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Transport Services

‘Schools as Operators’

School minibuses

Part 1:

School minibuses – the good & the bad

Part 2:

Schools as Operators

….a shocking situation

- 2010 West Berkshire audit of school minibuses

…..revealed an almost 100% non-compliance!

2010 School Minibus Audit

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- Audit looked a 9 simple areas:
  - Operator licensing (Section 19)
  - Driver licensing (D1)
  - Routine Safety Inspections
  - Who the buses were 'used' by *(or 'hired to!)*
  - What was charged for 'hires'
  - How the minibus was registered & insured
  - Daily checks
  - Record keeping
  - Driver Training & Assessment

Horror Stories…

- Minibuses driven by non-D1 licence holders
- Minibus registered & insured in the private name of the Bursar (for SDP use!!!)
- None carried out RSIs (thought annual MOT was adequate)
- Hardly any did daily checks
- Hardly any kept records of use
- Very few had Section 19 ‘O’ Licences
- Very few drivers had training or assessment

Action required…

Published complete guidance:

- Briefing for Heads
- Briefing for Governors
- WBC ‘Policy & Procedures’
- Driver’s Guide

and put into place:

- Common forms across WBC
- Introduced compulsory MiDAS training

2011 & 2012 Audits

- 2011 Audit significantly better results than 12m earlier - - around a 30% non-compliance

- For 2012, hoping for close to 0%

Trying to avoid this...

A new and better fleet

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…..an age old series of problems:

- Schools want their own minibus, but can’t justify the expense
- School minibuses ‘leak’ money

- Ever increasing costs to the LA for Home-to-School transport from commercial operators

‘Simples’…

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- Schools become an Operator in their own right, and take on a Home-to-School contract

- The school, operating ‘not for profit’, will always be cheaper than a commercial operator
- The ‘not for profit’ daily contract amount (x190 days) is used to offset the minibus ‘standing’ costs over 365 days
- Account for: (standing) Purchase / depreciation / renewals, driver costs, admin costs, RFL tax, management charge, insurance, repairs etc. (running) Fuel & sundries, wages

Making it work

- Write a robust business case – highlight the expense of running a minibus, but how it can be offset by becoming an Operator
- Get the support of school's SMT and Governors
- Use experience & contacts within the Transport Team to source suitable minibuses (they don't need to be new!)
- Remember, schools are not the experts, so do everything for them ie: VOSA S19

School Community Bus Projects

- Don’t waste the minibus resource
- Use it in the Community evenings & weekends (not for profit groups)
- Carefully word your S19 application to include specified NFP groups under the umbrella of a ‘School Community Bus Project’

Savings

As an example, a 16 seat school contract @ £120 per day operated commercially = £22,800

Operated by the school, not for profit @£75 per day = £14,250

Annual saving in this example of £8,550

We've made it work...

- Currently 7 schemes operating in West Berkshire using 9 buses
- Business cases in for 3 others

Transport Services

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