

# Transport Policy for Adult Social Care customers

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# Introduction

## Why have a transport policy?

The purpose of having a policy is to provide a fair and consistent approach to the provision of transport support that fits with the Council's strategic aims and outcomes for Adult Social Care. The policy describes how transport will generally be provided for customers whose care and support needs are being met by the Council. It sets a distinct set of criteria, which Social Care Assessors will use to determine whether an individual should be provided with local authority assisted transport as part of a Care and Support Plan.

Assisted Transport is transport arranged or provided by the Council using taxis, minibuses and volunteer drivers, for people whose care and support needs are met by the Council. It helps people who need support to access day opportunities, respite care, leisure services, employment and training opportunities and other activities in the community.

The underlying theme of this policy is to ensure that people travel as independently and safely as possible.

The policy applies to all adults aged 18 years and above who access care and support provided directly or commissioned by Adult Social Care and / or are in receipt of Direct Payments by any of the following Adult Service areas:

- Older People's Services
- Physical Disability and Sensory Services
- Mental Health Services
- Learning Disability Services

This policy does not cover travel assistance for customers under the age of 25 who need assistance to travel to and from education establishments for which more details can be found in the Home to School / College Transport Policy.

# The Policy

## 1. Legal framework

The Care Act 2014 and associated Regulations and statutory guidance provide the legal framework for the assessment of social care and support needs and for determining eligibility for adult social care support from the Council with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

The National Assistance Act (section 29) and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (section 2) together require local authorities to arrange various welfare services – including providing or assisting with facilities for travel - where they are satisfied that it is necessary to do so to meet the needs of disabled people. This means that transport will be considered as part of a broader assessment of needs based on the national eligibility criteria for adults and carers; and on the duty to meet needs through a care and support plan.

Assisted transport will generally only be provided to customers where following an assessment it is determined that this is necessary because the customer has no other travel option available in line with the eligibility criteria set out in this policy.

## 2. The Aims of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a fair, consistent and transparent approach is taken to identifying and meeting the transport needs of customers where these have been clearly identified in the Care and Support Plan, and all other suitable alternatives to meet the needs have been explored and exhausted.

This policy seeks to promote independent travel through the use of commonly available transport, such as public transport and private or Motability vehicle, and by encouraging walking, or mobilising with the use of aids, either independently or with support. This policy introduces a systematic approach to meeting the transport needs of eligible customers with the aim of moving away from the routine use of assisted transport. During social care needs assessments and Care and Support planning, all relevant transport options will be considered and Assisted Transport will be offered as a last resort where appropriate to needs and circumstances.

## 3. Principles of Providing Transport

The following principles will be adhered to:-

All those who access services arranged by the Council have received a Care Act Assessment.

Support with transport will only be considered for an eligible customer where a clear need is identified through their assessment and Support Plan. The travel assistance provided will be appropriate for the individual's need, will provide value for money and be cost effective.

Assisted Transport will only be provided in the event that, in the opinion of the Assessor, it is the only reasonable means of ensuring that the customer can be safely transported to service /destination/activity identified in the Care and Support plan which the customer would be otherwise unable to access.

#### **4. Eligibility Criteria for Assisted Transport**

All social care services are subject to eligibility criteria. Following a social care assessment, reassessment or review, the Council will, if required based on each individual's assessment, consider all transport options. If these are felt to be unsuitable, the provision of assisted transport by the Council will be considered using the following guidance:-

Transport may be provided where:-

- For specific health and safety reasons specialised transport arrangements may be necessary.
- A customer is unable to access services without supervision or support.
- Where applicable, the lower rate mobility element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment is being fully utilised to support the customer's transport needs to and from community activities, and the customer has re-applied for a higher rate of benefit entitlement where appropriate.
- A customer has no access to transport and cannot mobilise, use assisted mobility (wheelchair/aids) or use public transport, either independently or with support, in line with this transport policy.
- A customer cannot attend their nearest community activity including college or a day opportunity because there is no placement available or their culturally specific need cannot be met and all other options have been explored and exhausted. This may be on a temporary basis until an appropriate place is found nearer to home.

