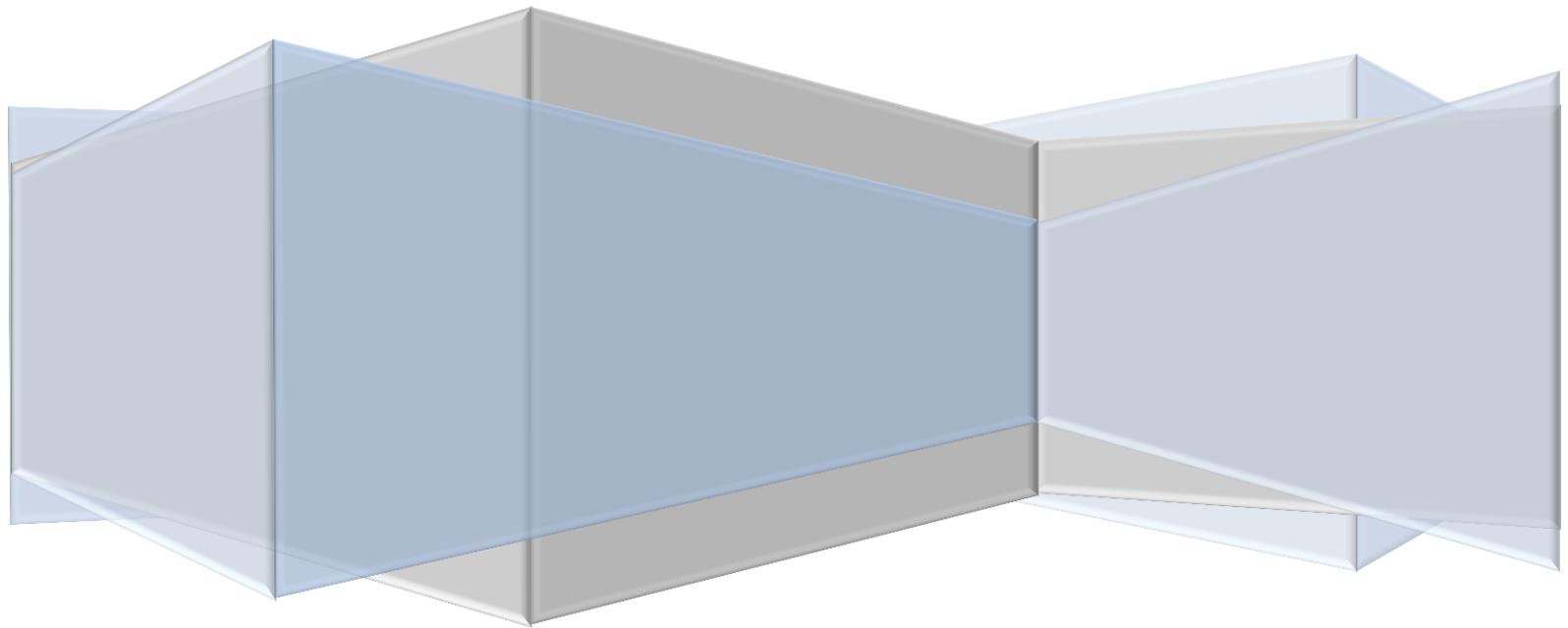**cta**
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**Community
Transport
Association**

Getting Started

A Toolkit for setting up a Community Transport service

Contents

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1.0 Introduction

CTA Wales has developed this toolkit to support individuals and community groups to address identified transport needs at community level.

> Before developing a new community transport scheme, we recommend that you first approach your nearest existing community transport operator who may be able to provide an immediate solution.

In situations where an identified need for community transport cannot be fulfilled by current operators, this toolkit will guide you through the initial steps in establishing a new community transport scheme.

CTA Wales understands that setting up a community transport service can seem daunting, but we can support you every step of the way. We provide advice, information and guidance, to help communities create local and responsive transport solutions for the people that need them.

CTA Wales can help in several ways:
- Provide information on the role and value of community transport;
- Provide information on different options;
- Offer training;
- Provide community development support throughout the setting-up process;
- Provide useful templates for governance, including induction.

1.1 What is Community Transport?

Community transport is a safe, accessible, cost-effective and flexible form of transport, run by the community for the community. It can be developed to directly address gaps in public transport provision and through this create noticeable and lasting social and economic benefits.

