

BADENOCH AND STRATHSPEY COMMUNITY TRANSPORT COMPANY

Country: Scotland, UK

OVERVIEW

The Badenoch & Strathspey Community Transport Company (BSCTC) operates one of the most successful Community Transport Schemes in Scotland, with the assistance of volunteer drivers and telephonists. BSCTC is based in Aviemore around 35 miles south of Inverness and operates in the area of Badenoch & Strathspey.

The scheme helps to meet the transport needs of people who are less able to get around themselves and it helps to fill gaps in existing public transport.

It provides a range of services including community bus services and a community car scheme. Most of these services are for the elderly and less physically able, and BSCTC's vehicle fleet includes three wheelchair-accessible vehicles.



Figure 1. Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport minibus

Main aspect/issue addressed by the good practice

The BSCTC scheme addresses the following criteria:

- A.1 Transport services addressing target user groups
- B.1 Systems and solutions for smart rural areas
- B.3 Community-based transport services

The very low population density (5.74 inhab. /Km²) makes it difficult to provide adequate public transport services that can meet the transport needs of those without access to a car, many of whom are elderly or less physically able and may require a door-to-door service. BSCTC helps to address the gaps in the public transport service provision in Badenoch and Strathspey.

Main objectives of the good practice

- To meet the transport needs of people in the community, particularly those who are less able to get around, so that they can access services. At the same time, the scheme needs to remain financially viable in the long term.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

<i>Region</i>	<i>Target area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Population density</i>
Badenoch and Strathspey (outlined in purple in Fig.2)	2366 [Km ²]	13800 (in 2016 ¹)	5.74 [inhab. /Km ²]

¹ www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates/mid-2016

Other

Closest major settlement is the city of Inverness to the north.

The Badenoch and Strathspey region is classified as 'Remote Rural'¹.

There is a high level of tourism in the Badenoch and Strathspey area.

¹ www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification

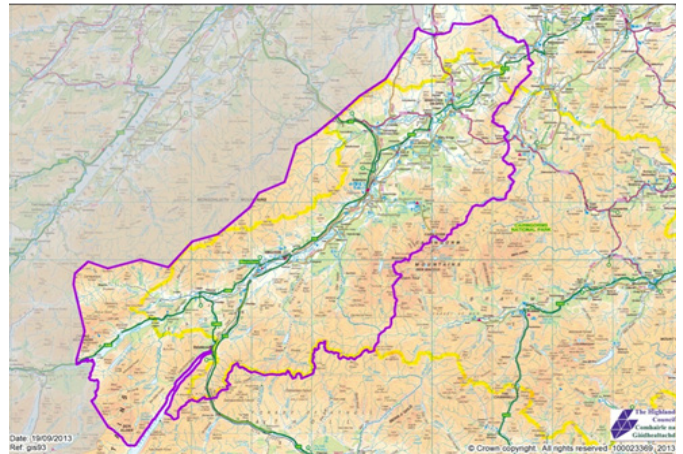


Figure 2. Badenoch and Strathspey (outlined in purple).
Source: Highland Council

Target user groups and needs

The key target user groups for BSCTC's services are the elderly and people with disabilities. 19% of Scotland's population is aged over 65 in 2017 and this proportion is set to increase over coming years¹. 20% of Scotland's population reported having a long-term activity-limiting health problem or disability. The motivation for the target users' trips is likely to be to access services, such as health appointments and social activities, including, shopping, etc.

¹ www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Age/AgePopMig

The proportion of households that have access to a car in remote rural areas of Scotland is approximately 83%. Elderly and disabled passengers are more likely to require a door-to-door service and may require assistance to get in and out of the vehicle.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

Timeframe(s)

BSCTC has been operating its services on an ongoing basis since 1999.

Bodies involved

BSCTC is a registered charity which was set up in 1999

Mobility services provided/addressed

BSCTC operates the following services:

1. Registered bus routes. These services operate 9:30am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, but operate

in different areas on different days. This is a door-to-door service and passengers need to book in advance. It is open to the general public, charges fares and use paid drivers.

2. Community car scheme. The Car Scheme is a car sharing scheme with volunteer drivers using their own cars to take clients to and from a destination of their own choice. To become eligible for the scheme, you must have no transport of your own and be unable to access public transport for whatever reason.
3. Community services. These include transport to social activities (e.g. lunch clubs), assisted shopping, etc. These use volunteer drivers as well as additional volunteers.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

4. Group hire. This includes minibus hire with a volunteer driver for social outings such as garden centres, etc.
5. A mobility scooter and wheelchair loan service is provided free of charge for people who require assistance to get around.

BSCTC's vehicle fleet consists of two 13-seater wheelchair-accessible minibuses and a 3-seater Citroen Berlingo which has been adapted for wheelchairs. Volunteers for the community car scheme provide their own vehicles.

Legal Framework

There are two relevant permit types:

1. Section 19. Services operating under are restricted to specific groups or category of user. Most are tailored to the needs of elderly and mobility impaired/wheelchair.
2. Section 22. The scheme is mandated for local bus services to be run on the basis of need and to service the welfare and social requirements of a local community. It is not designed for commercial bus operators.

