

Adult Social Care

Right Help, Right Time to Promote Independence

Travel Assistance Policy

Travel Assistance Policy for Adult Social Care Policy Governance

Title	Travel Assistance Policy for Adult Social Care
Purpose/scope	This policy applies to people who have an assessed eligible social care need for travel assistance, are aged over 18, not in full time education and are an ordinary resident in Telford.
Subject key words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Independence
Council Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and support our vulnerable children and Adults • Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines a consistent and equitable way of supporting older people, adults with disabilities, people with mental ill health, and support for carers, in the provision of 'travel assistance' in line with the national eligibility criteria set out in the Care Act 2014. People with assessed needs and their carers have the right to have their views taken into account by the Council when it is assessing and considering the provision of travel assistance or services. The Care Act 2014, together with the Care and Support Statutory Guidance provides the Legal Framework for making eligibility decisions. Travel assistance for those eligible can be directly commissioned or individually purchased from a direct payment in the most cost effective way
- 1.2 To meet the changing needs in the borough, we, the council, are developing a modern, flexible, financially sustainable asset based approach that will support people and their carers to remain independent and enabled to lead fulfilling lives. Travel is a necessary aspect of everyday life and central to this policy is the aim that people live and travel as independently and safely as possible.
- 1.3 We want to encourage use of the most sustainable and suitable travel assistance options, such as travel training to enable people to use public transport, walking or mobilising with the use of aids, either independently or with support, utilising concessionary travel and vehicle sharing with others.
- 1.4 In considering this policy, we will link to our Adult Social Care priorities:
- ✓ We will be aspirational and creative to enable people to achieve their full potential by using the resources in Telford effectively for local people and their carers.
 - ✓ We will continue to improve the quality of our service to enable people to achieve the things that matter to them most including supporting people to live a life free from abuse.
 - ✓ We will listen and work in partnership, sharing decision making with people who use our service and their carers. We will work well with other organisations that support people living in Telford.
 - ✓ We will help people to use their local community resources to build upon their strengths to live well and enjoy dignity, rights and choices

2. Policy Statement

2.1 The Adult Social Care Travel Assistance Policy applies to the following people who access support provided directly or commissioned by the council:

- 2.1.1 Those with an assessed eligible Social Care need for travel assistance;
- 2.1.2 People that are aged over 18 and not in full time education; and
- 2.1.3 Those that are an ordinary resident in Telford

2.2 The Policy will apply to travel assistance provided or arranged by the Council to ensure:

- 2.2.1 Support with travel assistance is provided in a fair and equitable way, for people with assessed eligible travel assistance needs;
 - 2.2.2 Eligibility for travel assistance for people over 18, who are not in full time education is identified through the social care needs assessment process;
 - 2.2.3 The independence and inclusion of the person is promoted by encouraging and supporting a range of travel options including independent travel and the use of concessionary travel passes;
 - 2.2.4 Efficient use of resources ; and
 - 2.2.5 The reduction in air pollution and encourage the use of sustainable resources by promoting the use of public transport and shared travel
- 2.3 The over-riding principle of this policy is that the decision to provide travel assistance is based on needs, risks and person-centred outcomes and on promoting independence.
- 2.4 It is expected that people who can travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers will do so.
- 2.5 The Council will only provide assisted travel to help meet an assessed travel need following a Care Act assessment. Travel assistance provided will be appropriate for that need and arranged in the most cost-effective way.
- 2.6 People who qualify for concessionary travel (free bus travel) will be expected to apply for, and use, this when appropriate to meet their needs. Likewise, if the ability to travel would be made possible by an accompanying companion, assistance will be provided in applying for a companion pass. The constraints of concessionary travel (i.e. no free travel before 0930) will be taken into account during the assessment.

