



Car Club Accreditation Criteria

Full, Provisional and Basic Standard Accreditation

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Introduction

The car club accreditation scheme has been set up for the benefit of public bodies, and it was designed with their input. The aim is to provide a tool for organisations that helps to assess operators when deciding who should be invited to submit proposals, supported or chosen for a contract. It also maintains standards for the end users.

The scheme is valuable for local authorities who are increasingly supporting car clubs with funding and provision of on-street parking. Planning authorities requesting car club provision in a development as well as public transport operators working on joint promotions and discounts will also benefit from the system.

Why be accredited?

Car club operators benefit from using the accreditation logo in their marketing, but with a charge for administering each approval, not all clubs will want to apply for accreditation. This does not mean they are not bona fide clubs. Indeed, many smaller community based clubs will not face the situations where accreditation is needed, although some will find it useful to prove and to have proof that they meet other minimum standards such as safety and service standards.

Section 1. Developing Accreditation for a Changing Market

CoMoUK reserves the right to update the accreditation criteria and application forms to reflect changes in the car club market and new models of car clubs that are emerging. Any updated versions will be published on the CoMoUK website and circulated to all accredited operators.

There are two standards of accreditation available, full and basic, both of which are available on a provisional and location specific basis.

1.1 Full Accreditation

Full accreditation will apply to operators who are already established and have a scheme that has already been launched. Full accreditation requires operators to meet all of the requirements set out in the Full Accreditation application form (see below)

Some operators may find it appropriate to apply for full accreditation for some of their locations and basic accreditation for others, depending on the standard of vehicles being provided. This can be accommodated – please speak to the CoMoUK team for further details.

Some car club operators who are new to the market may wish to work towards full accreditation as their operations move past the launch phase. In these circumstances provisional full accreditation may be appropriate (see above).

1.2 Provisional Full Accreditation

Local authorities entering into agreements with operators need to have assurances that they can deliver what they claim, but at the same time, new entrants to the industry may wish to apply for tenders prior to having all operational elements in place. It is difficult for CoMoUK to give the necessary assurances without the applicant being actually operational and proving what they can deliver. Provisional full accreditation may now be especially important to encourage new entrants to the market outside of London.

Provisional full accreditation will only be awarded on the basis that the operator provides CoMoUK with written details of a set of milestones leading up to a launch date and evidence at each stage they are achieved. If significant and repeated delays occur, provisional status will be removed until the launch programme is back on track.

1.4 Basic Accreditation

Smaller community-based car clubs have not previously required accreditation status or been able to meet the criteria, in particular the standard of vehicles. A number of stakeholders have raised the issue to CoMoUK that it would nonetheless be useful for these clubs to demonstrate that they have met selected minimum standards such as safety and service standards. Local authorities issuing tenders would still require full accreditation status but those providing small scale grants to community clubs and its members could have basic reassurances.

Specific criteria have been developed in order to enable appropriate clubs to be awarded “basic accreditation” from CoMoUK. The criteria have been chosen carefully to ensure they are realistic for this sector of car club operators to comply with and simple to administer whilst still being meaningful. They are designed to ensure a uniformity of basic standards whilst nurturing the growth of car clubs in the UK.

Section 2. Accreditation Scheme

The criteria for the basic and full accreditation are split into four sections; each section contains the requirements needed and a brief explanation of what is included and necessary. The four sections are:

- **2.1 Business requirements**
- **2.2 Service provision requirements**
- **2.3 Safety requirements**
- **2.4 Data collection requirements**

The differences between the basic standard and full accreditation are highlighted in each section. All other standards apply to both levels.

To be awarded accreditation each operator will need to complete the appropriate application form and provide the appropriate supporting documentation outlined in the application form.

To be awarded accreditation it will be necessary for an operator to achieve all of the requirements in full. The accreditation process will require operators to renew their accreditation on an annual basis.

