheme is advised to apply to their parish council(s) or any local charities for a working “float”. This would give a “petty cash” facility enabling drivers to be paid shortly after the journey. The scheme’s accounts would be topped up when the claim cheque was received by the scheme.

Additionally, volunteers are permitted to receive up to an extra 5 pence per mile per additional passenger carried. In practice, this could mean a driver carrying 2 passengers on a 20-mile round trip could receive £10.00, which would be made up £7.00 contribution from the passengers (30p + 5p additional passenger x 20 miles, with both passengers paying £3.50 each) plus £3.00 (15p x 20 miles) from Cambridgeshire County Council. **However, each car scheme has the right to set their own rates, and choose whether to**
adopt this additional rate. For instance a scheme may decide to keep to a 30 pence per mile flat rate regardless of how many passengers are in a vehicle for consistency and ease of calculation, and to avoid unnecessary confusion between passenger and driver in a situation where one regular passenger is charged one rate one week and a different rate the next through sharing a car.

It is recognised that volunteers run schemes and therefore the paperwork should been kept to a minimum. CCS2 Claim Forms are completed by the co-ordinator or scheme treasurer and returned to the Passenger Transport Services Team, Cambridgeshire County Council, on a regular basis. Claims can be submitted on a Monthly, Quarterly, Half Yearly or Annual basis, depending on how busy the scheme has been. Each claim must list each journey undertaken during the claim period, preferably in date order. One of the periods needs to finish at the end of March each year so as to fall in line with the end of the financial year.

CCS2 Claim Forms ask drivers to provide details of each journey as follows;

- The date of the journey
- Drivers home (the village or town will do)
- Passenger’s journey from and to (again the village or town will do)
- Purpose of the journey (shopping/visit to relative etc.)
- Number of miles starting from the drivers home and returning to the drivers home

CCS2 Claim Forms also enable the co-ordinator to claim expenses, related to the scheme, for;

- Telephone (20p per call) and Postage
- Stationery and other expenses
- Total Miles (x 15p per mile)

The co-ordinator should sign and date the form before sending it to the Community Transport Officer, Passenger Transport Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Box CC 1301, Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP. Please keep a copy for your records. Further information on this procedure is available in a separate document entitled Additional Notes on submission of Claims for Social Car Schemes.

11. Additional support for schemes

Cambridgeshire County Council can also provide;

- Financial help towards the cost of telephone calls, stationery and other expenses incurred by the scheme.
- Practical advice on all aspects of voluntary car scheme operation.
- Support to co-ordinators and drivers.
- Help with publicity, for instance producing posters and leaflets to advertise the scheme and the need for drivers.
- ID cards for drivers and windscreen stickers for volunteers’ cars.
- Drivers journey record forms (if required)

Cambridgeshire County Council works closely with Care Network Cambridgeshire (see last page for contact details) to provide such support to new and existing schemes.

Other means of accessible transport
The availability of other forms of accessible transport for disabled people and individual’s with mobility difficulties should be borne in mind when arranging a journey;

- Many towns and cities have Dial-a-Ride or similar services. Please refer to the most recent edition of the Community Transport by district leaflets, produced by Cambridgeshire County Council, which gives details of all dial-a-ride schemes, voluntary car schemes and other community transport schemes throughout Cambridgeshire. Or alternatively telephone the Community Transport Officer direct on 01223 715606.

- All local trains in Cambridgeshire are operated by First Capital Connect, National Express East Anglia and Cross Country Trains are now wheelchair accessible. It is advisable to arrange the journey in advance by booking assistance 24 hours in advance of travel with the respective train operating company.

- London and other cities and towns have wheelchair accessible taxis. All of the local bus routes in London, a number of scheduled coach services, plus various other services, are able to carry wheelchairs. Telephone 0207 222 1234 or see www.tfl.gov.uk for further information.

- Disability Cambridgeshire (previously Directions Plus) is an independent information service for disabled people and carers. Contact them on 01480 839192 or e-mail info@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk.

12. Further Information and Advice

In the first instance, please contact:
Community Transport Officer
Passenger Transport Services Team
Cambridgeshire County Council
Box CC 1301
Shire Hall
Cambridge
CB3 0AP
Telephone: 01223 715606
Fax: 01223 699701
E-mail: community.transport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/communitytransport

Or:

Care Network Cambridgeshire
5 Broadway House
149-151 St Neots Road
Hardwick
Cambridgeshire
CB23 7QJ
Telephone: 01954 211919 (main office)
E-mail: admin@care-network.org.uk
Website: www.care-network.org.uk

Care Network Cambridgeshire is a registered charity that operates throughout Cambridgeshire as an umbrella organisation, working at the grass roots to establish Good Neighbour Schemes (such as Community Car Schemes, Lunch Clubs, Village Warden Schemes and others) that meet the needs of local older and other vulnerable people in
their communities. Care Network Cambridgeshire provides support, training, advice and networking for volunteers through staff based in each rural district. Care Network Cambridgeshire also runs larger Good Neighbour Schemes, such as Welcome Home from Hospital, from offices around Cambridgeshire.

Further advice is available from:
Community Transport Association
Highbank
Halton Street
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 2NY
Telephone: 0161 351 1475
Website: www.ctauk.org
The CTA publish a comprehensive “Social Car Scheme” guide.

These notes have been produced by the Passenger Transport Services Team at Cambridgeshire County Council, and are intended solely for general guidance, and is not a legal document.

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