3. Eligibility and determining the need for travel assistance

3.1 The needs assessment process will consider what support, if any, is needed in relation to the provision of travel assistance in order to meet an assessed eligible social care need. In order to identify this, council officers will ask the questions in the checklist below, to assist with the decision-making process:

- 3.1.1 **How far is the support or service from where you live?** Based on a persons need they will be able to access support and community services nearest to where they live. To promote local inclusion, it is not generally appropriate to arrange a community service outside of a person's local area, unless it is not possible to meet their assessed need in that area. The perception of a local area can be different for people who live in rural areas compared to those who live in towns and cities. But broadly, people will be expected to access support and community services based nearest to where they live, as long as they are appropriate to meet the assessed, eligible needs.

- 3.1.2 **Can you share travel arrangements with another person accessing that service?** Promotion of transport sharing is encouraged to support sustainable travel.
- 3.1.3 **Can you walk or cycle, use a wheelchair or a walking aid to the service?** Being able to walk might mean by walking alone or with the assistance from someone else, for example, using a buddying scheme or assistance from family, friends or a carer.
- 3.1.4 **Do you arrange your own travel from an independent source and meet the cost of travel from any mobility allowance awarded to you?** A person who receives a benefit for example, the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), to facilitate their mobility needs, may consider using this to access support and services. The actual amount will depend on the person's needs and requirements. During the needs assessment, consideration will be given to other critical demands placed on the allowance, and if it is reasonable for either a contribution to, or full costs of, any agreed travel assistance to be funded by the benefit or if this would leave the person without the means to manage their situation. If the person is not in receipt of any mobility allowance, then support can be provided to make an application. (Council Officers, as part of their assessment, will endeavour to identify when a person only gets the lower rate DLA or P.I.P., but might qualify for the higher rate and to make an appropriate referral to the welfare rights service to review if a supersession claim is worth making).
- 3.1.5 **Can you use your own transport?** If you have your own motor vehicle, a vehicle obtained through the Motability scheme, a specially adapted vehicle or some other vehicle that you have access to, it is expected that this would be available for use. Claims for mileage will not be considered by the Council unless there is evidence, such as insufficient DLA to pay fuel costs, provided to justify the situation. We would not expect family members to claim priority over the use of mobility vehicles for their own use.
- 3.1.6 **Can you use public transport?** This might be travelling independently or with assistance from someone else for example, a buddying scheme, family, friends or a carer.
- 3.1.7 **Do you have a concessionary bus pass? If not, could you be assisted to apply for one? If an escort assistant is essential, are they eligible for a bus pass?** Where a person can use public transport or community transport either independently or with support, part of the support planning process may involve investing resources in the short term, to support people to be able to use these options, for example through travel training to support them to develop their skills around independent travel. People who qualify for concessionary travel will be expected to apply for and use this, to meet the costs of Travel to community services or activities that meet their social care needs. If the ability to travel would be made possible by an accompanying companion, assistance will be provided in

applying for a companion pass. The constraints of concessionary travel (i.e. no free travel before 0930) will be taken into account during the assessment.

3.1.8 If you cannot currently use public transport, could you do so following a period of reassurance, support, enablement and travel training? The council has a dedicated team of specifically trained officers to support adults to travel independently through a 1 2 1 programme.

3.1.9 Can you access transport with a carer, family member or friend? Where it is identified that a carer will provide travel assistance, the council officer will ensure any impact of this solution has been appropriately considered in the carer's assessment.

3.1.10 What will happen if, on occasion, your friends or carer are unable to provide travel assistance, what are your contingencies? Alternative arrangements should be detailed in a contingency plan to cover periods where they are unable to assist.

3.1.11 Do you live in residential care, a supported living scheme, or some other supported housing setting? Where people are living in settings funded by the Council there is an expectation that the cost of the placement will meet the full range of support needs, including travel to and from community activities, unless assessed as otherwise

3.1.12 Should another agency be providing the Travel? A person may be eligible for funding for their travel from another agency or organisation, for example to attend a service to meet an assessed health need.

3.2 It should be noted that, although a person may attend a specific community service/activity to meet their assessed needs, they will not be eligible automatically for travel assistance to and from the service/activity.

4. Positive Risk Management and Safeguarding

4.1 In order to make a safe and fair decision, assessors and the person will need to consider the risks involved in accessing one of the travel options and whether there are actions that can be put in place to ensure the option selected is safe and reasonable.

