

Transport Policy for Adult Social Care

Document Details

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| Strategic Lead | Rebecca Wassell – Assistant Director, People Commissioning |
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1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The Transport Policy for Adult Social Care (“the policy”) sets out Worcestershire County Council's (“WCC’s”) policy with regard to the provision and funding of transport for adults in receipt of social care services to meet their assessed eligible needs under the Care Act 2014.
- 1.2 The policy will be used where WCC has assessed an adult as eligible for care and support and where one of those support needs is to make use of necessary facilities or services in the local community. The policy sets out clear criteria which Social Workers and front line Adult Social Care staff responsible for assessment and support planning will use to determine whether an adult will be provided with transport assistance from the Council and how transport will be provided.
- 1.3 The overarching principle of the policy is to promote safe and independent travel using an adult's own strengths and community assets wherever possible. Where transport assistance is assessed as needed, the aim is to ensure the method of provision maximises independence, supports personalised approaches which make the best use of the resources available in people’s own communities and offers best value for money in line with the Council's strategic aims and objectives.
- 1.4 Transport provision assists people assessed with eligible support needs to make use of necessary facilities or services in the local community including but not limited to day opportunities, replacement care (respite), employment and training opportunities. Transport support can be provided in a variety of ways, for example using assistive technology to enable more independent travel or for example by the use of public transport, community transport, taxis, minibuses or cars. Assisted transport may be sourced independently by adults in receipt of Direct Payments or, if required, through direct provision commissioned by the Council.
- 1.5 The policy will apply to transport provided, arranged and/or paid for by the Council to ensure:
 - a fair, consistent and equitable approach is taken for those assessed as eligible
 - independence, self-reliance and inclusion are promoted wherever possible
 - adults' strengths and community assets (i.e. the resources available to the adult in the community where they live) are fully utilised
 - choice and control are maximised
 - resources are used efficiently and in a way that is cost effective and will provide best value for money.

2. Scope

2.1 The policy applies to all adults who are:

- aged 18 and over; **and**
- assessed as having 'eligible needs' as outlined in the Care Act 2014 following a Needs Assessment, Reassessment or Review; **and**
- ordinarily resident in Worcestershire.

2.2 The following areas are out of scope of this policy:

- transport provided to people aged 18-25 years who need travel assistance to facilitate the receipt of statutory education. Eligibility for these categories of young adults will be considered under the provisions of Worcestershire County Council's Home to School Travel Policy which can be found at [WCC Home to School Transport Policy](#).
- transport to NHS/health services or appointments: transport to these services is available for eligible clients from the NHS. For further information visit: [NHS Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Patient Transport Service](#)

3. Legal Framework and Eligibility

3.1 The Care Act 2014, in conjunction with the Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/313) and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance provide the legal framework for making decisions in relation to eligibility for adult social care support.

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to assess adults' social care needs and a duty to meet the identified eligible needs. Where eligible needs are identified, it does not automatically follow that transport assistance will be provided by the Council as part of meeting those needs through the provision of services. Transport assistance will be provided when the assessor determines such provision is necessary to enable the adult to safely access facilities or services in the local community, and no other travel option is available to the adult.

3.3 The policy has due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and in particular the local authority's Public Sector Equality Duty, and a full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to the policy.

4. Overarching Principles

4.1 The priority of Worcestershire's People Strategy is "to ensure Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible." Together with our partners, the People Directorate will co-produce ways of working with citizens to enable them to:

- Be well and stay safe
- Be independent and connected
- Be supported

The strategy will be achieved through:

- A person-centred approach which builds on strengths of local community assets
- Shaping services to redirect resources towards independence and enabling approaches
- Shaping of an effective market which facilitates development of independence, self-reliance and choice.

4.2 In line with the Council's strategy and Care Act duties, the overriding principle of this policy is that the decision to provide transport is based on promoting an adult's independence and wellbeing, taking into account needs, risks and outcomes. Therefore, when assessing transport needs, universal services within an individual's community will always be considered as the first option.

4.3 Adults will be encouraged to use the resources around them to meet their travel requirements and staff will be proactive in promoting the range of options available. The needs of carers must also be considered as part of assessment and decision-making.

4.4 Where it is determined that an adult requires funded support from the Council, the provision of funding through a Direct Payment should be the first option offered, before consideration of a commissioned transport option if a direct payment is not appropriate.

5. Eligibility and determining the need for transport

5.1 The decision to provide assistance with transport will only follow a full assessment of needs, including consideration of mobility and ability to travel independently 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

in an individual's Care and Support Plan.