Community transport is of particular value to people who, for a variety of reasons, do not have access to a car or public transport. It provides a lifeline in both rural and urban areas, catering for a variety of needs, such as taking disabled people to work, children to school, people to healthcare and older people to the shops.

Community transport services are very diverse (see section 1.3) and are developed to suit the circumstances of each situation. Ranging from very small car schemes with volunteers using their own vehicles, to formal timetabled bus routes, community transport provides vital links that offer equality of opportunity for all.

Community transport mobilises and engages communities, offering services that are shaped by the people who need them and harnessing the experience and energy of volunteers who give their time freely in order to help others. The success of community transport schemes across the UK shows what can be done when local people take responsibility for solving local problems.

1.2 Why is community transport important?

Easy access to suitable transport is something many of us take for granted; we plan our work and home life without having to consider how we can get from A to B. Imagine trying to live your life without using a car, bus or taxi. Transport is a crucial part of modern life. Without the ability to get to health care, education, work, leisure activities, we may be unable to live a happy and fulfilling life.

How would you do the following without access to suitable transportation?
- Attend a hospital or doctor's appointment
- Get to the chemist for medication
- Go to the shops and get your shopping home again
- Access leisure and cultural facilities e.g. library, bingo, sports centre, cinema etc
- Get to a job interview or accept a new job
- Get to a training opportunity at a college or other training centre
- Go and visit friends if you found it hard to walk
- Get your children to school

People without access to suitable transport frequently find themselves in a never ending circle of despair, unable to do the things they need to do, when they need to do it. The results on health and wellbeing can be far reaching, including social isolation, loneliness, depression, malnutrition, poverty and unemployment.

There are many reasons why people can have difficulty accessing transport:
- Public transport routes don't go to where you need (or takes too long)
- People working shift patterns and needing to get to work/home when buses don't run
- Mobility issues i.e. using public transport is impractical or impossible
- Poverty – can't afford to run a car or fares are unaffordable
- Living in isolated areas where bus routes aren't viable for the local bus company
- Death of a partner or friend you depended upon for transport
- Feeling unsafe on late evening public transport

Community transport is important because it can provide solutions for many of the transport barriers people can face.
- Community transport services are developed to meet specific individual needs;
- Community transport is available to those who need it most;
- Community transport can provide a door to door service;
- Community transport can often offer vehicles that are fully accessible, adapted to make travel easier for those with mobility issues.
- Community transport can offer a more individualised service such as carrying shopping to the front door, or assistance with a wheelchair;
- Community transport is often more affordable because it operates on a not for profit basis with fares that only cover the actual costs of travel;
- Community transport can offer transportation at the times you need it most.

As a result, community transport has far reaching socio-economic benefits, working with the most marginalised in society and providing services that create more cohesive and prosperous communities, in addition to supporting local economies.

Community transport is often the best or only alternative when public transport does not meet the needs of a community. In many cases community transport develops in an area as a direct response to unmet local needs. The process of community consultation that underpins the development of a community transport scheme can establish strong and lasting links with the community and even form the basis of ongoing community action and social inclusion.

1.3 Community Transport options

Community transport is a term that covers a diverse range of transport services, each with its own particular operation and each service designed to address particular needs. The table below describes the range of services that community transport offers. Not every service is appropriate for every situation; for a community transport scheme to be successful it is important to identify the most appropriate service for the needs of your community or communities.

Service	Description
Community car schemes	Volunteers use their own cars to carry passengers, often those who are unable to travel by other means due to disability, illness or lack of public transport. Some operators have vehicles (including accessible vehicles) that can be provided on a self-drive basis.
Door-to-door and Dial-a-ride services	These are services for people who cannot access mainstream services or find it very difficult to do so. People are usually picked up from their homes and dropped off at their destination e.g. doctors surgery or the shopping centre. Each vehicle will carry several passengers going to and from different places. These are run under section 19 permits.
Group transport	Community transport providers can provide vehicles (often accessible minibuses) on a group hire basis. This involves providing a vehicle and driver for community groups and clubs that need to travel together. Alternatively, voluntary groups can use their own drivers and just hire the vehicle. This type of service is carried out under section 19 permits.
Community bus services	Community transport providers can establish timetabled routes similar to public transport bus routes. These can operate on fixed routes, but can also include an element of demand-responsiveness to meet the needs of particular passengers. These types of services can only be operated where a commercial bus route isn't

