

Adult Social Services Assisted Transport Policy

1 What is Adult Social Services Assisted Transport?

Adult Social Services Assisted Transport is a transport service provided to people over the age of 18, to access 'community activities' within Caerphilly borough. A community activity is a care and support service that an individual attends away from their home, which is provided by Adult Social Services as part of a care and support plan.

These people generally cannot use public transport independently due to disability or health problems and have no reasonable access to private transport. It can be provided through taxis and mini buses either through direct provision by the Council, or sourced by the Council through transport contracts.

Assisted transport is specifically for access to social services commissioned services.

2 Policy Framework

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is the legislative framework for Social Services to identify an individual's outcomes and assess their need for care and support services. The Local Authority will have a duty to meet that need if the need cannot be met by the person's own resources or community resources.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 outlines principles and ways of working which include the responsibility for ensuring sustainable developments for individuals to connect with their local communities and the needs of the present being met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This links directly to the well-being principles underpinning this policy.

3 Principles of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to reflect national and local priorities and is based upon the following principles:

- Promoting independence
- Maximising choice and control
- Builds on strengths of someone's own network
- Supporting a healthy lifestyle
- Improving quality of life
- Maximising dignity and respect
- Developing local and community networks.

The overriding principle of this policy is that the decision to provide transport is based on needs, outcomes and on promoting independence, as part of the Council's commitment to inclusion and independence.

4 Policy Statement

This policy outlines how we will ensure that we have a consistent and equitable way of supporting individuals in the provision of Adult Social Services Assisted transport.

This policy sets the criteria that will be used to assess how people access transport to services identified in a care and support plan and provided by Adult Social Services. Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to promoting independence across all areas of service provision and seeks to ensure that people live as independently as possible within their own communities and continue to access services and support in ways which meet their needs.

As the need for transport is not an eligible need in its own right, but simply a means of accessing services, this policy rests upon a general assumption and expectation that clients will meet their own needs for transport to access services.

Funded transport will only be provided if, in the opinion of the assessor, ***if it is the only reasonable way to allow the person to safely access an eligible service***. Where there is appropriate transport available, it will be assumed that the individual will use this as a first option.

Adult Social Services will signpost individuals to appropriate transport options in order to promote the independence of that person.

5 Assessment for Assisted Transport to a Care and Support Service

An assessment for assisted transport will only be carried out when an individual is identified as being eligible for a community service provided by Adult Social Services.

The assessment will be undertaken as part of the person's Integrate Assessment, in line with the national eligibility criteria as outlined by Welsh Government within part 4 of the Social Services and Well – Being (Wales) Act 2014.

The target for starting the integrated assessment is within 28 days of the date of referral unless otherwise agreed with the referrer.

The target completion for the assessment for eligibility for assisted transport will be within 42 working days from date of referral.

In completing this assessment, consideration will be made to the person's strengths and abilities, with a focus on solutions that enable them to do things for themselves rather than become dependent. All transport options will be examined. The assessment will aim to establish whether it is safe and reasonable to expect the person, or their representative, to make transport arrangements.

When assessing eligibility for transport, the following factors will be taken into account:

- Access to existing transport.
- Access to mobility allowance or alternative funds.

- Assessment of mobility.
- Assessment of ability to travel independently.
- Identification of appropriate transport provision for those eligible.
- People may have the financial means to fund their own travel arrangements.
- Outcome of a period of travel training.
- Environmental assessment for entry / exit points to buildings to be transported to/from.
- Assessment of Health and safety requirements and suitability of wheelchairs and mobility aids to be transported on public / specialist transport.

Having explored all alternatives, assisted transport will only be provided to meet an eligible need that cannot be met by the person or through their network of support. The transport provided will be appropriate for that need, will provide value for money and be cost effective.

The outcome of the assessment will be clearly documented in the integrated assessment and Care and Support plan. A summary of the assessment and copy of Care and Support Plan will be provided to the individual. The Care and Support Plan will be reviewed a minimum of every 12 months.

Should an individual's circumstances change they will be able to request a new assisted transport assessment.

6 People will normally not be eligible for transport if:

- They have the physical and/or mental ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers.
- They are eligible for and receive mobility component of DLA / PIP.
- They have their own vehicle, access to family vehicle or a Motability vehicle which they drive themselves.
- They have a mobility vehicle of which they are not normally the driver themselves.
- Where the individual has access to a family/ household car, consideration will be made regarding whether it is reasonable to expect the person's family and friends network to help them travel to the location of the care service/ activities.
- They are in receipt of the Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outdoors and in the community. These people will only be eligible for transport if they are assessed as not capable of

independent travel or if the mobility element of the benefit does not fully cover their needs (due to distance from services, the nature of the disability, wheelchair type, carer support requirements etc). As part of the full financial assessment, Caerphilly County Borough Council's officers will also help people maximise their access to any benefits they may be entitled to.

- They live in a registered care home as these are subject to the terms and conditions of the contract between the Council and the care home. However, if the individual is assessed as having the ability to travel independently, or with minimal intervention, the care home will make provision to support independent travel if they are responsible for transport arrangements.
- They live in settings where their care needs are funded by the Adult Social Services Service e.g. Residential Care, supported living schemes (such as those for people with a learning disability or younger adults with mental health disorders), or shared lives placement, as the cost of the placement needs to cover the full range of support needs, including transport, to attend community activities.
- Where the individual is reliant on a relative or other carer to drive a mobility car, consideration must be given to supporting carer's respite needs. Nonetheless, if an individual or carer makes the decision that the car will not be used for the intended purpose the onus must be on the individual and/ or carer to make alternative appropriate arrangements. Assessing officers must also ensure that a carer's reluctance or inability to assist with transport does not prevent an individual from accessing a service that meets their assessed needs and the individual/ carer will need to make alternative arrangements.
- Where there is conflict between the individual and carer, regarding Motability cars, officers may need to consider safeguarding issues. The worker will need to consider discussing with the individual the possibility of reverting back to a monetary allowance, if the individual so wishes. This would promote independence and allow the individual to take control of their own transport requirements. Consideration will be given to the impact of this option on individual-carer relationships and the need to avoid creating unnecessary conflict.

If it is established during the assessment process that the person can travel to a community activity that meets their outcomes, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers, the Local Authority will not provide transport, or pay for travel costs. However, this does not prevent people using their own financial resources to pay for transport should they choose to do so.

People who qualify for concessionary travel (i.e. bus passes), will be expected to apply and use these as and when appropriate. Where access to a companion bus pass would enable the person to travel by means of public transport, this will be considered for their carer/ companion. The constraints of concessionary travel will also be taken into account during the assessment.

7 Appeals

It is not possible to appeal the decision of an assessment where all factors have been considered.

However, if an individual or their carer is unhappy with the content of the assessment carried out for assisted transport, they can request the assessment document to be reviewed independently by a Team Manager.

This request should be put in writing to the customer services department who will forward the request to the necessary team manager for consideration. Feedback will be provided within 7 working days of receipt of the request.

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/My-Council/Complaints-and-feedback/Adult-services-complaints>

8 Declining Services

If an individual has been assessed as able to make their own transport arrangements but declines to do so, and as a result is unable to attend the service for which they have an assessed eligible need, this will be viewed as the person declining services.

9 Access to Transport for services not provided by Adult Social Services:

The codes of practice for eligibility within the Social Service and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 4.1 states: *“It is not the purpose of the eligibility criteria to draw local authority care and support services into challenges they cannot address (such as provision of health care, employment, or education).”* Therefore:

Where there is a requirement for access to transport health care, an individual can seek assessment from the NHS via their GP for transport services to the hospital or out patient department they are required to attend.

Where there is a requirement for access to transport to employment, an individual can seek assessment from employment service such as the Job Centre Plus or Access to Work.

Where there is a requirement for access to transport for college or education. Education is not a provision of service under a care and support plan by adult social services and therefore assessment for such a requirement falls under the Education and transport department policy regarding post 16 transport to educational settings is outlined in a separate policy:

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Schools-and-learning/School-travel>

10 Alternative Methods of Transport in the Borough

There are several community transport schemes across the county, mainly covering areas with less reliable transport links but not restricted to these areas. The Council ensures,

through its support to the voluntary and community sector, that such schemes continue to be sustainable and serve the areas most in need. Caerphilly County Borough Council also has a robust Local Transport Plan, outlining current options for public transport and future proposed developments, this is updated as and when needed.

Caerphilly County Borough Council operates the Concessionary Travel Scheme, this scheme provides free bus travel at all times, everyday on most local bus services for anyone with an eligible disability and anyone over 60 who is a resident of Caerphilly Borough. The scheme also provides concessionary companion bus passes to those meeting the defined criteria and anyone unable to travel on public transport alone.

For eligibility and how to apply:

Over 60's bus pass:

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Transport-and-parking/Bus-pass-for-over-60s>

disabled bus pass and companion bus pass:

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Transport-and-parking/Bus-passes>