



School Transport Wales Education & Lifelong Learning Committee



OVERVIEW

- The current Assembly review of school transport is welcomed
- A radical agenda for change is required for the benefit of scholars, their families and the community at large
- ATCO and CPT have been jointly working on various issues associated with school transport



Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
Working together for better passenger transport



OVERVIEW

- Bus services are the safest form of transport for scholars to and from school
- Current standards of provision vary greatly throughout Wales
- The challenging behaviour of scholars is now a critical safety issue on school buses and in the vicinity of schools



OVERVIEW

- Opportunities can be generated from addressing the school hours
- Several examples of good practice already exist in Wales including Newport Transport and Yellow School Bus



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NATIONAL SCHOOL PASS SCHEME

- All local transport arrangements should pass a national test of 'best value' recognising quality and safety standards
- A National School Pass Scheme as a means of identifying all school transport users should be adopted
- ATCO/CPT suggest that this should be a SmartCard Scheme linked to concessionary fares for 16-18 yr age group
- Needs to be funded on an All Wales basis



COMMON STANDARDS

- All transport arrangements for scholars should be made within the normal PCV regulatory environment or hackney/private hire arrangements



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AT SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

- There should be a formalised procedure for loading and unloading vehicles at or adjacent to school premises
- Proper risk assessments should be undertaken involving the school, education authority and bus operators
- There should be an agreed Action Plan for controlling traffic in and outside each school
- Preferably a single department should control provision of school transport through local bus or contract services

- There should be agreed Codes of Conduct documents for all groups involved, including:
 - Drivers
 - Bus Drivers
 - Parents
 - School Children
 - Head Teachers/School Governors
 - Local Education Authorities
- Vale of Glamorgan have produced a code now which will be the model document

COMMON TENDER STANDARDS

- Common tender documentation is needed, addressing key areas such as:
 - Effective vetting of drivers
 - Criminal Records Bureau checks.
 - Standards for accepting or rejecting drivers need to be set for all tendering authorities
 - Suggested by ATCO/CPT that checks are done on a Regional basis with 4 lead authorities. The question of cost remains to be settled

VEHICLE SPECIFICATION

- Double Deck vehicles should be phased out and replaced by high capacity single deck buses. 60 – 70 seats with seat belts
- CCTV provision should become the norm
- ATCO/CPT have agreed that CCTV should be standard on all full size vehicles carrying school children



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CONTROLLING COSTS

- Annual cost of school transport is significant – many times greater than the cost of subsidised local bus services
- Recent cost increases in school transport services have been significantly greater than inflation due to pressure of staff wages and bus operator margins



EFFICIENT OPERATION

- School starting and finishing times must be amended to produce a staggered pattern. Vehicle efficiency could then rise with multiple journeys from each bus being achieved
- Education standards themselves may well benefit from such moves with improved attendance rates and greater educational

SUMMARY

- An area of high expenditure across Wales
- Opportunity for change and standardisation exists
- All parties must be involved in partnership working
- The aim should be for the perfect scholars journey every day