Service	Description
	available, usually because the route isn't viable for a commercial company. Community bus services run under section 22 permits.
Wheels to Work	Scooters/Mopeds are hired or loaned at an affordable rate to people (often young people) who face barriers to employment, apprenticeships or training due to geographic isolation or public transport services that do not operate when they need to travel (i.e. shift work). Often these schemes provide additional guidance and support to people using the service to help them find a permanent solution to their transport needs e.g. financial support for driving lessons.
Shopmobility	Offers the loan or hire of wheelchairs and mobility scooters to allow disabled travellers to get around the shops when they visit local towns.
Vehicle brokerage	A Community transport organisation can oversee and manage the sharing of such vehicles (which may be owned by different organisations), to optimise their use and provide additional transport services for the community. Brokerage is suited to situations where a number of community use owned vehicles exist (e.g. owned by community groups, clubs or, but those vehicles stand idle for most of the day.
Contracted services	These often include home-to-school, non-emergency patient or social care transport services, operated under contract to local authorities, schools or other bodies. They are run under section 19 permits

2.0 Getting started

There is one thing that all community transport schemes have in common; most have been started as a direct response to an identified transport need in the community. Many of the community transport organisations that exist today were begun by local people who developed their skills and knowledge as part of the setting up process. Community transport offers a way for communities to create a transport service moulded to local needs. All it takes is a group of determined and dedicated people who want to make a positive change for their community.

If you are reading this, then you've probably found a transport need and believe that community transport might be the solution, but maybe you're unsure how to get things started? The following information (sections 2.1 to 2.7) provides some guidance on how to get the ball rolling and will help you take some positive action towards the development of a community transport scheme. If you should require additional help and support then please contact us at CTA Wales.

2.1 Step One: Establishing a working group

Assuming you have identified a transport need that cannot be addressed by current operators (including your nearest community transport scheme) and it appears that a new community transport scheme is the most appropriate solution, the first thing is to establish a working group.

> It is important to spend some time and effort in establishing an effective and representative working group, as it will make things much easier and less stressful later on. A good working group will also secure community support for the scheme, share responsibility and ensure that the most appropriate scheme is set up.

You will need to get as many interested people as possible from a cross section of the community to take part in initial discussions. Representation on the working group could include interested individuals from the community, community groups and organisations (also referred to as Third Sector organisations), faith groups in the area, existing CT operators, CTA Wales and a representative from the local authority and/or community council.

Once you have commitment from people to be involved in the working group, it is important that everyone around the table shares a common understanding of why the group has been set up and what you are trying to achieve. Drafting some 'Terms of Reference' is very helpful at this early stage, formally setting out why the working group has been set up and the aims and objectives of the group. The 'Terms of Reference' doesn't need to be a long document but everyone in the working group should be involved in its creation so there is a clear understanding of the group's purpose. If necessary, CTA Wales can provide support in the drafting of the terms of reference.

2.2 Step Two: Understanding your community

Now you have a working group, the next step is to properly assess and evidence the transport needs of the community. The working group may all agree that there is a local transport problem but this step is about collecting clear evidence to prove that need exists. Avoiding this step will make it very hard for you to develop the right kind of community transport service and will definitely make it hard for you to secure funding. To complete this step there are only two key pieces of evidence you will need to collect:

1. Current transport arrangements
2. Current transport needs.

Current transport arrangements:
The working group will need to research and report on the current transport available to the community (e.g. bus routes and times, community transport services already available, trains, taxis, any formalised car sharing arrangements, minibuses owned by community groups that are made available to others etc). If you have a working group representing a good cross section of the community you

may find this knowledge already exists around the table, making it much easier to complete this step.

Current transport needs:
You will also need to clearly set out what the transport needs are and measure that need. The best way of doing this is to conduct a community consultation. This can be achieved in a couple of ways such as distributing and collecting a questionnaire or holding a public meeting. You will know your community best and it is important to choose a method of consultation that you know people will respond to. It is also advisable to consider neighbouring communities because you may find they are experiencing similar difficulties and there might be opportunities of working together.
(CTA have developed a draft needs analysis questionnaire which can be adapted accordingly depending on the community where you live (Annex A)).

> **Writing a report:** Once you have collected information on the current transport available and transport needs you will need to create a written report. The report should clearly set out and summarise the results of your research. This will become valuable reference material for the working group as you move forward, but can also be used in other ways such as providing evidence to accompany funding applications.

2.3 Step Three: Choosing the best type of community transport service

Once you have collected the information from step two, the working group will need to collate and discuss the findings, identifying and quantifying the gaps between the current transport available and the community's transport needs.

