

CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS DIAL-A-RIDE LIMITED

Memo to: Martin Holt, Head of Health and Housing, Chiltern District Council
From : Brian Richards, Manager of Chiltern and South Bucks Dial-a-Ride

Dated: 25th October 2007

Re: New Hospital Transport Scheme

Background

High levels of dissatisfaction, especially amongst the more elderly, at the difficulties of attending hospitals (possibly many miles away) for consultations/clinics and visiting friends or relatives.

Solution

C.D.C. and local D-A-R to work together whereby CDC provide 100% of purchase price of a new dedicated vehicle (Citroen Dispatch converted by Gowrings of Newbury to provide either 1 wheelchair space plus 3 seats or just 4 seats) with DAR meeting running costs, and charging fares.

Operation

For normal DAR transport, we operate under Section 19 permits which prohibits picking up the general public but allows us to carry members (who pay a small annual fee, currently £8.00) and who pay fares for journeys. For this hospital scheme, we consider that CDC has 'corporate' membership of DAR and thus any resident of CDC wishing to make use of the hospital service is eligible to do so and does not have to become a member first.

We run Mondays to Fridays, normally between 08:30 and 17:00, but with sufficient notice will consider any reasonable variation on these hours.

To request/book a journey, telephone our bookings line on 01494 766123 between 08:00 and 13:00 or leave details on the same number answerphone.

Destinations

We have taken customers to hospitals at Amersham, High Wycombe, Stoke Mandeville, Wexham Park, Oxford and Windsor, as well as to the Diagnostic Centre at Cressex Place in High Wycombe, the Aylesbury Medical Centre in Bell Business Park, as well as to physio clinics and the Multiple Sclerosis centre at Halton

Customer Satisfaction

Without exception, the service has been well received with favourable comments on the vehicle which is quieter, rides more smoothly and is more comfortable than the usual larger DAR vehicles, and customers are reassured to know both outgoing and returning times before they travel with the further reassurance that the driver will be waiting for them.

<u>Numbers (to Hospitals)</u>	<u>Numbers (to Other Med. Appts)</u>	<u>Numbers (to relatives)</u>
April	2	0
May	17	4
June	10	6
July	15	4
August	13	9
September	20	11

Fare Income

April	£ 31
May	£ 178
June	£ 303
July	£ 289
August	£ 344
September	£ 398

The Future

The concept of a dedicated hospital service is sound (although there is only a limited amount that a local voluntary charity can handle) – the model whereby the district council or some other source provides the initial capital cost and the operator runs on volunteer drivers (no wage costs) but charges fares and meets running costs is likewise desirable, as within say 5 years there should be sufficient moneys accumulated to provide for a replacement vehicle. In this way, the service is not a one-off but is permanently established.

We have always been fortunate in both finding and retaining volunteer drivers and were delighted to attract 8 new people for the hospital service (I think that it being a small vehicle and that we arrange the insurance cover helps considerably) but the service is not sustainable if fare income has to be paid away in drivers wages.

To their credit, Chiltern DC jumped in first with a service starting up in April 2007 and South Bucks DC who have followed progress closely are following suit – a vehicle is on order and their service should commence in December.

I understand that it is the wish of Bucks CC that there should be a similar service in each of the districts.