

## MINIBUS DRIVER TRAINING

## CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

### Reponses

Lancashire County Council  
Environment Directorate  
Road Safety Group  
Guild House  
Cross Street  
Preston  
PR1 8RD



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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This document summarises the responses received during the consultation exercise. No respondents are directly identified and examples of responses indicate the level of response both positive and negative. (Please note that page numbers may not now correspond correctly).

Responses were received from 19 organisations plus a publicised response was taken from the CTA website which is available to view at [http://www.ctauk.org/uploadedFiles/Influencing\\_policies\\_and\\_legislation/CTA\\_Response\\_Lancashire\\_County\\_Council.pdf](http://www.ctauk.org/uploadedFiles/Influencing_policies_and_legislation/CTA_Response_Lancashire_County_Council.pdf)

	Support	Not support	No/other response
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	8	7	4
<b>Monitoring</b>	8	0	11
<b>Training Agent Courses</b>	6		13
<b>Standards Nationally</b>	6		13
<b>Qualification of DATs</b>	4		15
<b>Royalty Fees</b>	6		13
<b>Changes in Legislation</b>	2		17
<b>Cost of Training DATs &amp; Drivers</b>	3	5	11
<b>Transitional Arrangements</b>	7		12

Three responses received from Community Transport organisations referred directly to the comments made by CTA.

One respondent replied indicating that they no longer employ their own drivers and their transport needs are met by an external service provider.

Responses not using the form provided include:

*'Whether MiDAS is better quality or not compared to other schemes is, unfortunately, a consideration I can ill afford to pay for, my overall priority is the cheapest way to fulfil legal requirements to drive our charity run minibus'.*

*'While we are inclined to agree with most of the recommendations proposed in Option 2, we have reservations as to the on going cost year on year.....'*

*We are proud of the fact that our DATs are fully committed, responsible staff, but while these facts are good, this is no substitute for fully trained ADIs'*

*'The acting Managing Director and I have read your report and our preferred option is Option 2, Lancashire County Council and DIA Minibus Driver Training Scheme.'*

*'I agree that the QA and DAT within the MiDAS course definitely goes towards damaging the credibility of that course. ....'*

*I fully support the proposed Lancs CC led course and will be applying pressure on my "powers to be" to find the funding to enable your course to be delivered to a percentage of the minibus drivers that I am responsible for.'*

*'In my opinion, what MiDAS offers is inadequate. As an ADI, I am also very critical of their DAT system. Given, at the very least, the length of time and subject content required to train an ADI, I fail to see how someone can make an adequate judgement on a candidate's*

*competence let alone give instruction, following three days of training. At least, though, the DSA will hopefully be closing that particular loophole in the near future.'*

Meetings to discuss the future of training within Lancashire were held with two sections of Lancashire County Council dealing primarily with community transport. Their responses were that they support the increased standard of driver assessment but have some concern regarding the passenger assistance aspects.

A meeting with the CTA has been arranged on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008 as a part of this consultation exercise.

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## Summary

The purpose of this document is to outline the proposal by the Road Safety Group to change the provision of Minibus Driver Assessment and Training from the current Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) to a new more effective and efficient model.

A recent consultation exercise with Local Authorities nationally has revealed that there is no one nationally recognised accredited minibus driver assessment and training scheme.

In a letter of 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007, The Community Transport Association were invited to consult with the Road Safety Group on the future of minibus driver assessment and training in Lancashire. At the date of publication of this document no response has been received from them.

The document covers the background to MiDAS and Lancashire County Council's involvement with the Scheme, the issues surrounding the existing arrangements, the proposals for a new scheme to operate in Lancashire, the options available and associated cost implications.

Two options are put forward in this document, option 1 to remain with MiDAS, option 2 to develop a new Lancashire County Council scheme. The main issues are set out in the table below:

	<b>MiDAS</b>	<b>LCC</b>
Nationally Accredited	<b>X</b>	✓
Quality Assurance	<b>X</b>	✓
Monitoring	<b>X</b>	✓
Training Agent (Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)) required * (see below)	✓	<b>X</b>
Professional Driver Assessor Trainer (DSA Fleet Registered ADI) ** (see below)	<b>X</b>	✓
Down trained not professionally qualified (DSA) Driver Assessor Trainers	✓	<b>X</b>
Driving Assessment	✓	✓
Driving theory training	✓	✓
Additional driver training and assessment available subject to status after initial assessment	<b>X</b>	✓
Royalty Fees payable	✓	<b>X</b>

\* Training Agents are required to be Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADI). Training Agents are only required if the organisation intends to train Driver Assessor Trainers (DATs)

\*\* The minimum requirement for a DAT with MiDAS is that they hold a category D1 (101) licence, not for hire or reward.

You are invited to respond to this document in order that the Road Safety Group gain a clear picture of the requirement of its partners, customers and

potential customers before recommendations for change are put forward to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.

The Road Safety Group wish to ensure that minibus drivers employed by this authority or working as volunteers for this or other organisations within Lancashire are professionally assessed and trained in the safe use of minibuses.