Following these discussions, you will have some solid evidence upon which to make informed decisions regarding the most appropriate community transport services that will suit your situation (see section 1.3). CTA Wales can provide additional resources to aid further exploration of the community transport options outlined in section 1.3.

Once you have decided upon the preferred community transport solution, add a final section to the report created in step two (above), stating the solution you have decided upon and explaining why it is the preferred option.

2.4 Step Four: Who will run the service?

Having considered the local transport needs and identifying the most suitable community transport service to develop, the working group will now need to consider how the service could be operated. Initially, this means deciding who is best placed to run the service. Options may include:

- **An existing organisation** – There may be an organisation in your community who are already well placed to take the development forward. For example, an existing community transport organisation, or other Third Sector

organisation, or maybe your local authority. The advantage to this option is that tangible developments of the new community transport scheme could occur comparatively quickly. If this is the preferred option, you need to be certain the organisation will be able to cope with the additional workload (in terms of available resources, finances and time required).

- **A partnership arrangement between existing organisations** – where no single existing organisation has the spare capacity to take on the new development alone, it may be possible to combine resources among several existing organisations. For example a local authority might offer a depot facility for vehicles, a Third Sector organisation takes on a coordinating role and other partners offer a pool of volunteers. If this is the preferred option, it is important to draft a partnership document that will agree and clearly set out the key responsibilities and expectations on each partner to avoid any misunderstandings later on.

- **A new organisation** – Where there is no possibility of any existing organisations taking on a new community transport project, it may be necessary to consider establishing an entirely new organisation. This will involve deciding on the type of organisation to establish (e.g. Charity, Company Limited by Guarantee etc), drafting up the governing document, appointing a board of Trustees or management committee and formally constituting/incorporating the new organisation. You should be aware that establishing a new organisation can sometimes take time to complete which could possibly mean a temporary halt to the development of community transport scheme. However if a new organisation is the best option, the time involved is necessary in order to create the right kind of transport service for your community.

Based on your particular circumstances, you may be able to identify other options not listed above so choose the solution that offers the best circumstances for success. You should also consider step five (below) in deciding who runs the service because it could affect the start-up costs and future funding options.

2.5 Step Five: How will service/organisation be financed?

In tandem with deciding on who will run the service, it is important to also consider where the money is going to come from to set up and run the service. For example, a new organisation might find it easier to secure funding but an existing organisation might be able to do it cheaper.

First of all you need to know the costs involved before you can decide on how you will meet those costs. It is likely that you will have to draw up more than one breakdown of costs i.e. costs of the project being run by a new organisation compared to the costs of it being run by an existing organisation. You will need to list direct costs (e.g. purchase of vehicles, fuel, permits, insurance, volunteer expenses, salaries etc) and indirect costs (e.g. rent, office costs, marketing, utilities etc). Creating a cashflow statement can be the best way of assessing the cost implications of the choices you make.

By using a cashflow statement, you can also forecast the level and type of income the scheme will generate and through this identify if the scheme has potential to cover its own costs or if you will need to secure additional income through things like grants.

> It is **very important** that when you begin listing costs and possible income, that you keep them as realistic as possible. There is a natural temptation to under estimate costs and over inflate possible income to make things look good, but in doing so it will create major problems later on and could even result in the failure of your scheme. If you prefer, you can create a best case and worst case scenario, which is extra work but does give you a broader range of circumstances on which to base your decisions.

Where you have identified a shortfall in finances, it is advisable to plan how and when you will secure extra money, otherwise known as a funding strategy. A funding strategy can eventually be linked to a business plan, clearly showing how your service will operate, how and where you will generate or raise funds and provide contingencies so that you have a clear course of action if your worst case scenario should become a reality.

The financial aspects can cause a great deal of anxiety for newly formed groups for understandable reasons. However CTA Wales can provide you with assistance to support the process and help you identify suitable funders to get your project off the ground.

2.6 Step Six: Developing an Action Plan

Once you've completed steps one to five, you are likely to find the list of things to be done is getting longer and longer. This is quite usual (and to be expected) and in fact is a good sign because it means you have a clear understanding of what needs to be done.

To help you manage all these tasks, you can create an action plan. An action plan is a very simple way of pin pointing what needs to be done, when it needs to be done by, in what order and by whom. You can then use the action plan to monitor progress and keep everything on track. Action plans can be very versatile and should be reviewed and updated regularly, adding in new actions as necessary.

