



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Policy for the Provision of Travel Support for
Adult Social Care Service Users and Carers**

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Charging and Financial Assessment for Adult Care and Support at Home Policy and the Care Act 2014 National Minimum Eligibility Threshold.
- 1.2 Adult Social Care undertakes an assessment to determine if an individual can travel independently or requires travel support in order to access services and activities. The outcome of the assessment will determine what support or provision, if any, is required. The policy for the provision of adult social care is aimed at promoting the maximum possible independence for the service user.
- 1.3 This policy sets the criteria that will be used to assess whether the service user's needs can be best met through independent travel arrangements, taking account of the service user's assessed needs and abilities, or whether directly provided transport services, either internal or external, will be required.
- 1.4 This policy rests upon a general assumption and expectation that service users will meet their own needs for transport to enable access to and take advantage of services or support where reasonably possible, and taking into account their assessed needs and abilities.
- 1.5 Transport is not a service in its own right; rather it is a means of achieving access to services or support. The overriding principle is that the decision to provide transport is based on assessed needs, risks and outcomes and on promoting independence.
- 1.6 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council funded transport (referred throughout this document as funded transport) will only be provided if, in the opinion of the assessor, it is the only reasonable means of ensuring that the service user can be safely transported as part of their assessed and eligible care and support or support. Where there is appropriate transport available (either personal or public transport), it will be assumed that the service user will use this as a first option. Directly provided transport will only be available if there are no other alternatives.
- 1.7 If funded transport is provided for a service user, a financial assessment will be required and a contribution may be payable towards the cost of all services received, including transport.

2. Scope

- 2.1. The assessment of need provides the basis on which Adult Social Care responds to requests for assistance and is concerned with exploring a person's presenting needs and abilities and determining their eligibility for care and support or support.
- 2.2. The provision of transport will only be considered in relation to meeting the needs of adults aged 18 years and over who have been assessed as eligible for care and support or support from Adult Social Care. As part of the

Assessment and Care Planning process, the need to attend a community service and/or to pursue other activities away from the service user's home may be identified.

- 2.3. The need for transport to any community service or activity must be a necessary ancillary part of the assessment of a person's needs and any subsequent review(s). Transport can only be provided where the person is eligible for care and support or support as set out in the Care Act 2014 National Minimum Eligibility Threshold.
- 2.4. Where an individual requests a Direct Payment to meet their assessed needs for care, the same principles will apply as to those people opting to receive support directly from Adult Social Care. The cost of transport will only be included in the Direct Payment where it is considered that the service user is eligible for this support and that it is necessary to enable the service user to receive such service in order that intended outcomes for the service user are met.
- 2.5. The provision of transport is subject to a charge under the Council's Charging and Financial Assessment for Adult Care and Support at Home Policy and service users and their carers' and advocates should read **that** Policy. This policy may be reviewed as and when appropriate, and changes may affect the charge which will be made for the provision of transport.

3. Legal Framework

- 3.1. The Care Act 2014 replaces key previous adult social care legislation. The National Minimum Eligibility Threshold identifies those who are eligible for care and support or support. In certain circumstances transport may be included in a care and support or support plan. The Care Act 2014 promotes the principle of **wellbeing** and support to meet the daily living needs of adults. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council must be satisfied that eligible care and support or support needs are met.
- 3.2. The three criteria that an adult must meet to have eligible needs are:
 1. The adult is affected by a physical or mental impairment or illness
 2. There is a significant impact on their **wellbeing**
 3. The adult does not have the ability to achieve at least 2 out of 10 National Minimum Eligibility Threshold outcomes.

3.3. National Minimum Eligibility Threshold outcomes are as follows:

1. Managing and maintaining nutrition
2. Maintaining personal hygiene
3. Maintaining toilet needs
4. Being appropriately clothed
5. Being able to make use of the adult's home safely
6. Maintaining a habitable home environment
7. Developing and maintaining family and other personal relationships
8. Accessing and engaging in work, education or volunteering
9. Making use of necessary facilities or services in the community (which can include public transport)
10. Carrying out caring responsibilities for a child

3.4. Carers

Carers can be eligible for support in their own right. The threshold is based on the impact their caring role has on their wellbeing. When determining carer eligibility Local Authorities must consider the following three conditions:

1. The carer's needs for support arise because they are providing necessary care to an adult
2. As a result of their caring responsibilities, the carer's physical or mental health is either deteriorating or is at risk of deterioration or the carer is unable to achieve any of the outcomes that the carer has identified as part of the carers assessment.
3. As a consequence of being unable to achieve these outcomes, there is or there is likely to be, a significant impact on the carer's wellbeing.