Please respond to:

Neil Fletcher  
Road Safety Adviser  
Lancashire County Council  
Environment Directorate  
Road Safety Group  
PO Box 9  
Guild House  
Cross Street  
Preston  
PR1 8RD

A pre-paid envelope is enclosed for your reply, or

Telephone 01772 531470

Fax: 01772 531469

Email [neil.fletcher@env.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:neil.fletcher@env.lancscc.gov.uk)

The closing date for consultation will be Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

This document is also available to access at

[www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety)

## Background

The Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) is a programme developed to enhance the driving and passenger awareness skills of the many thousands of individuals who drive minibuses in the course of their work or as volunteers.

With approximately 125,000 minibuses in Great Britain it is estimated from available statistics those travelling in a minibus are 2-3 times less likely to suffer death and injury than car passengers. However, when incidents do occur there is a likelihood of a higher number of casualties.

Whilst minibuses are therefore a relatively safe form of passenger transport, all are agreed that the task of minibus driving requires skills over and above those required for driving a car. Drivers also have specific responsibilities for vulnerable passengers such as children and disabled people as well as a duty of care to take reasonable safety precautions when arranging and providing transport for all passengers.

MiDAS is designed to make appropriate assessment, training and accreditation available to minibus drivers from schools, colleges, universities, health authorities, local authorities and voluntary organisations at any level.

The scheme was originally developed by Hampshire County Council who granted a licence to the National Community Transport Association (CTA) to undertake the management of the scheme throughout the country.

The proposal to consider the implementation of the MiDAS scheme in Lancashire was delivered to the Highways and Transportation (H & T) Committee in May 1996.

The concerns which led to the need for the MiDAS scheme were:

- The issue of driver quality, particularly with vehicles that did not require the driver to have a passenger carrying vehicle entitlement (PCV) originally known as the PSV driving licence.
- A number of different departments of the County Council as well as each Community Transport Group currently trained and assessed their own drivers. This resulted in there being no agreed uniform standard.
- A limited number of people who could be trained and assessed in any one period.

The unified cascade method of MiDAS sought to address these issues.

The H & T Committee accepted the recommendation that the MiDAS scheme be implemented. Similar recommendations were put to and accepted by the Social Service and Education Committees.

In order to deliver the scheme it was necessary to have a qualified Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) undertaking the training. The Road Safety Group had a member of staff who had this qualification; he

received the required training from the Community Transport Association, at a cost of over £600 (the cost of this training is now £750), to enable him to deliver the MiDAS training. This enabled the County Council to become a registered Training Agent with CTA.

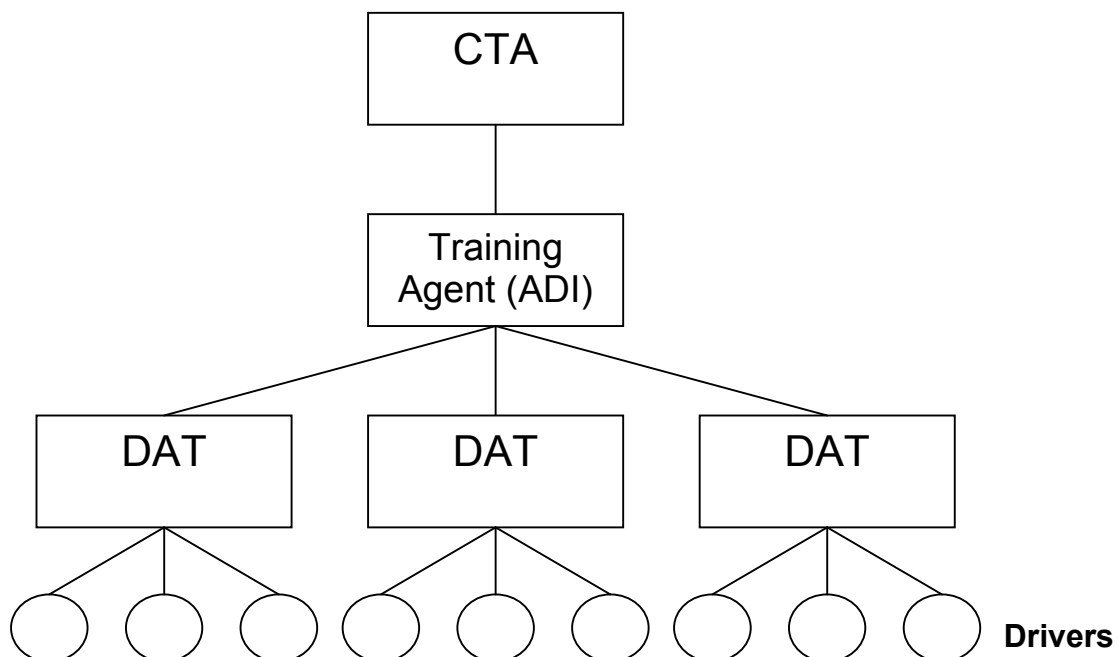
In addition to the Road Safety Group becoming the training agent, discussion took place with Lancashire County Engineering Services who had a member of staff who previously assessed drivers using county council vehicles. Lancashire Engineering Services undertook the day to day running of the scheme on behalf of the Road Safety Group who then monitored the service provision.

Following discussions in 2004 between Lancashire County Council and Lancashire County Engineering Services it was decided that the MiDAS scheme service delivery should be returned to the Road Safety Group in 2005 whereupon it was decided to review the scheme against efficiencies, effectiveness and outcomes.