A template action plan can be found in Annex B which you can adapt to your specific needs. Example entries have been added to Annex B to illustrate the kind of information to include, but the details of your action plan might be very different. The following bullet points explain the headings of the action plan in Annex B, but the exact content needs to reflect your particular situation:

- **Aim/Objective** – In this column, include the overarching work area, aim or objective. This will help keep the actions focussed and in context. E.g. Securing volunteers, writing a business plan, legal issues, securing premises etc. You may want to use the headings of the CTA Quality Mark as the

headings in this column (see 2.7 below) to help you develop a scheme that aspires to standards of best practice from the very beginning.

- **Action to be completed** – Based on the Aim/Objective, think through the various steps that will need to be taken in order to achieve that aim or objective. If necessary group related steps to create distinct actions that can be given to someone to complete so they have a better overview of an action that enables better decision making i.e. running costs, quotes, stakeholder engagement etc.

- **Reason for action** – This isn't always necessary to include, but it can be very useful to remind everyone why an action is important. This is especially helpful if you will be delegating actions to people who were not involved in creating the action plan so they understand how their work will feed into the bigger picture.

- **Responsibility** – Assign each action to a specific named person or persons whenever possible. This makes it much clearer and avoids any confusion about who is doing what. It is important to recognise that the named person is not necessarily the person who will actually be doing the work, but they will definitely be the person who is responsible for overseeing that action and reporting on its progress. Make sure the person knows about and agrees to the responsibility they have been assigned; they can then be justifiably held accountable and asked to explain why an action might not be completed on time.

- **Cost** – You should include any costs attached to a particular action. Even if you will not be spending physical money, time is often considered a cost because you need to make sure people have time available to complete the action. In addition if you have paid staff working on these actions, then their time has a cost attached to it reflected in their salary. By listing pounds (and/or time), you can track how much it will cost you to deliver the action plan.

- **By When** – Set realistic timeframes for each action because the whole purpose of the action plan is to keep things moving forward. Setting unrealistic timeframes will undermine the value of your action plan and could place unnecessary pressure on everyone and/or cause your project to lose focus. Stating specific months for completion instead of a date provides some flexibility. However if an action has a definite date for completion (i.e. a deadline for a funding application) then make sure you clearly state that date in the action plan. If you prefer you could add an extra column to the table to include start dates for each action, which together with a planned completion date will set a date range for each piece of work.

You should review progress of the action plan regularly to ensure things are getting done and to discuss any issues that may be preventing progress. Usually monthly review meetings are sufficient unless your timeframe is very tight in which case weekly (or even daily) reviews might be needed. Use your judgement to decide how frequently you review the action plan.

If you find your action plan isn't working for you, then it probably means you need to change it slightly e.g. further divide the actions into smaller tasks, introduce longer timeframes, or make sure you are assigning responsibilities to people with the appropriate skills (and time) to complete them.

2.7 Step Seven: Quality Assurance

As the name implies, 'Quality Assurance' gives a level of guarantee to others that you are operating a quality service. Customers and funders increasingly look for some kind of quality mark to let them know the service being delivered (or the organisation seeking funding) is professional, dependable safe and reliable.

For this reason, CTA UK has developed a 'Performance Quality Standard' for the community transport sector. Even if you do not intend to work towards gaining the CTA Quality Mark, we would encourage all community transport operators to carefully consider and work towards the eight quality standards shown below.

The eight quality standards are as follows:

Standard 1:	The organisation is appropriately constituted and accountable;
Standard 2:	The organisation has appointed one or more staff or committee members as a 'competent person(s)' and received appropriate training;
Standard 3:	The organisation has systems, policies and procedures in place to ensure that services comply with relevant legislation and meet the needs/expectations of customers;
Standard 4:	The organisation operates vehicles safely, legally and in accordance with regulations and good practice;
Standard 5:	The organisation has systems in place to ensure that all vehicles operated on services are maintained in a safe and roadworthy state;
Standard 6:	The organisation ensures that all staff and volunteers are properly recruited, supervised and receive appropriate training for their roles;
Standard 7:	The organisation operates an effective procedure for assessing and managing risks with regard to protecting everyone;
Standard 8:	When services are operated using drivers' own cars, the organisation ensures services comply with appropriate additional legislation and good practice requirements.