3.5. National Minimum Eligibility Threshold outcomes for carers are as follows:

1. Carrying out caring responsibilities for a child
2. Providing care to other persons
3. Maintaining a habitable home environment in the carer's home
4. Managing and maintaining nutrition
5. Developing and maintaining family or other personal relationships
6. Engaging in work, training, education or volunteering
7. Making use of necessary facilities or services in the community
8. Engaging in recreational activities

4. Aim of the Policy

4.1. The aim of this policy is to reflect national and local priorities and provide a framework for access to and the provision of funded transport.

4.2. The policy is based upon:

- Promoting independence
- Promoting inclusion and equality
- Maximising choice and control
- Supporting a healthy lifestyle

- Improving quality of life
- Maximising dignity and respect
- The provision of local accessible services and support

5. Principles

- 5.1. The overarching principle is that, as part of the Council's commitment to inclusion and independence, individuals who can 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 act as facilitators in indicating appropriate transport options.
- 5.2. Following an assessment of need, funded transport will only be provided to meet an eligible assessed need. The transport provided will be appropriate for that need, will provide value for money and be cost effective. Toward enabling independence, people who qualify for concessionary travel e.g. bus passes, will be expected to apply and use this as and when appropriate according to assessed needs.
- 5.3. A principle of reasonableness will be adopted, in that an exploration will be undertaken in any given situation as to whether it is reasonable to expect individuals to make their own arrangements, all transport options having been examined and the potential outcomes having been identified and evidenced.
- 5.4. This policy recognises that a reasonable charge will be applied for the provision of funded transport. The charge will be subject to a financial assessment in accordance with the Council's current Charging and Financial Assessment for Adult Care and Support at Home Policy.

6. Eligibility and Practice Guidance in determining the need for transport

- 6.1. The decision to provide assistance with transport will usually follow a full assessment of mobility needs and the risks associated as part of the support planning process. The purpose of transport should be clearly stated on an individual's Support Plan. The Local Authority does have the power to meet urgent needs before a needs assessment is completed, although this would only be exercised in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.2. In general, this Policy is based on the assumption that service users will travel independently except where assessment shows that this is not possible.

The test used in the assessment should be what will happen if direct transport (whether internal or external) is not provided, i.e. are there other ways in which the service user can reasonably be expected to attend services and/or support making his/her own arrangements to get there.

The provision and/or funding for transport should only be considered if the service user has needs categorised in accordance with the National Minimum Eligibility Threshold.

6.3. There are 4 stages in the process for assessment of eligibility for the provision of assistance with transport and the identification of appropriate transport:

1. Access to existing transport
2. Assessment of mobility
3. Assessment of ability to travel independently
4. Identification of appropriate transport provision for those eligible

6.4. Stage 1: Access to existing transport

Service users will not be eligible for transport if:

- They have a Motability vehicle they drive themselves. In this instance there will be consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect that the service user will use that vehicle in order to travel to the location of the care service/activity.
- They have a Motability vehicle of which they are not normally the driver themselves. Similarly, there will be consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect that the service user will use that vehicle in order to travel to the location of the care service/activity.

Service users with the following benefit will only be eligible for transport if they are assessed at Stage 3 as not capable of independent travel:

- Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP). (please note and cross reference to para 7.11 Page 11 re Disability Related Expenditure (DRE))

NB. The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 section 73(14) states that while social services authorities are empowered but not obliged to charge for such transport services, in assessing a person's ability to pay, his/her mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment if received must be ignored.