### The MiDAS Strategy

MiDAS is designed to improve minibus safety by working with organisations to enhance the driving and passenger awareness skills of minibus drivers and in addition provides training for those people who wish to become responsible for assessing and training minibus drivers. These people, would be known as Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs) and would receive appropriate training. This is achieved in the following ways:

- The training which Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs) receive has to be provided by an ADI as the Training Agent. This training is delivered from CTA notes.
- Driver Assessor/Trainers then assess and train drivers locally using standard training materials and the MiDAS assessment and training programme.
- In some cases, organisations may decide not to appoint their own Driver Assessor/Trainer but to use someone from another organisation.



## Issues affecting MiDAS in Lancashire

There are a number of issues which the Road Safety Group have identified regarding the operation of MiDAS, these include:

- Quality Assurance
- Monitoring
- Training Courses held by CTA
- Standards Nationally (see Appendix E)
- Qualification of Driver Assessor/Trainers
- Royalty fees
- Changes in legislation affecting trainers
- Cost of training Driver Assessor/Trainers and Drivers
- Resources

### **Quality Assurance**

CTA appear to have no Quality Assurance systems in place, they appear to be only concerned with training of Training Agents.

### **Monitoring**

CTA appear not to monitor the delivery of the scheme. Out of all the Training Agents in the country only **four** are **local authorities**, including LCC, the remaining are private companies one of whom stated at the AGM of the Training Agents "I haven't time to be monitored – it costs me money".

### **Training Agent courses**

CTA do not appear to make plans for the training of new Training Agents and work very much on the basis of when they have enough they will consider putting together a course.

### **Standards Nationally**

See Appendix 'E'

### **Qualification of Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs)**

Other than the Training Agent requirement for an ADI, MiDAS does not call for any professional qualification for Driver Assessor/Trainers other than they hold an appropriate driving licence (category D1(101)).

### **Royalty Fees**

A royalty fee of £22 is payable to CTA for each DAT that is trained. For each DAT attending a refresher training session a further royalty fee of £11 is payable.

### **Changes in legislation affecting trainers**

Section 123 of the Road Safety Act 2006 states:

“(1)A person –  
(a) must not give paid driving instruction of any prescribed description unless he is registered in respect of the giving of that description of driving instruction”

Currently this applies only to motor cars but recent consultation with the Policy Section of the Driving Standards Agency revealed this is to be implemented to minibuses within a time frame of 18 months to 2 years. The impact of this on the MiDAS scheme means that the assessment drive in its current format may be illegal if the assessor is not an ADI.

Changes in driver licensing means that those drivers who passed their motor car driving test on or after 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 no longer receive the D1(101) ‘not for hire or reward’ category with their licence. This has already impacted on various organisations as new younger staff members who would normally have been able to drive minibuses are not qualified and need to undertake another driving test to obtain the full D1 licence. This has resulted in some organisations changing vehicles to MPVs for which there is currently no provision made in Lancashire for driver assessment and training.

Also associated with this issue is the fact that under The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2005, from 1 November 2005 persons wishing to supervise learner PCV drivers (including D1) will “need to meet the following requirement:

Have held a full licence for at least 3 years for the category of vehicle they are travelling in”

This must be a full D1 licence by virtue of having passed a driving test, the D1(101), not for hire or reward, is not sufficient. (Advice from Policy Section, Driving Standards Agency). The impact of this on organisations is that these drivers are very restricted in the practice that they can do in a minibus unless the organisation has a correctly qualified driver to supervise that practice.

### **Cost of Training Driver Assessor/Trainers and Drivers**

Under the MiDAS scheme the current cost of training a DAT to train drivers of standard minibuses with Lancashire County Council is £475. The training consists of a driving assessment and 3 days of training, much of which is classroom based theory. The training for a DAT to deliver accessible training (for those minibuses fitted with a passenger lift) adds an additional £85 and consists of an additional day of training, much of which is classroom based. These costs to be borne by the organisation wishing to have a Driver Assessor/Trainer trained. Completing the training certificates them for two years. After this period refresher training needs to be undertaken to maintain the DAT qualification at a current cost of £84 (Standard Minibuses) or £145 respectively (Accessible Minibuses)

The current cost of assessing and training a driver is £115 for drivers of standard minibuses and £145 for accessible minibuses (see Appendix A for details of training) This is for the initial training which certificates them for four years. After this period further refresher training sessions to be undertaken to

maintain the qualification at a current cost of £111 and £128 for accessible minibuses.

## **Resources**

The main resources that need to be purchased are manuals and certificates. These need to be purchased (when in stock) direct from the Community Transport Association and are required to be renewed every 2 years (Driver Assessor/Trainers) and 4 years (Drivers).

The cost of these resources at February 2007 are:

Driver Assessor/Trainer Manual:	$£6.75 + £2.60 \text{ p\&p} = £9.75$
Driver Assessor/Trainer Certificate:	$£2.90 + £0.41 \text{ p\&p} = £3.31$
Driver Manual:	$£5.50 + £2.60 \text{ p\&p} = £8.10$
Driver Certificate:	$£1.50 + £0.41 \text{ p\&p} = £1.91$

## Proposed New Scheme

It is proposed to replace the existing arrangement for MiDAS with an updated effective and efficient training programme that can easily be transferred between the differing fleet that is currently operated by Lancashire County Council and other organisations. The effect of this new scheme would be to simplify the process and to incorporate a quality control and monitoring process.

A number of options are put forward in this document for consideration and your views are sought on these. They are outlined below.