The charge for accreditation is comprised of a CoMoUK membership fee and a per vehicle levy. The levy charge contributes towards wider support work. Car club operators with less than 10 vehicles will be charged a lower membership fee rate and no vehicle levy. The table below illustrates the fees to be paid from 1st April 2019

A penalty charge of £50 may be made if substantial information is missing on an application and a second appraisal is required. Price rises may be applied each year at the AGM. Each renewal year runs April to March regardless of when a club is approved. Pro-rata charges will be applied when an operator applies for accreditation part way through a year.

Payment structure from 1st April 2019 (prices exclude VAT)

- £1000 flat administration and £500 membership fee for all companies with over 10 vehicles.
- £250 for schemes and £20 membership fee for community schemes with less than 10 vehicles.
- £3 per vehicle levy (based on the number of cars at 1st April each year and no levy charged for under 10 vehicles);

2.1. Business Requirements

2.11 The operator must have a formal constitution and/or be a limited or public liability company

Car club operators will be required to show that they have a formal organisational structure in place. Limited companies must produce foundation documents and demonstrate that they have a formal management structure in place, such as a board of directors.

Other operators, such as community groups should have, as a minimum, a formally adopted, written constitution. These groups should also have an elected body that form an operational committee; these should include a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer as a minimum.

2.12 The operator must submit an annual report on application, unless they are not yet operational in which case they must submit a similar publicly available statement of how the club will be operated

In all cases the report should include details of current number of vehicles and members, pricing structures, location(s) of operation, and operational methods. It should also include a statement on company procedures should the operator cease to operate in a particular area, close operations or be taken over. Published audited accounts or management accounts for the previous year must also be submitted.

On renewal, it is the duty of the operator to make CoMoUK aware of any new documentation or changes to operating conditions that have an impact on their accreditation status (for example new operational locations that are to be included in the accreditation). CoMoUK reserves the right to request updated documents on renewal of accreditation (such as published accounts for the most recent year).

2.13 The operator must meet the following ethical, social and environmental standards

To ensure high environmental standards are maintained the operator will have either:

- ISO14001 accreditation, or
- An Environmental Policy and Environmental Impact statement to be approved by CoMoUK.

To ensure operators demonstrate fair work practices, operators will demonstrate that they:

- Support the living wage by guaranteeing a minimum standard of income for all employees and sub contactors.
- An Equality and Diversity Policy.

2.2 Service Provision Requirements

2.21 The operator must offer a pay-as-you-drive car club service

To be accredited the car club operator must provide a service that conforms to ALL of the criteria listed below. As a response to the emergence of flexible and point to point operators we have made minor amendments to this section to make the accreditation criteria more accommodating to 'new models' of car clubs including flexible and one way.

The car club must have:

- Prices based upon mile AND/OR per time booked.
- Customers should pay according to an easily available clear price structure.
- Pricing must be available to customers at the time of booking and include all aspects of vehicle usage (e.g. insurance, tax, fuel etc).
- A recognised booking system and customer helpline (e.g. telephone, mobile app and/or internet) accessible to all their customers.
- Vehicles available to be booked in time segments, for example by the hour or by the minute.
- Vehicles available to customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This rule allows for block bookings by corporate members.
- A system by which the customer will not sign a new hire or rental agreement contract with each booking.
- Vehicles which are accessible at the time of the booking commencing without the need of assistance from a member of the car club staff.
- Vehicles which are located within residential or commercial areas close to a cluster of members.

2.22 All vehicles used should meet environmental and safety standards as defined by

Full accreditation requires that vehicles should be Euro 6 and NCAP 4 rating to protect the image of car clubs as an attractive environmentally progressive alternative to private ownership, and ensure the lowest emission vehicles with the highest safety standards are made available to customers.

Exceptions:

- For the basic accreditation this is reduced to Euro 5 and NCAP 3 to make allowances for reduced resources and lower utilisation and thus wear and tear.
- Diesels cars are not acceptable in an accredited fleet. Diesel vans to phased out when feasible.

