COMMUNITY TRANSPORT INQUIRY
ASSOCIATION OF EAST LOTHIAN DAY CENTRES
WRITTEN SUBMISSION

The following is a brief description of the transport facilities used by Day Centres in East Lothian.

In East Lothian there are 10 Day Centres providing high quality day care to elderly persons living in the area bounded by Dunbar in the East, Musselburgh in the West and Haddington/East Linton in the South. Day care facilities are provided to a total of some 420 members/services users in the County of which some 40% suffer from some form or extent of dementia.

Age, frailness and dementia factors create in most cases the need for transport between member’s homes and the towns/villages in which the day Centres are located. This transport service is achieved in a number of different ways by individual Centres, with 7 of the 10 making use of suitably equipped mini buses that are owned and operated by the Centre’s Management Committees. 2 of the remaining 3 Centres make use of transport facilities provided directly by ELC with the third depending on an arrangement with a local taxi service.

To ensure the safe transport of members, the mini buses are equipped with various aids such as electro/hydraulic tail lifts, supplementary passenger side access steps etc. Some of the typically 16 seat vehicle capacity is sacrificed to enable the positioning and securing of wheelchairs. Drivers and the required escort personnel are volunteers who have been through MIDAS/PATS training systems. In some cases drivers receive remuneration for their involvement.

The vehicles owned by Centres are kept in good condition but some are getting to the end of their cost effective lives and it is of some concern as to how vehicles will eventually be replaced recognising that the cost of a suitably equipped new vehicle is some £ 45,000

All Centres are partially funded by ELC through Section 10 grants, but there is no specific section in this funding that applies to transport. ELC are very much aware of just how much the Day Centre system depends on the provision of reliable, safe and cost effective transport facilities, and are actively investigating the issue. The concerns of the Centre’s Management Committees are regularly expressed to ELC through the Association of East Lothian Day Centres a body formed in March 2011 to give the Centres one voice in transport and other issues.
Most of the Counties Day Centres are open for 4 or 5 weekdays between the hours of 0900 and 1500, with mini buses picking up between 0930 and 1030 and redelivering members between 1500 and 1530. At other times such as in the evenings and at weekends, vehicles are rarely if ever in use. If acceptable procedures could be put in place to effectively release vehicles to other potential users during periods when vehicles are not required by Day Centres, then that could be a more cost effective and practical method of maximising there use.

Association of East Lothian Day Centres
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