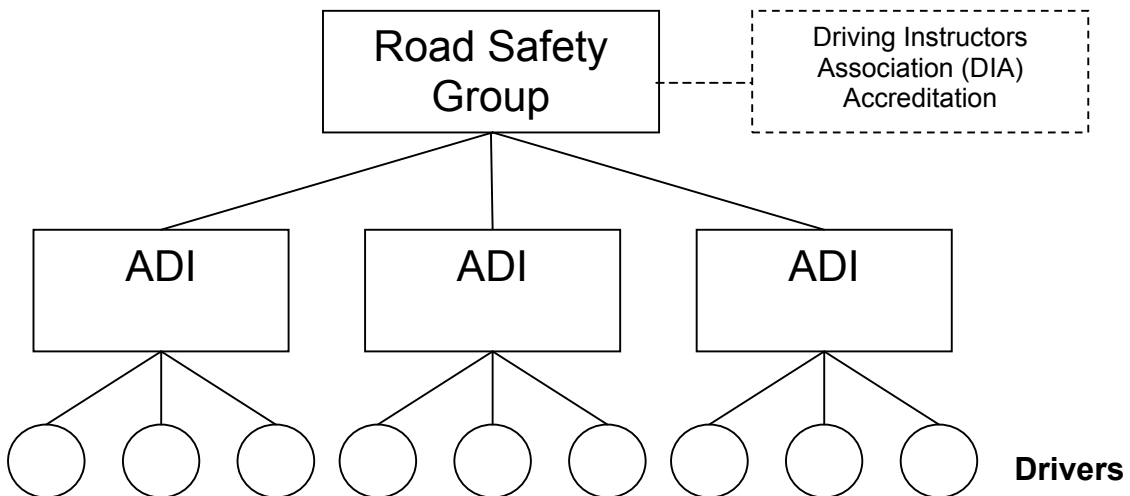
### Lancashire County Council Strategy

The scheme will be administered by the Road Safety Group, who are one of only 16 Driving Standards Agency accredited Fleet Instructor Training providers in the UK. The Driving Instructors Association (DIA) have agreed an interest in accrediting this scheme.

All assessment and training will be delivered by Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) who are on the Driving Standards Agency register of Fleet Trainers and will have been specially selected and trained to operate this scheme.

There will be no need for Training Agents, as this role will be covered by the Road Safety Group.

All training will be rigorously monitored and evaluated and it is anticipated the driving elements will be accredited by the Driving Instructors Association (see appendix D) and the passenger assistance elements endorsed by the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation (see Appendix D)



All assessments and in-vehicle training will be conducted either within the customer's own vehicle or in a modern fully equipped training vehicle provided by the Road Safety Group.

### **Financial Implications**

The cost of providing this assessment and training will be £185 per driver and will include all necessary resources.

### **Refresher Assessment**

To ensure that the standard of driving is maintained it is proposed that a refresher assessment would be undertaken every three years. This would include an assessment of driving and passenger lift operation and passenger security.

It is proposed to create a database to ensure all drivers trained within Lancashire can be contacted with new or additional road traffic regulations pertaining to drivers of minibuses.

### **Transitional Arrangements**

It is acknowledged that there are a number of drivers working for Lancashire County Council and other organisations that hold a current MiDAS certificate, some of whom will have recently gained or retained their certificates. It is proposed that these certificates should be recognised as being evidence of having taken and passed the MiDAS course or refresher course until the expiry date. When the certificates are due to expire the drivers should be brought into the new scheme.

# Options

## Option 1

### **Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS)**

Maintain MiDAS as it is currently operated. This is not considered to be the best option as there are deemed to be major flaws in the scheme, operational differences across the country and no quality assurance or monitoring and appears not to be representative as a national course. An outline of the course can be found at Appendix 'A'

## Option 2

### **Lancashire County Council and DIA Minibus Driver Training Scheme.**

This scheme will consist of an intensive driver assessment together with an interactive 'theory' session conducted in both the classroom and minibus. It will include training for accessible minibuses which will provide for 'generic' drivers who will then be able to operate both standard and accessible minibuses.

The course will also be available as an MPV module at the same cost.

All assessment and training will only be conducted by specially selected and trained Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors who are on the Driving Standards Agency register of Approved Fleet Trainers. Quality Assurance systems will be in place together with regular monitoring of standards of delivery of the assessment and training.

This scheme is outlined at Appendix 'B'

## List of Consultees

Bacup Road Resource Centre  
Hesketh Bank and Tarleton Air Cadets  
Highfield Humanities College  
Hill Climb Activities Ltd  
Lakeside YMCA  
Lancashire Care Preston  
Lancashire County Council Social Services  
Lancashire Youth Offending Team  
Lancaster and Morecambe College  
Lancaster Supported Living Scheme  
Larches Childrens Home  
LCC Care Services  
LCC Childrens Integrated Services  
LCC Directorate for Children and Young People  
LCC Educational and Social Services Department  
LCC Marles Hill  
LCC Social Services Respite  
Leonard Cheshire Homes  
Lune Valley Transport Enterprise  
Moor Park House  
Mossvie Enhanced Day Centre  
Myerscough College, Sports Turf and Mechanisation  
Nguzo Saba Centre  
NST Travel Group PLC  
Ormskirk Community Support Team  
Ormskirk District Scout Fellowship  
Pendle Community Transport  
Preston City Council  
Preston Community Transport  
Ribbleton Sure Start Childrens Centre  
SMSU Ambleside  
St Anthony's S.V.P. Society  
St Martins Students Union  
Surestart Clifton  
Surestart Hyndburn  
The Bungalow Respite Unit  
TLC Travel Ltd  
Transtech  
Traveller Education Services  
University of Central Lancashire  
University of Central Lancashire Students Union  
Warwick Avenue Childrens Home  
West Lancashire Dial-A-Ride  
Wigan and District Community Transport  
YHA Ambleside  
Youth and Community in Lancashire

