

Greater Manchester Community Transport Forum

About the forum & membership



The Greater Manchester Community Transport Forum

Community transport - background

Often referred to by its acronym – CT - community transport began over three decades ago.

Community transport was fighting Social Exclusion twenty years before the term entered popular parlance.

The early focus, mainly using volunteers, was on providing transport for local people and groups who found it difficult or impossible to use public transport.

Since then, CT operations have grown and developed with the changing times. CT operators employ paid professional staff, and are subject to the same rigorous licensing standards as public bus service operators.

The days of well-meaning volunteers running around in an old Transit are long gone. CT today prides itself on its professionalism, delivering a wide range of services, from health and education transport to regular bus services, and from training to recycling.

However, the core ethos of CT remains at the heart of what we do; community transport is still about supporting and developing local communities and combating social exclusion, by providing accessible, safe, affordable and professional transport services for local people and community groups.

More detail about CT in Greater Manchester are contained in the accompanying leaflet – “Making an Impact”.

What is the CT forum?

As the umbrella association for the professional CT sector in Greater Manchester, we work to the ethos of professional CT operators and their key role in:

- Developing and sustaining communities
- Combating social exclusion
- Promoting economic regeneration

To achieve this aim, we will:

“...represent, support, and provide a forum for discussion and collaboration and co-operation between, all organisations involved in the provision of community transport within the Greater Manchester conurbation.”

The forum began in 2002 as an informal grouping of CT operators. It is now incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (number 05801241) and is also registered as a charity in England & Wales (number 1120427).

We are owned by our members, who elect a board of Directors annually to manage the organisation and its delivery of services.

Membership

The Forum's original members were solely professional CT operators, but it is now open to a wider membership

Types of membership

There are two classifications of membership

Full membership is for CT operators, and carries full voting rights at Company and Forum meetings. There is a charge for this membership, calculated on a sliding scale according to turnover.

Full members will be required to meet the Forum's Quality Standards. For operators who are in the process of attaining these, provisional full membership may be offered.

Associate membership is for organisations with an interest in community transport.

There is no charge for this class of membership.

Full details, including current membership rates, can be found in the companion leaflet "Becoming a member".

As well as promoting high standards and representing & supporting our members, we work closely with strategic partners such as GMPTA, local authorities and the NHS.

This approach means that CT contributes to delivering strategic transport objectives as part of an integrated city-region-wide transport system.

We welcome applications for Associate Membership from interested organisations such as (but not limited to):

- Voluntary & Community sector groups that own or operate vehicles
- Voluntary & Community sector groups with an interest in transport
- Local Authority departments interested in Social Needs Transport

Recognising the importance of a multidisciplinary, multi-agency approach to tackling inequality and supporting regeneration, we've opened up the forum to other partners, and to organisations taking the first steps in CT.

What the Forum can do for you

We provide a range of networking and support services for members

Full members gain access to:

- Hands on funding advice and grant application support
- Hands on organisational development support
- Support to achieve and/or maintain Quality Standards
- Participation in annual Monitoring & Evaluation - demonstrating the continuing impact of CT to partners and funders
- Accredited member status (subject to achieving Quality Standards)
- Wider voluntary sector support
- Links to, and dialogue with, key strategic agencies
- Subsidised or free access to relevant training courses
- Information about development and/or funding opportunities
- Potential collaborative working

- Potential income generation from Vehicle Brokerage/management

- Replacement minibus loan/hire

All members gain access to:

- Quarterly meetings/seminars, built around a transport-related theme
- Participation in relevant strategic transport consultations
- Peer support and regular updates on local and national policy, regulation and initiatives via the e-group,
- Inclusion in forum publicity
- Examples of CT best practice
- Help with meeting members transport needs
- Advice about operations & licensing

See the "Becoming a member" leaflet for joining details, or email membership@gmctof.org.uk