BSCTC operate their registered bus route under a Section 22 permit. The community services (for specific user groups) are operated under a Section 19 permit.

Cost and Financing sources

BSCTC operates as a charity. It receives income from the following sources:

1. Grants. BSCTC has received the following funding:
 - a. Local Authority funding for community car transport, which supports assisted shopping trips and group transport;
 - b. BIG Lottery funding for several social inclusion projects that BSCTC is involved with;
 - c. National Health Service (NHS Highland) funding for accessible transport for health and social inclusion services;
 - d. Funding for several projects involving Intergenerational work;
 - e. Funding from Transport Scotland's Bus

Investment Fund (BIF). This allowed BSCTC to purchase one of their 13-seater minibuses in 2015.

2. Fare revenue. The fares for concessionary passengers (e.g. for elderly or disabled passengers) on the registered service are wholly subsidised, with the fares being paid by the Scottish Government straight to BSCTC. There are a small number of passengers on the registered service who are non-concessionary; these pay full fares which go directly to BSCTC.
3. Fund raising and donations. There are various fund-raising events and activities throughout the year.

Volunteer drivers for the community car scheme receive a non-profit making mileage rate, under car sharing legislation.

Organizational set-up

BSCTC is a registered charity with a board of directors. There is a Project Development Manager and an Office Manager, supplemented by four part-time project staff. The booking system is supported by a team of 8 volunteer telephonists. There are two part-time paid drivers who drive the minibuses and 125 volunteer car drivers. An additional team of around 8 volunteer minibus drivers support our group social outings.

Supporting technologies

The Flexiroute software supports the operation of the service: this includes a passenger database and a trip booking system.

INNOVATION ASPECTS

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

BSCTC work with two local taxi companies in delivering their assisted shopping services.

BSCTC partner with the National Health Service (NHS) and link with the Aviemore medical practice through the Community Link Worker initiative.

BSCTC partner with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Project Scotland.

LEVEL OF PUBLIC SECTOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

BSCTC has more diversity in its funding sources than typical community transport operators.

INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN SHARED AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

BSCTC's services link up with train and bus services, in cases where people are unable to travel (e.g. because it is too early or too late to access normal services).

ICT CONNECTIONS AND IMPACTS OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

N/A

OTHER (E.G. SOCIAL INNOVATION, ETC.)

BSCTC takes a holistic view in operating its transport services, i.e. transport is seen as an enabler for other activities. The Community Link Worker initiative addresses mental and physical health; and wellbeing, through being active both physically and socially

ASSESSMENT

Ridership and other key metrics/results (through key-indicators, where applicable)

There were over 12000 (single) trips made using BSCTC's services in the 2017-2018 financial year. 78% were for leisure/social, 13% for health, 7% for day-care, and only 1% to access public transport. A new hospital is due to open in Aviemore in two or three years, which will increase demand for BSCTC's services. BSCTC's vehicles could be utilised more, particularly at weekends.

There is potential transferability of the services and approach that BSCTC take to other remote rural areas.

Good Governance

BSCTC demonstrates effective community engagement through its social activities, support of less able members of the community, initiatives outside of transport per se, etc.

Success factors/strengths

These include:

1. Understanding of real needs of users and development of services specifically tailored to meet these needs;
2. Partnerships with a range of organisations;
3. An effective social media marketing campaign.

Difficulties encountered/weakness

There has recently been a consultation on section 19 and 22 permits for road passenger transport in Great Britain. The consultation sought views on how to align domestic law on section 19 and 22 permits with EU legal obligations on road passenger transport operators.

The Transport Act 1985 enables permits to be issued under sections 19 and 22 of the Act to enable qualifying not-for-profit organisations to run passenger transport services without a public service vehicle (PSV) operator licence. The UK Department for Transport has proposed the following exemptions to operate without a PSV license, for road passenger transport operators which:

1. *"...are engaged in road passenger transport services exclusively for non-commercial purposes";* or
2. *"...have a main occupation other than that of road passenger transport operator";* or

3. *"...are engaged exclusively in national transport operations having only a minor impact on the transport market because of ...the short distances involved".*

It is crucial for BSCTC that they can continue operating without a PSV license (due to the high cost of obtaining the license).

BSCTC need to continually find new sources of public sector financial support to enable the continued operation of their services.

There are sometimes difficulties in finding drivers with D1 (minibus) on their driver's license. Drivers who passed their test before 1997 automatically have D1 on their license, whereas those who passed after 1997 do not.

This could be a problem for example in the case of a school in which all the teachers/volunteers are all too young to have D1 on their licence.



FEATURES THAT ARE CONSIDERED TO BE GOOD PRACTICE (LESSON(S) LEARNT)

1. BSCTC's understanding of the needs of their users and the development of services specifically tailored to meet these needs;
2. Effective community engagement through a range of initiatives;
3. Partnerships with a range of organisations;
4. BSCTC's holistic approach to the delivery of their transport services;
5. The diversity of BSCTC's funding sources.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER DETAILS

Contact of the operator and of relevant stakeholders

Organization: Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company

Person contact: Maggie Lawson (Project Development Manager)

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Websites

- www.ct4u.co.uk