## **APPENDIX 'A'**

### **Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS)**

This scheme is operated nationally by the Community Transport Association (CTA) based in Manchester and comprises three modules:

- Module 1 – Driver Assessment
- Module 2 – Training Drivers of Standard Minibuses
- Module 3 – Additional Training for Drivers of Accessible Minibuses.

These Modules are delivered by a Driver Assessor Trainer (DAT), the minimum qualification for this role is that the DAT holds a category D1 (101) driving licence.

#### **Module 1 – Driver Assessment**

The Driving assessment, including pre-assessment checks, is scheduled to take 80 minutes, **only 30 minutes** of which is driving by the client, **only 10 minutes of which is 'assessment'**. Due to the short length of time for the assessment it is usually impossible to include much variety of road and traffic conditions, mainly being conducted on urban roads. Part of the assessment process is giving advice and instruction on driving techniques and, should it become obvious during the assessment that the driver is not of the required standard, then the assessment session can become purely a training session. Expected changes in driver training regulations may make this illegal for assessors who are not Approved Driving Instructors.

#### **Module 2 – Training Drivers of Standard Minibuses**

This module is theory only and is scheduled to take 170 minutes. It covers such topics as introducing MiDAS, reversing and manoeuvring, defensive driving, legal requirements and good practice for minibus drivers, health and safety awareness, manual handling awareness, passenger safety, child passenger safety, personal safety for drivers, breakdown, collision and emergency procedures and a theory assessment briefing.

#### **Module 3 – Additional Training for Drivers of Accessible Minibuses.**

The majority of this module is classroom based and is scheduled to take 175 minutes. It covers such topics as passenger awareness, passenger assistance, safe use of passenger lifts, ramps and steps, safety for passengers who use wheelchairs in minibuses, legal requirements and good practice and practical skills assessment briefing.

In addition to this there is allocated supervised practice in using equipment of no specified time duration and a practical skills assessment of 20 – 45 minutes.

Total time for module 3 = 195 – 220 minutes plus practice time.

## **APPENDIX 'B'**

### **Lancashire County Council Minibus Driver Training Scheme.**

This scheme will be operated by the Road Safety Group and will comprise two modules:

Module 1 – Driver Assessment

Module 2 – Minibus Driver Training

The assessments and training will only be delivered by Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) who are on the Driving Standards Agency register of Fleet Trainers and have been specially selected and trained to deliver this scheme.

#### **Module1 – Driving Assessment**

The Driving assessment, including pre-assessment checks, driving licence and eyesight checks, is scheduled to take 100 minutes, **60 minutes of which is actual assessment of the client.** The assessment will cover five areas of driving, urban roads, rural roads, dual carriageways, motorways and manoeuvring. There will be no training element, as clients will be expected to have reasonable experience of driving the size of vehicle in which they are being assessed. If during the assessment the driver does not demonstrate an acceptable standard of driving this size of vehicle, further training will be recommended before the driver moves on to undertake Module 2. (See Appendix C)

#### **Module 2 – Minibus Driver Training**

This training will be a combination of classroom theory and practical minibus training and the clients will be continually assessed throughout the process.

The theory part will cover such topics as an introduction, forward planning, manoeuvring, legal requirements, health and safety, breakdown and emergency procedures, manual handling, passenger awareness, passengers safety, passenger lifts, ramps and steps.

This part of the training will last 120 minutes

The practical part of the training will include such topics as a health and safety exercise, passenger lift explanation and demonstration, passenger lift practice, clamping and strapping of wheelchairs explanation and demonstration, clamping and strapping practice. The training will finish with a review and question and answer session.

**Total training time = 240 minutes.**

The Driving Instructors Association (DIA) have committed to accrediting the driving elements of this scheme and the Queen Elizabeth Foundation will be asked to endorse the passenger care elements.

## **APPENDIX 'C'**

### **Additional Training**

If during the assessment drive the driver does not demonstrate an acceptable standard of driving within any of the areas assessed, urban roads, rural roads, dual carriageways, motorways and manoeuvring, further training and assessment will be recommended. Lancashire County Council Road Safety Group will be able to offer this training and continual assessment in units so that if, for example, motorways proved to be an issue then a unit on motorway driving would be available.

To enable the driver to progress to Module 2 of the training then this and any other unit will need to be successfully completed.

Alternatively training can be sought from another source in which case a full driving assessment will need to be successfully completed before progression will be allowed to Module 2.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **ORGANISATIONS**

#### **Driving Instructors Association (DIA)**

Founded in 1978 to represent the interests of the professional driving instructor, the DIA is regularly consulted by all the relevant Government bodies, has representation in Parliament and enjoys influence in Europe and throughout the world.