3.0 Further support and assistance

This toolkit is only a guide and every situation is different. Therefore you may find other issues arise in the development of your community transport scheme that are not covered by this toolkit. Should you require additional help or support, then please contact us at:

ANNEX A

Transport Needs Questionnaire

The Community Transport Association (CTA Cymru) is working with [INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY] to assess unmet transport needs for [   ]. Following discussion and two meetings with a wide range of representative groups for disabled and older people in the area, it was agreed that there was a significant need. However, further detail would be required about the types of journeys and destinations required by potential service users which are not currently met by other transport provision in the area.

The aim of this survey is to try to better assess the levels of demand and the types of transport required e.g. voluntary car schemes, Dial a Ride or group transport. All information collected will be on an anonymous basis and will be treated in confidence.

Please tell us in which town or village you live.	
If you live in [ ], please tell us in which area of the town.	
How often do you need to travel to access services or social activities each week?	Once a month ☐ Once a fortnight ☐ 1-2 times a week ☐ Other (please explain):
Which services in [ ] do you access currently or would like to access regularly? Please tick all that apply.	Shopping ☐ Doctor/medical appointment ☐ Visiting family and friends ☐ Day centre ☐ Group activity ☐ Other (please explain):
Are you currently employed in the [ ]area?	Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, and if you would like to, please tell us the name/location of your employer:

Do you have any difficulty traveling to your place of work e.g. non-regular shift patterns or non-compatible/accessible local bus services?	Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please explain:
What times of day do you require regular general travel? Please tick all that apply.	Early morning (before 9:00) ☐ Morning (9:00 – 12:00) ☐ Afternoon (13:00 – 17:00) ☐ Early evening (17:00 – 19:00) ☐ Night time (after 19:00) ☐
Do you require travel at weekends?	Yes ☐ No ☐
What method/methods of transport do you currently use? Please tick all that apply.	Taxi ☐ Train ☐ Bus ☐ Community car scheme ☐ I rely on friends/family ☐ Other (please explain):
What travel needs do you have which make it difficult to access public transport?	I am a wheelchair user ☐ I travel with a carer ☐ I travel with a guide dog ☐ I'm unable to walk more than 200m without help ☐ Other (please explain):
If you do not often use taxis or trains for your travel needs, please explain why.	
If you do not often use buses for your travel needs, please explain why. Please tick all that apply.	There is no local bus route to where I want to go ☐ The bus doesn't go at the time I need to travel ☐ I cannot get to the bus stop ☐ I am unable to board a bus on my own ☐ I cannot afford the cost ☐ Other (please explain):

Please tell us if you need to access a service which is not based in [ ]currently.	Service: Location:
In order to gain an understanding of the needs/requirements of potential service users, we would appreciate you telling us your age range:	18 – 30 ☐ 31 – 40 ☐ 41 – 50 ☐ 51 – 60 ☐ 61 – 70 ☐ 71 – 80 ☐ 80+ ☐
Are there any further comments you would like to make regarding your transport needs not covered by the above questions?	

Thank you for taking part in the survey.

Please return questionnaires to:

[insert suitable return address here]

Annex B
Action Plan Template

Please note: the completed entries below are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be considered as an example of a fully completed action plan.

Aim/Objective	Action to be completed	Reason for Action	Responsibility	Cost	By When
Securing a vehicle for the new CT service	Get quotes for the purchase of a minibus	Identify funding needs	Alun	No cost other than time	June 2015
	Calculate running costs of minibus for 1 year of operation (fuel, insurance, permit, maintenance)	Provide information for working group and identify funding requirement	Sarah	No cost other than time	June 2015
	Research and explore options for accommodating new vehicle including additional costs	Finding safe and secure garaging when the vehicle is not in use.	Maggie	Volunteer time	June 2015
	Decide upon preferred minibus option based on information above.	Selecting an appropriate vehicle for the service that is also cost effective	Working Group	Budget of £15k	July 2015
	Apply to Big Lottery and Local Authority for funding	Secure grant funding to purchase and operate the vehicle for 2 years.	Alun and Maggie	Volunteer Time	August 2015
	Purchase minibus and secure garaging facility	Key assets to be able to operate the CT scheme.	Chair	Budget of £20k (=£15k vehicle, £5k garaging)	January 2016
Stakeholder engagement	Complete stakeholder analysis	Identify key stakeholders	Bronwen		June 2015
	Plan and hold stakeholder engagement event	Secure support for new scheme from stakeholders (e.g. letters of support)	Chair/Working Group.	£210 (room hire &catering)	July 2015