6.5. Stage 2: Assessment of mobility

An assessment will be made of the service user's mobility. This will involve assessing issues such as:

- Ability to walk outside
- Requirement for wheelchair / other walking aid
- Ability to get in and out of property
- Ability to get in and out of vehicle
- Risk of falling without support
- Ability to bear weight to transfer
- Whether mobile but at a risk when mobilising due to uncontrollable movements

- Ability to use stairs, manage gradients, including the steepness of stairs in home, safety, energy levels

Clients will be categorised for this purpose as follows:

- No mobility problems
- Limited mobility problems
- High/ complex mobility problems

6.6. Stage 3: Assessment of ability to travel independently

This assessment considers both physical and social reasons that enable or prevent the service user from travelling independently. This will include:

- Extent of the mobility problems identified in Stage 2
- Availability of family/carers
- Communication difficulties (for example ability to order a taxi or use public transport)
- Psychological factors e.g. mental health issues, loss of confidence, agoraphobia
- Experience or risk of harassment
- Any other factors affecting personal safety

The assessor will determine whether the service user:

- Is capable of travelling independently
- Requires some training, support or assistance that will enable them to be capable of travelling independently in the near future, whilst taking into account :
 - Managing/reducing risks
 - The use of Communication aids
 - The use of aids/adaptations in managing barriers (such as a pre-paid bus pass if a person has no monetary awareness/coin recognition, alarms set on mobile phone or watch if an individual requires a prompt for time)
 - Whether the adult is capable or not of travelling independently

When assessing ability to travel independently, it will be taken into account that some individuals may be trained on one route but these skills cannot be transferred to other routes or modes of transport without further training and support. Even after achieving independence, some individuals may need further training should there be any changes to that route.

Training and assessment should be a practical/physical exercise. A written assessment is not indicative of abilities.

Training should also be detailed and thorough, with full consideration to expected changes in seasons (such as darker evenings in the winter) and term time/school holiday implications.

6.7. Stage 4: Identification of appropriate transport

Once eligibility has been assessed as above, it will be the duty of Adult Social Care to make appropriate arrangements for transport. Directly provided transport services, whether internal or external, will be provided only once other alternatives have been considered and ruled out, and not as a matter of course.

6.8. The range of travel support includes:

- Assistance with using public transport, e.g. travel buddies.
- Provision of transport by parents/carers supported by payment of mileage allowance if appropriate.
- Existing taxi journey - to be shared with other clients
- Taxi service – solely for the use of the client
- Transport in Council vehicles, e.g. minibuses

6.9. Resources from Adult Social Care are unlikely to be allocated specifically to meet transport related needs where an individual:

- Is in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, or the enhanced rate of Personal Independence Payment the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outdoors. Generally no-one in receipt of the higher rate mobility allowance would receive funded transport, unless there are factors limiting their ability to utilise fully the benefits of the allowance e.g. geographical location, nature of the disability, wheelchair type or carer support requirements. The support plan will determine the level of support offered in these circumstances as part of the assessment process.
- Lives 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 support, the care home will make provision to support independent travel if they are responsible for transport arrangements. If the individual is a tenant in supported accommodation or Shared Lives, they will be subject to the same assessment and care planning arrangements as people living in their own homes or with relatives.

In some circumstances the cost of the placement covers the full range of support needs, including transport, to attend community activities, including attending college.

6.10. There is no single definition of what is 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 in all the circumstances then applicable.

It will be for each person to decide how far they are willing to travel in order to extend their choice and this will need to be balanced between distance, value for money and choice. In addition, the time taken to travel to the service destination or the cost of alternative means of transport should also be taken into account by the assessor as these may be prohibitive for the individual.

- 6.11. Where people incur extra expense for transport related to their impairment (Disability Related Expenditure: DRE) this will be assessed and agreed as part of the financial assessment process and allowances made.
- 6.12. Transport costs will be considered where costs incurred are over and above the Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment Mobility Component payable to an individual, when a reasonable alternative is not available. This is in accordance with the Council's Charging and Financial Assessment for Adult Care and Support at Home Policy.
- 6.13. Part of the individual's assessment or review will identify their potential to learn road safety and orientation skills so that they can travel independently, thus maximising their skills and autonomy. This may require a planned programme of transport training by a support worker, or a system of pairing people up or forming small groups, so that people can travel together and support each other. Programmes of support must be identified in Support Plans and be subject to regular review to monitor progress. Where a person cannot attend their nearest community activity including college or a day opportunity because there is no placement available the assessor may make a case requesting additional resources to be allocated.

However, where a person chooses to attend community activities, college or a day centre that is not the nearest and the nearest service is available to meet their assessed need, any additional cost of transport considered necessary will usually be met by the person.