The DIA is consulted by the DfT, DSA, DVTA, DVLA and other Government agencies. It has representation in Parliament, in Europe through the EC and OECD and internationally through the International Association for Driver Education (IVV) and United Nations.

#### **Objectives**

- To promote the interests and welfare of those involved in professional driver training
- To raise the standard of road user education
- To increase awareness of road safety issues

The DIA's General Purposes Committee is democratically elected at the Annual General Meeting. There are also other committees assisting with various aspects of the Association's work. Considerable time and effort is given to consulting and negotiating with government agencies to help secure a safe and prosperous future for the individual driving instructor.

The DIA is a trading company, the proprietors being DIA (Int.) Ltd, and members are protected from any financial liability. The Driving Instructors Association is a registered charity No. 146734.

#### **Queen Elizabeth's Foundation**

Queen Elizabeth's Foundation encourages and enables adults with disabilities to increase independence and improve life skills. The Foundation's aim is to ensure that all adults in the United Kingdom with disabilities can access the training and support required to achieve their goals.

The Foundation is based in southeast England and provides vocational training for mainstream employment, brain injury rehabilitation, mobility assessment and training, coaching for life in the community and a national information service for people with disabilities.

Founded seventy years ago, the Foundation continues to be in the forefront of disability provision.

## **Community Transport Association (CTA)**

The CTA exists to support its members and to act as the lead UK body for voluntary and community transport. CTA members are organisations embedded in the communities they serve. This is what shapes so powerfully the voluntary and community transport network and explains why it is so well positioned to provide services that focus on the local, on one-to-one help, on being innovative. In developing local solutions to national concerns, operators of community transport can respond to both individual and collective needs and drive forward social regeneration.

The success of any organisation depends on the people associated with it. We are grateful for the hard work and expertise of our trustees and members of our committees; the dedication and professionalism of our staff; the commitment of our funders; the breadth of knowledge provided by our partner organisations; and, of course, the integral support of our members. The CTA's vision is of a society free of social exclusion and injustice, where everyone has mobility and access to the services they require. The CTA's mission is to deliver social change through leadership, learning and enterprise. The CTA will achieve this by:

- providing effective leadership, learning and enterprise support to our members
- being the voice of voluntary and community transport in the UK and representing the views of our members to government
- supporting and influencing the wider network of organisations involved in voluntary and community transport and in mainstream transport services, in order to deliver accessible, inclusive and dynamic transport solutions to achieve social justice and social change.

## APPENDIX E

### MidAS Standards Nationally

Comments that have been posted on the MiDAS forum on the CTA website indicate that the standard of training nationally varies tremendously: (The CTA website is currently undergoing changes and this forum is no longer accessible).

*“My standard driver's certificate was obtained by sitting in a class for only 1hr 45 min, I was bored silly with a PowerPoint presentation, and it was "without" a driving assessment!*

*“I attended a further (standard+accessible) training session which ONLY lasted for 2hrs 15 min (this included the theory test) 25 min was spent talking about fire extinguishers, we never saw a wheelchair, the remaining content was inaccurate and the answers to the theory test were announced at the end for all to copy for a 100% pass rate.*

For timings specified by CTA see appendix A.

*“Lately posing as a driver in need for training I was offered a 30min classroom training session followed by a 15min on road assessment.”  
“I compete against DATs who are allowed to offer the in-class workshop in only 30 mins and the off-road assessment in only 15 mins...”*

*“When the competition are offering these sort of deals, drivers don't want the full MiDAS course when they can just get the certificate for minimum effort....*

*“I have raised these "substandard MiDAS training" concerns with the CTA and Hampshire County Council but, sadly these DATs are allowed to continue this standard of training.”*

*“Without doubt there is a requirement for Midas or **something similar**. My issue with the scheme is it **lacks credibility**.....*

*“Midas set out to be a potent weapon in the fight for safer Minibus operations but I feel the longer these **standards slip**, then the more damage is done to the Midas scheme and that reflects badly on the CTA who are doing so much to raise and improve the profile of Community Transport.”*

# Response to Lancashire County Council Minibus Consultation Document

## Quality Assurance

CTA do not appear to have in place any Quality Assurance systems within MiDAS.

The proposed LCC scheme is designed around proven QA systems in line with other schemes operated by the authority.

Please comment.....

*'Improvement'*

*'The LCC scheme would appear to be better in this respect',*

*'would support',*

*'I agree that monitoring of MiDAS is lacking',*

*'Training schemes need to be proven for quality. An advantage',*

*'I am very unhappy that CTA does not feel QA and monitoring is important',*

*'Our "intelligence" suggests that LCC concerns about MiDAS quality may be justified',*

*'The availability of a proven QA would be preferable, particularly if in line with other schemes operated by the county',*

*'I believe that in this area dealing with potentially vulnerable persons on and beside the road the presence of an effective QA scheme is vital.'*

*'One can only agree ..... can you be sure you can maintain standards for the future? Do you have the capacity to deliver this training?'*

*'Although CTA do not appear to have QA in place, in-house we have our own standards. In 2007 drivers completed a defensive driving course and have almost completed NVQ2 in Community Transport. Both courses delivered by instructors who are included on the National Register of PVC drivers and hold NVQ3 in driver instruction.'*

*'The QA element is added by our organisation in its delivery of MiDAS through monitoring and evaluation.'*

*'Training schemes need to be proven for quality. An advantage.'*

## Monitoring

CTA appear not to monitor the standard of courses delivered by Training Agents and DATs.

