

MobilityMatters



Mobility Matters is a campaign group that has been formed to lobby DfT and Government to oppose the proposed changes to s19 and s22 Permit legislation (GB) and s10B (NI). This news update bulletin has been produced by **TAS Partnership Limited** in support of the **Mobility Matters** campaign group.

Campaign Newsletter No.1 (21 Sept 2017)

The CT sector has mobilised! **Mobility Matters** has launched a campaign to have the **DfT's** letter about permit changes withdrawn and for a full holistic review of the permit system to be undertaken. The independence of thousands of vulnerable people depends on our success.

A Steering Group for **Mobility Matters** has been formed from participants who attend the launch meeting on 17th August. The group has held weekly phone meetings since then to formulate a strategy and implement various actions for the campaign. The steering group includes **Paul Beecham** (Accessible Transport Group), **Mark Arnold** (Halton CT), **Matt Roberts** (CT Sussex), **Sarah Leyland-Morgan** (PAVO), **Anna Whitty** (Ealing CT) and **Andrew Kelly** (Westway CT), supported by **John Taylor**, **Sarah Huntley**, **John Atkins** and **Meera Rambissoon** of TAS.

Mobility Matters now has an active website <https://ctpermits.org/>. The website includes a portal for CT operators to make contact and let us know how they wish to be involved. We have also added a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section which hopefully explains the purpose of the campaign, and the concerns which have led to its inception. To date, 150 CT operators have registered support through the site portal.

We have contacted over 500 CT operators across the UK to inform them of the **Mobility Matters** campaign. Lack of an up to date and comprehensive database of s19 / s22 operator contact details means that many groups may not be aware of what we are doing. However, we continue to spread the word.

Press releases have been circulated to a number of passenger transport trade publications, and will shortly be sent to those concerned with voluntary sector activities. Articles have appeared in **Local Transport Today**, **TransportXtra**, **Route One**, **Bus & Coach Professional**, and **Coach & Bus Week**. We have also spoken to Hereford and Worcester BBC. Further press releases will be aimed at the national press.

MP briefing notes have been prepared as a means of enabling CT operators to lobby their local **MPs**. The notes aim to provide a concise résumé of what is a complex legal mechanism. These will be available via the website.



Some campaign members have written to **Bill Freeman** at **CTA** to ask for clarification of the current **CTA** policy which appears to be advocating that CTs should prepare to adopt a full PSV operation. This, as was pointed out, directly contradicts **CTA's** previous policy to rigorously defend the s19 / s22 regime. **CTA's** reply denies that there has been any policy change, but generally fails to reassure its members that it is adequately fighting to preserve the permit system.

Following an email from **Mobility Matters** to DfT, on 12 September **John Taylor** attended a meeting with **Jesse Norman** (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for Transport) and **Akwasi Mensah** (DfT). With limited time available, John made the case for the CT sector and argued for a different approach to be taken. Although these arguments were listened to, it was clear that **DfT** would not be easily dissuaded from the position it has taken.

A former senior **Traffic Commissioner (TC)** has provided some assistance to **Mobility Matters**, particularly in arguing the case that **DVSA** as an executive agency of **DfT** does not issue section 19 or section 22 permits. Consequently, it is not the decision maker and so the **DfT** letter is misleading and incorrect about this. It is the Traffic Commissioners who decide about the unlawful use of these permits (as only they have the power to revoke permits) and the **DfT** letter makes no reference to any apparent decision made by any **TC**.

We have made contact with **Stephen Joseph** of **Campaign for Better Transport** who has agreed to advise the **Mobility Matters** campaign.



The **DfT** letter has provoked understandable concern amongst local authorities, and we have been liaising with **Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO)**, who are also pressing **DfT** to provide clarification of their intent. **ATCO** are surveying member authorities to try to obtain a clearer picture of the extent of s19 and s22 operations in the UK, and we are assisting with this process. It has been understood that the campaign will benefit from an impact assessment that can envisage the extent that community transport will be reduced if the **DfT** directive is enforced, and how this will adversely impact on individuals and communities. Related to the impact mapping, we are also seeking any

anecdotal or case study material that relates to CT user experiences and benefits. Any text or photographs would be useful – it is important that any individual who is identified in any text or photograph has agreed to the identification of themselves as part of this campaign.

An explanatory note has been produced by **Mobility Matters** specifically for commercial transport operators and other stakeholders. The aim of this note is to provide a clear explanation of the objectives of the campaign, and the role of **TAS** as a support and advisory body. We have been keen to emphasise that the campaign is not setting out to uncritically defend the preservation of the s19 and s22 licensing system as it is currently operated and enforced. We accept that some CTs and commissioning authorities have unwittingly misused s19 in the competitive contracting arena, and that this has become a genuine concern.

The **Mobility Matters** campaign strategy is being formulated. This will entail a number of specific actions and roles for the steering group members and also actions that we hope each individual CT operator can make at a local level. We are also exploring funding sources for the campaign. A number of CT operators have already pledged financial support (thank you!) and we will soon be able to widen the appeal.

Finally, there has been some comment in the trade press from the commercial bus sector that is aligned with the **Bus & Coach Association's** long term efforts to debar s19 operators from bidding for local authority education / social care contract work. The **BCA** has welcomed the **DfT's** letter as a vindication of its campaign. However, the implication of **DfT's** letter extends far beyond the use of s19 and s22 on this kind of contract work and potentially forces all CT operators to become fully PSV compliant. **Mobility Matters** has pointed out that, unfortunately, if the CT sector follows this course, the result will be much greater levels of competition for the contract provision, which is presumably the exact opposite of what **BCA** had hoped for. As **John Taylor** commented with a **Pussycat Dolls** quotation: "**Be careful what you wish for 'cause you just might get it**" (from "When I Grow Up").

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