- 6.14. Geographical isolation may be a factor in an individual's ability to achieve access to services outside the home. People living in rural or outlying areas of the Borough may experience additional barriers in terms of the frequency and number of buses they would be required to use, or the prohibitive cost of taxi fares. The availability of alternative accessible and affordable means of transport must be considered when assessing an individual's ability to travel independently.
- 6.15. Where a person contributes towards the provision of a shared community vehicle, there is an expectation that this would be used to transport them to community activities, including college, assuming it is available. 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 service user/carer relationships and the need to avoid creating unnecessary conflict. In some circumstances support from an independent advocate should be sought for the individual and, if necessary, the carer.

- 6.16. 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.
- 6.17. Where it is concluded that the carer cannot provide transport because it would place an unreasonable demand on them, then the assessment should lead to an allocation of resources to meet the eligible needs that can be met by enabling access to transport. 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.
- 6.18. In all other circumstances where a person has no access to their own transport and has difficulty walking, use assisted mobility (wheelchair/aids) or use public transport, either independently or with support, then the assessment should lead to an allocation of resources to meet those eligible needs that are adequate to access funded transport to and from services or activities.
- 6.19. There may be a need for periodic transport support for individuals in times of illness of themselves or their carer, or in relation to family circumstances or other temporary unavailability of usual transport and a flexible approach will be taken in these situations. A review of the Care/Support Plan is appropriate in these cases.
- 6.20. Once it has been agreed that the individual will be provided with funded transport, a referral must be made to the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Community Transport Service, who will undertake an evaluation under the Transport Framework to procure suitable transport provision, taking into consideration the assessed needs, ability and wishes of the individual, the views of any carer or representative/advocate, health and safety risk assessment factors and value for money.

NB. Where there is a reference to college, this refers to a college placement that is linked to day activities.

7. Implementation

- 7.1. This policy will be applied from November 1st 2016 to any new adult social care service users and also to existing service users. For existing service users this Policy will be implemented at the time of their annual review which will make provision where necessary for advocacy support to ensure that any change in arrangement is fully understood and that the service user is able to participate in the review process.

- 7.2. For those existing service users who will lose their eligibility for transport under this Policy, their circumstances will be considered sympathetically and it is envisaged that there will be a transitional period of up to 3 months to support them to travel independently or to make use of alternative arrangements following their re-assessment/annual review.

8. Periods of Absence

- 8.1. Where an individual does not require their directly provided transport, then providing they give 48 hours' notice to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, they will not be charged but will still be required to contribute to the cost of any other support they continue to receive. Where notice has not been given, charges may only be waived at the discretion of the appropriate Service Manager, such as if the client is admitted to hospital as an emergency (This is in accordance with the Charging and Financial Assessment for Adult Care and Support at Home Policy Policy).
- 8.2. If an individual is allocated a place on directly provided transport, it is essential that the place is fully utilised. Therefore, if the individual is absent for more than 4 weeks, either through illness or on a planned basis, they will be subject to a review to ensure that continuation of the previous service will be appropriate to meet their needs. Their place may be re-allocated during this time if the need arises. In some cases it may be appropriate to keep the place open, but this must be by agreement with the care manager, day opportunity provider, transport provider and the individual.

9. Monitoring, Review and Reassessment

- 9.1. Travel arrangements and any impacts this policy has had on the ability of vulnerable people to access appropriate services to meet their eligible social care needs will be considered by assessing officers at a review or reassessment of the individual's needs.
- 9.2. An individual or their authorised representative can request a review of their social care needs at any time.
- 9.3. If the individual disagrees with the assessment and wishes this to be reconsidered, they should contact the Team Manager within 10 days of receipt of the assessment outcome. Following such a notification from the service user, the Team Manager will review the assessment carried out by the assessor.

This will normally be completed within 10 working days and a written reply provided detailing and setting out the reasons for maintaining or revising the assessment. The Adult Social Care Team will acknowledge receipt of the service user's request and notify them of the timescales involved and when they will be receiving a response.

- 9.4. At any time in this process the individual or their representative can make a complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

10. Complaints

- 10.1. Stockton-on-Tees Adult Social Care's Complaints Policy welcomes and responds positively to all comments, compliments and complaints as a means of demonstrating its commitment to working in partnership with individuals and carers and to ensure that services are provided to the required standard.
- 10.2. The Adult Social Care Complaints Policy comprises of one stage after which the complainant should be advised to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman. A copy of the Complaints Procedure is available on request.
- 10.3. Although complainants can refer their complaints from the outset, or at any stage, to the Local Government Ombudsman, they will not normally be investigated until the Council has conducted its own investigation and made a response.

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