2.23 Vehicles should be kept clean and tidy at all times

To protect the image of car clubs as a professional service, as seen by potential and actual customers, all vehicles available for use by customers should be kept clean and in good order. As part of the application for accreditation, operators must outline their checking procedures which should include cleaning and checking each vehicle:

- at least every two weeks for full accreditation,
- or four weeks for basic accreditation,
- or when a complaint is received, whichever is sooner.

2.24 Operators must be contactable by telephone

In order to deal with member's problems operators must be contactable between reasonable hours.

Full accreditation:

Ideally, 24 hours cover but a minimum of 7am to 10pm plus system to deal with out of hours queries as soon as possible via a 24 hour message retrieval system.

Basic accreditation:

From 8.30am to 6pm plus system to deal with out of hours queries as soon as possible via a 24 hour message retrieval system.

In order to reduce the number of out of hours' queries, systems should be put in place to deal with non-serious matters. Members should be informed of the procedure in the case of:

- A parking space being taken on return with the vehicle (where relevant)
- Not being able to access the vehicle
- A vehicle being returned late (where relevant)
- Damage being discovered on the vehicle before driving
- A vehicle breaking down or being involved in an accident.

2.25 In the event of a withdrawal of operations, operators must have an appropriate procedure in place

In the event that an operator ceases operations or withdraws services from a specific area, operators should aim to give their members two months' notice if this is practicable. They should also consider offering members the option to transfer to another car club for a nil or nominal charge. We require that operators advise CoMoUK of their intention to withdraw services or close, as early as possible. Operators are required to share plans for an appropriate closing down procedure with CoMoUK.

3.0 Safety Requirements

- 3.1 All vehicles available for hire must be covered by comprehensive insurance. This could include operator's self-insuring their vehicles.

To protect the safety of users and their property, vehicles and the operator, ALL vehicles, must be covered by comprehensive insurance that protects against passenger injury, third party injury and damage to the vehicle being driven, regardless of who was at fault. (It is standard for policies not to compensate the driver for their injuries if they are at fault).

- 3.2 Deposits (which should be fully refundable) and excess payments taken by the operators must not be unreasonable

To protect the operators from insurance excesses and unpaid penalty charges it may be necessary to request a deposit from the customer. In all cases the deposit must not be in excess of the excess required from the insurance broker. Members should be made aware of what excess will be payable in the event of an accident which is their fault.

All deposits must be returned to the customer within 60 days of termination of the service contract, any deductions must be itemised and supporting documentation and/or receipts provided.

- 3.3 All vehicles available for hire must be roadworthy and regularly serviced and maintained

To protect the customer's health and safety all vehicles offered for hire must comply with all national legislation regarding roadworthiness.

Manufacturer's service requirements must be adhered to in full. All servicing should only be undertaken by a qualified mechanic and service history records kept up to date.

Regular maintenance checks should be undertaken by the operator to ensure compliance with legislation and the Highway Code. All maintenance checks should be recorded and any repairs or adjustments recorded.

- 3.4 All vehicles available for hire must be covered by a national breakdown and recovery programme.

To protect the customer's health and safety whilst driving the vehicle, all vehicles that an operator has available for hire must be covered by a national breakdown and recovery company (e.g. AA, RAC, ETA, Green Flag). This must offer roadside assistance, vehicle recovery and return to home for the customer.

3.5 All operators must provide a handbook to members on joining and in each vehicle

To ensure that members are aware of how to operate the vehicle and how to deal with emergencies and breakdowns, a handbook or pack of information must be available within the vehicle. This can be provided electronically through an in-car system. This should include all telephone numbers that may be needed should any problem arise from hiring the vehicle or in-car method by which the operator can be contacted.

3.6 All operators must have a complaints policy

Operators should have a procedure with which members can raise complaints which should be made available to members.