4.2 To determine the risks involved in getting out and about or with travel arrangements, the following factors will have been considered as part of the social care assessment of need:

4.2.1 Does the person have a disability, frailty, or a physical health issue? Is there any reason to doubt the person's ability to make safe decisions regarding their travel arrangements?

4.2.2 Can the person travel independently and is it safe for them to do so?

- 4.2.3 Are there any barriers to independent travel? Can these barriers be resolved?
- 4.2.4 What public transport is available to the person? How can they access public transport safely? Do they need support to use public transport?
- 4.2.5 Is there a risk to other people, if considering shared travel?
- 4.3 The assessment process should consider whether providing travel assistance will further disable the person or reduce their independence.

5 Support Planning Considerations

- 5.1 Where there is more than one service or support being accessed, or accessed on more than one day, there may be more than one solution or option available. Each day, service or journey may require different travel arrangements or no travel arrangements at all. Each journey will be considered separately, as part of the person's support plan.
- 5.2 Support planning will consider the impact that the travel arrangements will have on the sustainability of the plan and on family carers. This will be considered through assessment of the person's and their carer's needs. Determining the best way to meet the eligible travel assistance need will be addressed at the support planning stage.
- 5.3 Travel assistance may be partially or wholly provided or arranged by the Council and will include consideration of the following:
 - 5.3.1 Promoting independence and inclusion, and not increasing a person's dependence on others.
 - 5.3.2 How travel assistance support or services that can help the person meet their eligible needs will be accessed.
 - 5.3.3 The clear identification of travel arrangements including a contingency plan in cases of unforeseen changes.
 - 5.3.4 Ensuring people and their family carers are aware of options for travel assistance and that these are reflected in their support plans.
 - 5.3.5 The need to provide passenger assistance, where required due to health and safety reasons.
 - 5.3.6 The support plan will have regard to the sustainability of the caring role.
 - 5.3.7 Making good and effective use of the resources available.
 - 5.3.8 Always using the nearest appropriate and available resource to meet the person's assessed needs before considering any other resource. Or alternatively provide the sufficient funding that would be made available for the travel assistance to the person's home with the option for the person to top up their travel assistance

funding to make up the difference. This may increase their contribution to their care and support package.

6 Process

- 6.1 The best way to meet any eligible travel assistance need will be determined and agreed with the person at the support planning stage. This may be partially or wholly provided or arranged by the Council
- 6.2 Travel assistance may be provided on a temporary basis and reviewed when the person's situation changes or at least within 6 months.
- 6.3 Travel assistance needs will be included as part of the regular assessment and support planning reviews
- 6.4 Once travel assistance is in place, the responsibility of cancelling the service due to illness or holidays, falls to the person or a person acting on their behalf. They must inform the council giving as much notice as possible, preferably at least 48 hours' notice to enable the contract to be cancelled and costs not to be incurred.
- 6.5 Where identified, the Council will offer funded travel assistance in the following order
 - a. Independent Travel Training
 - b. Assistance with using public transport, e.g. travel buddies;
 - c. Provision of transport by family/ carers - supported by payment of mileage allowance if applicable
 - d. Use of Community Volunteer car and drive scheme
 - e. Use of the Council's Integrated Transport Fleet bus
 - f. Where all other options have been explored and discounted, consideration of a Taxi service, shared with others or solely for the use of the person, may be considered.

7 People who do not have eligible need for travel assistance provided by the Council

- 7.1 Where a person is not eligible for the provision of council funded and arranged travel assistance, as an assessed need, then they should be signposted to any community groups or public transport offers that would be relevant in supporting them

8 Appeals

- 8.1 The assessment for an eligible social care need, including any assessed need for support with travel assistance, will be carried out by a suitably qualified council officer with the person and/or their family/carer representative.
- 8.2 In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to the Service Delivery Manager for the locality the person lives in, who will attempt to resolve the issue. If the person/their representative remains dissatisfied with the Council's decision they can make a complaint under the Adult Social Care complaints procedure.

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