As part of the QA systems in place with the proposed LCC scheme all Assessor/Trainers will be monitored at least twice each year.

Please comment .....

*'The proposed LCC scheme would appear better in this respect'*

*'Logical.'*

*'Support.'*

*'Assessors/Trainers definitely need monitoring'*

*'Although no CTA monitoring is present we as a College would like to think that we deliver to the highest standards and have kept those standards from the guidelines set out at DAT training.'*

*'Monitoring of assessors/trainers is essential.'*

*'I believe that delivery agents should be monitored regularly.'*

*'MiDAS within the service is transferring shortly to another part of the service as part of a large scale restructuring and in doing so will be afforded the same monitoring standards as the rest of our training programme.'*

## **Training Agent Courses**

CTA do not appear to make plans for the training of new Training Agents and work very much on the basis of when they have enough applications they will consider putting together a course.

The proposed LCC scheme does not require training agents as this role is undertaken by the Road Safety Group which is a Driving Standards Agency Accredited Fleet Training provider.

Please comment .....

*'The above comments do not compare. What guarantee is there that the Road Safety Group would have sufficient staff levels to undertake this role?'*

*'Good.'*

*'Support.'*

*'This is true. My DAT certificate has lapsed as we couldn't find a training agent.'*

*'LCC scheme appears to be appropriate.'*

*'I believe that this arrangement will make the training more readily available to parties in need of minibus driver training.'*

*'Agree.'*

*'This has proved a slight issue this year as we have been unable to refresh our DATs through the County Council as in previous years. We were unable to wait for a decision around DAT refresher training from the County Council so had to source this from elsewhere.'*

## **Standards Nationally**

Comments that have been posted on the MiDAS forum on the CTA website (no longer accessible due to updating of their website) indicate that the standard of training nationally varies tremendously.

Please comment .....

*'I would expect that this is true in many large organisations and each centre would need monitoring and moderating to deliver output to the same quality'*

*'Definitely needs changing.'*

*'My experience of discussing training offered by various DATs would support this.'*

*'Agree with above comment.'*

*'Although no CTA monitoring is present we as a College would like to think that we deliver to the highest standards and have kept those standards from the guidelines set out at DAT training.'*

*'Training standards/quality need to be uniform.'*

*'I believe that standards should be uniform and high.'*

*'Cannot objectively comment. Opinions we have polled vary.'*

*'Although standards may vary nationally our standard is consistently very high. We do not allow "self-drive"; only our own professional drivers drive for us. Assessed, trained, eye-tested by an optician and re-assessed every six months in addition to MiDAS refresher.'*

*'This is always going to be the case and people vary rarely post positive aspects. This is a different debate for our service as our provision of this training is to enable staff and the associated drivers listed above to be able to work with young people. This is not part of a commercial market seeking to make a profit by undercutting competitors and potentially cutting corners. The emphasis is on raising standards and awareness, particularly when transporting groups of young people.'*

## **Qualification of Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs)**

MiDAS does not call for any professional qualification for DATs other than they hold an appropriate driving licence (category D1(101), not for hire or reward).

All the Assessor/Trainers with the proposed LCC scheme will be Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) who are on the DSA register of Approved Fleet Trainers. They will have been specially selected and trained to deliver this scheme.

Please comment .....

*'The proposed LCC scheme would appear to be better in this respect.'*

*'Good.'*

*'Good idea. Open to DATs?'*

*'Although D1 is only requirement DATs were well trained by Training Agents originally.'*

*'Although there is no formal professional qualification the person needs to hold, within education establishments and at DAT training they are expected to be of a reasonable tutoring standard to deliver instruction.'*

*'I believe this will ipso facto raise the delivery standards of the training.'*

*'Surely the MiDAS DAT certificate is already a professional qualification. Why is this not recognised by the DSA?'*

*'Our DAT has worked within the CT sector for over 10 years. Many of those years as a driver working across a range of passengers with differing needs from young people with SEN, dementia patients, stroke victims, older people and people with a wide spectrum of abilities. Therefore he is experienced and is able to pass knowledge from both passenger and driver perspective. The question must be raised will LCC ADIs have this depth of experience and knowledge of our sector.'*

*'The assessors currently employed by the Service, as well as holding the licence groups above are very experienced drivers and whilst we would welcome a higher level of qualification for future recruits, should we be able to retain MiDAS within the Service, would be very concerned if they were disbarred from continuing if they didn't hold the qualification stated.'*

## **Royalty Fees**

A royalty fee of £22 is payable to CTA for each DAT that is trained. For each DAT attending a refresher training session a further royalty fee of £11 is payable.

The proposed new scheme does not require any royalty fee payment as there will not be a need for DATs.

Please comment .....

*'There doesn't appear to be a downside to this.'*

*'Good.'*

*'If MiDAS were providing good service this wouldn't be a problem.'*

*'One begrudges paying a royalty to Hampshire CC. However, cost is not a major issue and training suppliers we use charge a lot less than the figures you quote for MiDAS training.'*

*'This is a small price to pay for the consistency and value added nature of the provision of training to our service.'*

## **Changes in Legislation Affecting Trainers**

Section 123 of the Road Safety Act 2006 states:

“(1)A person –  
must not give paid driving instruction of any prescribed description  
unless he is registered in respect of the giving of that description of  
driving instruction”

Currently this applies only to motor cars but recent consultation with the Policy Section of the Driving Standards Agency revealed this is to be implemented to minibuses within a time frame of 18 months to 2 years. The impact of this on the MiDAS scheme means that the assessment drive in its current format may be illegal if the assessor is not an ADI.

