

Concessionary Travel Method Statement

Eligibility: Category B – Severely or profoundly deaf



Eligibility criteria

The England National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) is a national scheme which is administered in Warwickshire by the WCC. The eligibility criteria have remained unchanged since at least 2011 when WCC took over the scheme from the District and Borough Councils.

As the eligibility criteria are set down in legislation, WCC has no power to alter them, and is unable to issue ENCTS passes to anyone who does not meet the criteria.

An applicant for a pass must live in Warwickshire – this means their sole or principal residence must be within the county.

In addition, applicants for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass must show that they have one or more of the seven qualifying disabilities, as set out in the Transport Act 2000 and accompanying government guidance.

This document outlines how eligibility criteria will be applied in Warwickshire.

Category B

Section 146 of the Transport Act 2000 includes a person who is "**is profoundly or severely deaf**" as a disabled person who would qualify for a bus pass.

The current (April 2013) Department for Transport Guidance on eligibility says;

"(b) is profoundly or severely deaf"

33. Hearing loss is measured in decibels across the normal hearing spectrum, as dB HL (Hearing Level). People are generally regarded as having a severe hearing loss if it reaches 70-95 dB HL and a profound loss if it reaches 95+ dB HL. The Department advises that the statutory minimum concession should be made available to people in these categories.
34. There is no statutory registration system for deaf people. However, many will be registered on a voluntary basis with their local authority social services department. The register is open to people who have varying degrees of hearing loss, so in checking the register a local authority is advised to check that the applicant is profoundly or severely deaf before issuing a national concession bus pass.
35. As in the case of blind and partially sighted people, local authorities may, where appropriate, require applicants to provide evidence of registration before issuing a pass, or evidence that they could register, for example, an audiological report, or a report from an aural specialist.

Someone can have hearing loss above the 70dBHL threshold in one ear, without being considered 'severely or profoundly deaf', if the hearing in their other ear is below the threshold. This is because they can hear sounds averaging below 70dB.

This is supported by the descriptions given by Action on Hearing Loss on their website, which states;

- "Severe hearing loss : People with severe hearing loss rely a lot on lipreading, even with hearing aids. BSL may be their first or preferred language. The quietest sounds they can hear average between 70 and 94 decibels.
- Profound deafness : BSL may be the first or preferred language for people who are profoundly deaf, or they might communicate by lipreading. The quietest sounds they can hear average 95 decibels or more."

Someone who meets the threshold in one ear, but who has normal hearing, or less impaired hearing in their other ear, would not meet these descriptions.

This is also consistent with the "Guidance on assessing the eligibility of Service Personnel and Veterans for the England National Concessionary Travel Scheme" published by the Department for Transport in August 2011. The following descriptors from 'Table 7 Senses' are listed as injuries making someone automatically eligible for a bus pass under category B.

- Total deafness and loss of both eyes, or total deafness and total blindness in both eyes, or total deafness and loss of one eye and total blindness in the other eye.
- Total deafness in both ears
- Blast injury to ears or acute acoustic trauma due to impulse noise with permanent bilateral sensorineural hearing loss of more than 75dB averaged over 1, 2 and 3kHz.
- Bilateral permanent hearing loss of more than 75dB averaged over 1, 2 and 3kHz.

Although there are descriptors for hearing loss where only one ear is above the threshold, these are not included in the list of injuries which make someone automatically eligible.

WCC therefore takes the view that hearing loss must be above the threshold in both ears in order to qualify for a bus pass.

An audiogram will normally show overall AC (Air Conduction) and BC (Bone conduction) values for left and right ears. It is the AC values which will be used to determine eligibility.

If overall values for left and right ears are not shown, then average of the pure-tone air conduction (AC) hearing threshold levels at 250, 500, 1,000, 2,000 and 4,000 Hz will be used.

A single frequency showing a value over the threshold on an audiogram will not be sufficient to show eligibility.

Based on information published by the NHS, the current threshold for patients to receive cochlear implants is for them to have severe to profound hearing loss.

WCC therefore takes the view that someone who has received, or has been referred for, cochlear implants will qualify for a bus pass under this category.

Category B - Issuing a pass

WCC will therefore issue passes to individuals who can demonstrate that they have hearing loss above 70dBHL AC in both ears.

Category B - Evidence which can be used

Evidence which can be provided to help show eligibility under category B includes

- Audiogram showing hearing loss of more than 70 dBHL in both ears
- Medical information which indicates that you have had a cochlear implant fitted, or are awaiting a cochlear implant.
- Form CT-B1 completed by a relevant medical professional, indicating hearing loss of more than 70 dBHL in both ears
- Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) award with one of the following injuries
 - Total deafness and loss of both eyes, or total deafness and total blindness in both eyes, or total deafness and loss of one eye and total blindness in the other eye.
 - Total deafness in both ears
 - Blast injury to ears or acute acoustic trauma due to impulse noise with permanent bilateral sensorineural hearing loss of more than 75dB averaged over 1, 2 and 3kHz.
 - Bilateral permanent hearing loss of more than 75dB averaged over 1, 2 and 3kHz.

Category B - Evidence which is not acceptable

Document	Reason for rejection
Evidence showing hearing loss in one ear only	Eligibility criteria not met
Evidence that you have hearing aids	Does not provide the level of hearing loss
Evidence which is inconsistent with other evidence provided	e.g. if the dBHL values show a huge discrepancy within a short timescale without a satisfactory explanation. If this occurs, then WCC may require the applicant to complete an evoked response audiometry test to provide a definitive value.