COMMUNITY TRANSPORT INQUIRY

THE SILVER CIRCLE

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

I write on behalf of the Silver Circle - a charity providing help to the elderly and disabled in Strathdon, and based some 50 miles west of Aberdeen in remote and rural countryside with little in the way of public transport.

Amongst other activities we are able to provide the following help with transport.

We hire a mini bus to take 10 or so passengers to one of the nearby towns once a week. This enables the elderly without transport to do supermarket shopping and to use facilities provided by the town - the bank etc - and is thus enabling those living alone to maintain some independence and to play a part in this isolated community.

We have a group of volunteers who provide transport using their own cars for hospital appointments in Aberdeen, and other local towns and health centres. The elderly are also given help to attend the local Day Centre. Around 250 trips a year are made and the patient contributes about 30% of the cost of rewarding the driver at 40p per mile. The remainder is made up by a grant from Aberdeenshire Council, funds raised locally, and from donations from other charitable bodies. This service is very much valued but both the volunteers and the financial help from the Council are vulnerable and we would like to see this scheme, and others, put on a more secure footing.

This service has enlarged over the last ten years in response to withdrawal of the ambulance service in providing such transport and we are now in a situation where we have become dependant on the voluntary sector to help out, which leaves an insecurity and lack of consistency in providing hospital transport. We also do stress that we do need the grant from Aberdeenshire Council for which we are truly grateful.

Dr L R Sanders
Secretary to the Silver Circle

26 March 2013