All the Assessor/Trainers with the proposed LCC scheme will be Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) who are on the DSA register of Approved Fleet Trainers. They will have been specially selected and trained to deliver this scheme. Should training be required in the minibus they already hold the appropriate qualification.

Please comment .....

*'It would be unfair to comment on how the MiDAS scheme may respond to legislation that has not yet been implemented.'*

*'Logical.'*

*'Support.'*

*'DATs were always told we could not "instruct" only demonstrate how we expect them to drive.'*

*'This would not impact on our service element of the training as no charge is currently made. We would need to seek advice as to whether the contribution made by the voluntary sector towards the training constitutes an infringement of this act.'*

## **Cost of Training DATs and Drivers**

The current cost of training a DAT (3 days, much of which is classroom based) with Lancashire County Council is currently £475. There is an additional cost of £85 for the DAT to be trained to cover accessible minibuses (1 additional day of training). Refresher training (after 2 years) is currently charged at £84 (standard minibuses) and £145 (accessible minibuses).

The current cost of assessing and training a driver is £115 for drivers of standard minibuses and £145 for accessible minibuses. Refresher training (after 4 years) is currently charged at £111 (standard minibuses) and £128 (accessible minibuses)

The proposed new scheme will not require DATs and this will therefore create a substantial saving for some organisations. The proposed new scheme will train all drivers to accessible minibus driver level and will cost £185. Refresher Training (after 3 years) is estimated to cost £120.

Please comment .....

*'This is obviously unfavourable for ourselves as the cost for driver training and refresher training have increased substantially.'*

*'Improvement.'*

*'Support.'*

*'The cost of this system is the main problem we have with it.'*

*'As the new proposed training scheme will not allow "in house training" as such which MiDAS can be, this could have a substantial extra cost to us as a college. We are also in a position of gaining income from the delivery of MiDAS to other schools and colleges in the North West as*

*sourced suppliers. If there were possibilities to include 'in house ADIs' on your register this would be an advantage'*

*'Costs for LCC scheme seem appropriate and represent good value.'*

*'I believe that, with many of those requiring training being funded by the voluntary and statutory sectors, cutting the cost of training should increase the number (and, with other improvements to the course, competence) of those certified to undertake this important social service.'*

*'Will LCC be adding the additional costs to the grant given to each CT group?'*

*'The Service currently employs 3 DATs and therefore the outlay for initial training has already been met. The cost of the 2 yearly refresher is currently the only cost to be met. The costs associated with driver training would have by far the most significant impact on the Service. The costs are clearly not sustainable and would decimate the use by the voluntary sector and ultimately impact on not only the KPIs of the service but services across Lancashire. The 3 yearly refresher would also increase costs further over time.'*

## **Transitional Arrangements**

It is acknowledged that there are a number of drivers working for Lancashire County Council and other organisations that hold a current MiDAS certificate, some of whom will have recently gained or retained their certificates. It is proposed that these certificates should be recognised as being evidence of having taken and passed the MiDAS course or refresher course until the expiry date. When the certificates are due to expire the drivers should be brought into the new scheme.

Please comment .....

*'This is common sense!'*

*'Logical.'*

*'If the new system is brought into being then I agree with this statement.'*

*'Appears to be appropriate procedure.'*

*'I believe that 'grandfather rights' is a practical way to manage the transition to a new system.' This is a vital area. We seek to recruit a steady stream of experienced volunteer and paid casual drivers. This isn't easy. We cannot afford additional recruitment burdens and training costs. Of course safety is paramount but whatever your perception of current driver training, the CT sector has a good safety record. We are committed to raising driver standards but a longer transition period would be required.'*

*'No indication is given of when this new scheme is to be imposed.'*

*'The service would seek to be excluded from this and therefore, if successful, would not be an issue.'*

## **Other Comments**

*'In the document you refer to the DIA accrediting the driver element and Queen Elizabeth Foundation endorsing the passenger care elements. Further to this, will passing the LCC assessment be recognised by other authorities and institutions? Perhaps more importantly would the insurance companies be prepared to accept the LCC scheme as evidence of a driver's ability?'*

*'Support.'*

*'Most DATs are members of the organisation they are training so have a good understanding of the depth of training needed. Would the ADIs have the same knowledge and experience?'*

*The service strongly urges that should the outcome of this consultation result in MiDAS not continuing within the wider County Council, that the service reserves the right to continue to operate MiDAS for the reasons stated above.'*

**Please send your responses to arrive not later than Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to:**

Neil Fletcher  
Lancashire County Council  
Road Safety Group  
PO Box 9  
Guild House  
Cross Street  
Preston  
PR1 8RD

Or email [neil.fletcher@env.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:neil.fletcher@env.lancscc.gov.uk)

### **MINIBUS DRIVER TRAINING CONSULTATION**

Name of Organisation .....

Address: .....

.....

Contact Name .....

Tel. No: .....

Email .....

Number of drivers employed (including volunteers)

Signed

Date.

This document is also available to view at [www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety)