

Adult Social Care Assisted Transport Policy

1 What is Adult Social Care Assisted Transport?

Local Authority Transport is a transport service provided to people who 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, minibuses, Council fleet cars and volunteer drivers, either through direct provision by the Council, or sourced by individuals in receipt of Direct Payments.

Assisted Transport usually helps people to access day opportunities, respite care, leisure services, and employment and training opportunities.

2 Policy framework

2.1 Gwent MH and LD strategy

2.2 Monmouthshire County Council funds several community transport schemes across the county, mainly covering areas with less reliable transport links but not restricted to these areas. These options can be either dial-a-ride, Grass Routes, Bridges Community Car Scheme or befriender schemes. The Council ensures, through its commissioning strategy and its support to the voluntary and community sector, that such schemes continue to be sustainable and serve the area's most in need.

2.3 Monmouthshire County Council also has a robust Transportation Plan which is updated as and when needed, and which includes a countywide Bus Strategy.

2.4 Monmouthshire County Council operates the disabled bus pass and the concessionary (age-based) bus pass schemes, allowing anyone with a disability over the age of 5 and anyone above the retirement age who is a resident of Monmouthshire to apply for free bus travel out of peak times

<http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/150603-concessionary-travel-scheme-guidance.pdf>

For application forms :-

<http://www.newport.gov.uk/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=transport.homepage&contentid=cont50704>

2 Over 60's

<http://www.newport.gov.uk/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=socialcare.disabilities&contentid=cont50704>

4 Disabled

3 Legal Framework

3.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act sets out the council's duty to assess an individual's need for support services, where the person resides within the boundaries of the authority and it appears that they might be in need of community care services or support. 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.

4 Principles of the Policy

4.1 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
- Supporting a healthy lifestyle
- Improving quality of life
- Maximising dignity and respect
- Developing local and community networks.

4.2 The overriding principle of this policy is that the decision to provide transport is based on needs, risks and outcomes and on promoting independence, as part of the Council's commitment to inclusion and independence. Where a transport solution which promotes independence is not the most cost-effective solution, this will be considered on an individual basis by the budget holder.

4.3 A principle of reasonableness will be adopted (the assessment will aim to establish whether it is safe and reasonable to expect the person, or their representative, to make transport arrangements). As part of the assessment, all transport options will be examined and the outcomes will be identified and evidenced.

5 Policy Statement

5.1 Adult Social Care is able to provide transport through a variety of options to Monmouthshire residents with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities, older persons and people with mental ill health. This policy outlines how we will ensure that we have a consistent and equitable way of supporting these individuals in the provision of Local Authority funded transport.

5.2 This policy sets the criteria that will be used to assess how people qualify for transport and also to assess which option is the best one for each person: transport arranged by the Local Authority or privately-arranged. Monmouthshire County 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.

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

5.4 Funded transport will only be provided if, in the opinion of the assessor, it is the only reasonable way to allow the person to safely access an eligible service. Where there is appropriate transport available (either personal, taxi funded via Mobility Allowance, vehicles provided under the motability scheme eg provided and paid via mobility allowance, or public transport, including voluntary community schemes), it will be assumed that the individual will use this as a first option. Transport will only be provided if alternatives are unavailable or inappropriate for some reason.

5.5 Individuals who have the physical or mental ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers will do so. Staff from Adult Social Care will signpost individuals to appropriate transport options in order to promote the independence of that person.

5.6 Following an assessment, Monmouthshire County Council will only provide transport to help meet an assessed need that cannot be met by the person themselves, having explored all alternatives. The transport provided will be appropriate for that need, will provide value for money and be cost effective.

5.7 People who qualify for concessionary travel (i.e. bus passes), will be expected to apply and use these as and when appropriate according to assessed needs with support from their care manager to apply if needed. 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

5.8 Where there is a reference to college, this refers to a college placement that is linked to day activities. [See separate policy regarding post 16 transport to educational settings](#)

6 Scope

6.1 This policy applies to people over the age of 18 who have been assessed as eligible for support from Adult Care Services directorate, meaning they have a need that can only be met by services and/ or support which require access to transport.

6.2 The provision of transport will only be considered in relation to meeting the needs of adults who have been assessed as eligible for services and/ or support from Adult Social Care. As part of the Integrated Assessment/ Care and Treatment Planning process, the need to attend a community service and/ or to pursue other activities away from the individual's home may be identified, and as such this policy will set the framework for accessing transport.

6.3 The need for transport to and from any community service or activity service must be part of the assessment of a person's needs and any subsequent review(s). Transport can only be considered where the person is eligible for this service.

6.4 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.

6.5 The Social Care Charges (Means Assessment and Determination of Charges) (Wales) Regulations 2011 seek to add to the services that cannot be charged for by including transport to a day service where transport is provided or commissioned by an authority and where this, and the attendance at the day service, have been identified as a requirement of a person's care assessment. This is to put such individuals on a par with those older and disabled people who receive free bus transport through concessionary fares;

Parts 4 and 5 of the code of practice in the Social Services and Well-Being Act specifies that the charging policy does NOT cover transport,

Parts 4 and 5 specifically in relation to non- residential services states that the mobility element of DLA and PIP is excluded from their charge i.e. the £60 per week cap

7 Eligibility and Practice Guidance in Determining the Need for Assisted Transport

7.1 If a person contacts us for help and shows a presenting need, we may carry out an Integrated Assessment/Care and Treatment Plan in order to establish whether or not they have any qualifying needs for transport as part of a wider care and support plan. In completing this assessment Monmouthshire County Council will place an emphasis on the person's strengths and capabilities, and focus on services that enable them to do things for themselves rather than become dependent.

7.2 The decision to provide assistance with transport must only follow a full assessment of needs, including mobility and the risks associated with accessing support and services in the community as part of the care and support planning process. The need for, and purpose of transport should be clearly stated on an individual's Care Plan. The provision and/ or funding for transport should only be considered if the service user's own resources and all other options have been exhausted

7.3 If there are no other ways in which the individual can reasonably access services and support or be expected to make arrangements to access them safely, then the provision of transport by the Council will be considered.

7.4 When assessing eligibility for transport and feasibility of different ways to access services, 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

7.4.1 People will normally not be eligible for transport if:

- They have a Motability vehicle which they drive themselves. Where a person uses their own vehicle or Motability car no petrol costs or other expenses will be considered;
- They have a mobility vehicle of which they are not normally the driver themselves. There will be consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect the person's family and friends network to help them travel to the location of the care service/ activity;
- 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, Monmouthshire County Council's finance officers will also help people maximise their access to any benefits they may be entitled to.
- They live in a registered residential 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 Care 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 including college.

7.4.2 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, including enabling them to work. 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.

7.4.3 Where there is conflict between the individual and carer, regarding motability cars, officers may need to consider the possibility of reverting back to a monetary allowance with the Department for Work and Pensions, 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. There may be a need to consider safeguarding issues.

8 Appeals

If an individual or their carer is unhappy with the assessment of their transport needs, they have the option to use the council's complaint process.

9. Refusal of 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.

Where a person has declined a service which they are eligible for, the assessor will evaluate whether the person has the capacity to make this decision. If the decision is being made on behalf of another person, the assessor will check whether they feel the decision is being made in the best interest of the person who is eligible for the services