- 5.2 If there are no other ways in which the individual can reasonably access services or be expected to make arrangements to access them safely, then the provision of transport by the council will be considered a need.
- 5.3 When assessing eligibility for transport and feasibility of different ways to access services, an assessor will consider the following factors:
1. Access to existing transport, including the potential use of other funding streams such as mobility benefits
 2. Assessment of ability to travel independently
 3. Identification of appropriate transport provision for those eligible (prioritising the use of local services to meet the eligible need) and the most appropriate method of provision of funded transport, with a direct payment being considered in the first instance.
- 5.4 A principal of reasonableness will be adopted i.e. the assessment will aim to establish if it is safe and reasonable to expect the person to make their own travel arrangements.

Access to existing transport

- 5.5 Access to existing transport and the use of mobility benefits should be considered in the first instance, specifically:
- a) Where the individual has a Motability vehicle which they drive themselves. In this instance there will be consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect that the individual will use that vehicle in order to travel to the location of the care service or activity.
 - b) Where the individual has a Motability vehicle of which they are not normally the driver. Again, there will be consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect the person's family and friends to help them travel to the care service or activity.
 - c) Where the individual is in receipt of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), 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. Consideration should be given to the appropriate use of the mobility benefit, and whether it may be utilised to either fully or partially meet needs.

Assessment of ability to travel independently, including mobility

- 5.6 Transport assistance will not normally be provided if, following assessment and support planning an adult is assessed as being safe to travel independently (within a reasonable distance) with or without support. This includes being able to walk, cycle, use public transport (bus or train or community transport). Support includes assistance from

a carer, family/friends, support worker or volunteer (this must be confirmed in the support plan).

- 5.7 An assessment of a client's ability to travel independently should be carried out using a risk-based approach, considering the physical, mental and social aspects of travelling independently and the promotion of a "positive risk taking" approach.
- 5.8 Physical mobility must be considered, including assessing areas such as the ability to walk outside, requirement for mobility aids, ability to get in and out of a vehicle and any barriers to independent travel, including any relevant occupational therapy or other professional assessments.
- 5.9 Other factors which may affect an individual's ability to travel independently should be considered, including communication abilities, psychological factors, factors affecting personal safety and availability of family, carers or volunteers to assist with access to transport.
- 5.10 Where an individual is assessed as potentially capable of independent travel, access to short-term support such as independent travel training should be considered.

Identification of appropriate transport

- 5.11 Once eligibility has been assessed and the ability and willingness to use an individual's own resources or resources in the community have been discussed and documented in the Support Plan, any residual unmet transport needs will then be considered and it will be recorded in the Support Plan how these are to be met. The support plan must explain clearly how this decision was made. Directly provided transport services will be provided only once all other alternatives have been considered and ruled out, and not as a matter of course.
- 5.12 There are different types of transport service provision:
 - Assistance with using public transport (e.g. travel buddies or by undertaking a course of independent travel training, or with the support of assistive technology)
 - Assistance with using community transport
 - Provision of transport by parents/carers or by a support assistant
 - Commissioned transport such as a taxi, either shared or in exceptional cases for sole use.
- 5.13 Where a person cannot attend their nearest community activity because there is no placement available, the assessing officer may request additional resources to be allocated. However, where a person chooses to attend community activities that are not the nearest, and the nearest service is available to meet their assessed need, any additional cost of any transport considered necessary will be met by the person.

- 5.14 There is no single definition of a reasonable distance/ time to access services or activities that meet social care needs. An assessor should be able, having information about an individual's abilities and the transport options available, to define "reasonable" for that individual.
- 5.15 Where the individual is reliant on a relative or other carer to drive a mobility car, consideration must be given to supporting the carer's respite needs, including enabling them to work. However, assessing officers must ensure that a carer's inability to assist with transport does not prevent an individual from accessing a service that meets their assessed needs, and discussions with an individual and carers must have reference to the conditions of the Motability scheme, namely that the mobility car is to be used by or for the benefit of the disabled person. See <https://www.motability.co.uk/about/how-the-scheme-works/how-your-vehicle-can-be-used/> for more information.
- 5.16 Where it is identified that a carer will provide transport, it is important that the assessor is able to demonstrate that the impact of this has been appropriately considered in an assessment of the carer's needs. Where carers or friends have been identified as being able to provide transport, alternative arrangements should be detailed in the contingency plan to cover periods where they are unable to do so.
- 5.17 Following consideration of all the options outlined above, where it is determined that an adult has a need which cannot be met in these ways, then the assessment should lead to an allocation of resources to meet need that are adequate to access funded transport to or from services.
- 5.18 Consideration should be given to whether service provision could be accessed via a direct payment in the first instance, or via commissioned transport where this option is not suitable.
- 5.19 In some limited circumstances, the Council may explore the option of providing unpaid carers (family and friends) a mileage allowance in order for them to provide transport to meet the assessed travel needs but only if it can be demonstrated that this is the most cost-effective option.

6. Review

- 6.1 All current and future transport arrangements will be subject to annual care and support plan reviews to ensure ongoing eligibility.

7. Additional Guidance and Information

- 7.1 Additional guidance and information can be found on the Council's website at [Transport Toolkit | Worcestershire County Council](#) .