Section 4. Data Collection

The criteria outlined below are those agreed with all operators and local authority representatives for those with full accreditation status. CoMoUK welcomes all basic accreditation operators to join in the data collection process for the benefit of themselves and their supporters. CoMoUK will provide any required web system for the online surveys which will be suitable for any operator to use.

One of the aims of this process is to avoid having different reporting requirements in different local authorities. This does not mean that local authorities cannot make additional requirements in their tenders but these should be avoided or kept to a minimum. Some aspects may be particularly commercially sensitive and hence may need to be disclosed directly without being included in this process. Secondly it should be noted that the data criteria will have to be reviewed annually and there will be an opportunity for revisions and additions at this point.

The data will be collated into the following reports:

1. **The Members Survey** – a survey of private and corporate car club members and corporate car club administrators, that collates information on car club membership, usage and customer satisfaction. It also measures the impact of car clubs on travel habits, corporate policy and the environment. There is a slightly modified version of the survey issued to car club members who have joined a car club within the three months prior to the survey referred to as the joiners survey. This captures information about their joining experiences and the early impacts that car club membership has had on their travel habits which can be different to those of more established members. The corporate surveys are tailored to gather relevant information on car clubs in a business context.

Operators are asked to distribute web links to the various surveys to the appropriate target members on our behalf. The data is analysed by an independent, managing consultant.

The survey is usually run annually with some exceptions. Timings for the surveys will be agreed with operators each time. Three versions are published – London, England & Wales (excluding London) and Scotland.

2. **Operators Survey** – this runs concurrently with the annual survey of car club members and the results are included within the CoMoUK Annual Survey report. It asks operators to provide data on the profile of their car club membership and the general usage of their car club vehicles by members.
3. **Emissions Analysis and Profiling** – this is carried out once a year and provides an insight into the impact of car clubs on air quality. It requires car club operators to provide a list of the vehicle registration marks (VRMs) of all of the vehicles on-fleet as at 1st November each year for analysis against DVLA and manufacturer datasets. The results of the emissions profiling forms part of the CoMoUK Annual Survey.
4. **Metrics:** parking bays (where relevant) and vehicle details broken down by location and vehicle type to be supplied via API or manually on a quarterly basis. Details of which cars are part of a dedicated fleet with restricted use should also be added. For point to point and flexible operators we ask that you provide an average number of vehicles within an agreed zone. All to provide number of members¹ as requested using the template spreadsheet.

To view a sample copy of the CoMoUK Annual Survey, including the Operators Survey and Emissions Analysis report, please go to our web site:

<https://como.org.uk/shared-mobility/shared-cars/why/>

All information held by CoMoUK as a result of applying for accreditation or participating in the CoMoUK Annual Survey and other data collection exercises is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation and no company sensitive information will be disclosed to any other operator or third party. Where data is reported publicly as part of the CoMoUK Annual Survey or in reports to our funding partners, the data will be presented anonymously.

Please note that CoMoUK reserves the right to withdraw an operator's accreditation if they consistently fail to provide data outlined in this document within given timescales.

¹ A member is defined as: *“Someone who has completed all the necessary procedures, and is currently authorised by the operator, to access and use a car.”*

Section 5. Maintaining Standards

Principally, the standard of operators will be checked through a renewal of the accreditation status each year. CoMoUK reserves the right to randomly check the quality of service being provided by each operator. BVRLA are developing a checking service and will inform CoMoUK of any sustained serious breaches in standards. If operators do not maintain standards throughout the year then a process has been put in place to review their continued eligibility for accreditation as outlined below:

1. CoMoUK will write to the operator detailing the areas which are thought to need improvement.
2. The operator has three months to challenge the claims and /or make necessary improvements.
3. If the standards are still not met after this time CoMoUK, in conjunction with the relevant local authority or other key partners, will look to remove the accreditation status.
4. If an operator has not paid the renewal fee due for the whole of the fleet by the 60th day after the renewal invoice is dated, the accreditation will be removed.