

Transport Policy for Social Care and Support

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Contents

Introduction	3
The Policy	4
1. Legal framework	4
2. The aims of this policy.....	4
3. Eligibility criteria for assisted transport.....	4
4. Assessment and review of need	6
5. Charging Social Care and Support customers for transport.....	6
6. Appeals and complaints procedure	6
Monitoring and Review	7

Introduction

Why have a transport policy?

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair and consistent approach to the provision of transport by Warwickshire County Council Social Care and Support. The policy describes how transport will generally be provided for customers with care and support needs.

It sets a distinct set of criteria, which Social Care practitioners will use to determine whether an individual should be provided with local authority assisted transport as part of a Support Plan.

Assisted transport is transport arranged or provided 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 Social Care and Support and / or are in receipt of Direct Payments.

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.

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 Support Plan.

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 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 vehicles, and by encouraging walking, or mobilising with the use of aids, either independently or with support. Where possible we will support people to learn to travel independently and gain the skills to use mainstream resources.

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

The travel assistance provided will be appropriate for the individual's need, will provide value for money and be cost effective.

Warwickshire County Council will use a strengths based 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 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. Eligibility criteria for assisted transport

All social care services are subject to eligibility criteria. Following a social care assessment 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:

- there are specific health and safety reasons which mean specialised transport arrangements may be necessary.
- the customer is unable to access services without supervision or support.
- (if 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.
- the 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.
- the 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 and safety risks to the user and to other customers.

Transport will not be provided in situations where:

- the 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.
- the 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.
- the customer receives the higher rate mobility element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment. (In this case, the customer will be required to fully utilise the benefit to access transport options).
- the customer has access to a private car, including a car leased through the Motability scheme. (They will be required to travel to the community activity independently using that vehicle. If the customer uses their own vehicle or Motability car, no petrol costs or other expenses will be considered for funding by the council).
- the customer chooses to attend community, social or recreational, or education facilities which are not the nearest available resource to meet their assessed need. (They will be expected to travel independently or meet any additional cost of transport considered necessary).

This list is not exhaustive. 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 review.

In light of the above eligibility criteria, the decision to offer transport will ultimately be dependent upon the needs of the individual as assessed by the social care professional. These will be reflected within the Support Plan. This will take into consideration the potential impact of the decision on carers/family members.

4. Assessment and review of need

A customer's assessment and review will focus on the 'assets or strengths' of each individual and will identify their 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 Support Plan will ensure skills in this area are maximised, and independence attained wherever possible.

The criteria detailed above will apply at assessment and review. 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 solution will be identified.

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.

5. Charging Social Care and Support 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.

6. 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 allocated practitioner. Should the customer remain dissatisfied following the practitioner reconsidering their decision, the customer may use the council's complaints procedure.

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.