Entitlement to assisted transport does not automatically mean that the customer will have a requirement to be escorted on their journey. This will need to be considered as part of the individual Assessment and Support Planning processes. As part of this assessment, practitioners should assess the potential health & safety risks to the user and other customers.

Transport will not be provided where the following options are available:-

- Where a customer is assessed as able to mobilise safely to their destination, with or without mobility aids, either independently or with support from family, friends, support worker, volunteer etc. to get to a local community activity.

- Where a customer can use public transport, voluntary transport, or similar services either independently or with support (family, friends, carer, support worker etc.) to get to and from community activities.
- Where a customer receives the higher rate mobility element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, the customer will be required to fully utilise the benefit to access transport options.
- Where a customer has access to a private car, including a car leased through the Motability scheme, then they will be required to travel to the community activity independently using that vehicle.
- Where a customer uses their own vehicle or Motability car, no petrol costs or other expenses will be considered for funding by the department.
- Where a customer chooses to attend community, social or recreational, or education facilities which are not the nearest available resource to meet their assessed need, the customer will be expected to travel independently or meet any additional cost of transport considered necessary.

This list is not exhaustive and a range of factors that are relevant to a particular customer will also be considered when assessing their needs and would contribute to identifying if transport was required to meet these. Where transport is provided, the assessed need for the assistance to access activities will need to be clearly documented and reviewed as part of the annual care and support plan review.

## **5. Assessment of Need**

Consideration will be given to transport in the initial assessment of a customer's needs and any subsequent review and reassessment, and will be provided in accordance with section 5 above.

A customer's assessment and review will focus on the 'assets or strengths' of each individual and will identify potential to learn road safety and orientation skills so that they can travel safely and independently to and from community activities. The focus of the Care and Support plan will ensure skills in this area are maximised and independence attained wherever possible.

## **6. Re-assessment & review**

All transport arrangements will be reviewed as part of the reassessment. The criteria detailed above will apply. Where a customer is accustomed to assisted travel this will not be a criteria for the continuation of such provision. Where it is felt that an individual may already be able, or could develop the skills to travel independently, an assessment for independent travel, including an assessment of risk, will be carried out, and an appropriate transport package will be identified. This may be with the support provider.

Transitional plans will be put in place to ensure any risks are managed and access to a service is maintained, e.g. whilst the customer undertakes a programme of travel training, should such an option become available.

## **7. Charging Adult Social Care customers for Transport**

All assisted transport provided, or arranged, by Warwickshire County Council is subject to a charge. The charge will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Financial assessments will be used to determine the proportion of transport charges that individual customers will be liable for.

## **8. Implementation**

This policy will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 for new customers. For existing customers receiving Council travel assistance, this Policy will be implemented at the time of their next reassessment or review after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

In order to decide whether existing customers require assisted transport or other support with travel, a transport assessment will be carried out as part of their review or reassessment. For existing customers who will no longer be entitled to assisted transport under this Policy, their circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. A transitional period of up to one month may be offered to support them to travel independently or to make use of alternative arrangements following their re-assessment/annual review.

## **9. Appeals and Complaints procedure**

Any customer, who is not satisfied with the Council's decision in relation to transport or the service provided, should in the first instance liaise with their assessor. Should the customer remain dissatisfied following the assessor reconsidering their decision the customer may instigate the Council's complaints procedure. In conducting an investigation into the complaint the appropriate manager will look at the operation of the policy and procedure, and will also be able to consider any special circumstances that may apply to any customer.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed one year after implementation and then on a rolling three year basis as a minimum. This policy will also be reviewed in light of any changes in legislation and any external and/or internal policy changes which may have an impact on its content.

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## Further Information

### **Information in other formats**

If this information is difficult to understand, we can provide it in another format, for example, large print, audio tape, easy read, or in another language.

Please contact the Interpreting and Translation Unit on 01926 410410

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