

POLICY ON PROVISION OF TRANSPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO USE COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES IN MIDLOTHIAN

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy describes the approach to the provision of transport for people who use Adult Social Care Services in Midlothian. This includes older people, people with physical or learning disabilities, and people with mental health difficulties.

The policy is consistent with Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership aims and strategic outcomes and outlines how we will ensure a consistent and equitable approach to providing transport that makes best use of physical and financial resources.

It sets out the criteria that we will use to assess how people qualify for transport, and how we will assess what option is best for each person.

The policy rests on the assumption and expectation that people will make their own transport arrangements to access community care services, and that funded transport will only be provided if there is no other reasonable way to safely access the services for which they are eligible.

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to adults who have been assessed as eligible for support from Adult Social Care services in Midlothian.

It applies to transport to and from any service that has been identified or organised to meet this assessed need.

3. PRINCIPLES

Any decision to provide transport will be based on needs, risks, outcomes and the promotion of independence.

We will:

- make sure that people who need it the most get help with transport.
- support and encourage people to travel independently and use local services.
- expect people to use ordinary public transport if they can.
- make sure that any transport we provide is safe and good value for money.
- support transport that is efficient and good for the environment.

4. DECISIONS ABOUT WHO CAN GET HELP WITH TRANSPORT

The need to attend a Community Care service will be identified as part of the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership Assessment and Care Planning process.

The need for transport to access such a service will be part of this assessment and any subsequent reviews.

Any decision to provide transport will follow a full assessment of needs including mobility and the risks associated with getting to and from community services as part of the care and support planning process.

The need for, and purpose, of the transport will be clearly stated in the person's Care and Support Plan.

If it is established during the assessment process that the person can travel independently or with assistance from support providers, family, or friends there will be no allocation of budget towards transport. This does not prevent people from using their overall personal budget to pay for transport should they choose to do so, providing that agreed outcomes are met.

The provision of transport will be considered a need if there is no reasonable way that a person can access their community care service safely.

People who qualify for benefits (DLA, PIP) to help with travel will be expected to use these to pay towards their travel costs. People in receipt of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance will only be eligible for transport if they are assessed as not capable of independent travel, or if the payment does not fully cover their needs because of the nature of their disability or distance from services.

People with Motability cars driven by either themselves or family, friends, or carers will not be eligible for transport unless it is assessed that it would be unreasonable to expect that the person would use the vehicle to access their care service. They will be expected to use their entitlement to contribute to costs.

People who qualify for concessionary travel will be expected to apply for and use these schemes, as and when appropriate, and according to assessed need.

The provision of transport is subject to a financial assessment under the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership Charging Policy.

5. THE TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT

The Transport Assessment has four stages.

(i) Access to Transport

We will look at what transport people have currently. This could be a Mobility Car or a Concessionary Travel pass, or benefits to cover transport costs.

(ii) Independent Travel

We will look people's ability to travel independently and assess:

- Their mobility
- Their safety travelling
- Their communication
- The risk to the person or other people of travelling independently
- Psychological factors or conditions including mental health issues and confidence
- The risk of harassment
- The availability of family or carers to support travel
- The distance of the journey and the Public Transport available

This assessment will decide if:

- a person can travel independently
- they can travel independently with some training, support, or help
- they cannot travel independently

Transport will be provided for people who would not be able to get to their Community Care Service any other way.

(iii) Deciding on the right transport

We will decide what transport people are eligible for and support them to decide what is best for them.

The options are:

- Help using public transport
- Training to travel independently
- An individual or shared taxi
- Transport in a Council car or bus

(iv) Working out the cost of transport

There will be a financial assessment to work out if the person should pay for their transport.

What people will be expected to pay will depend on the financial assessment and this is worked out using the Midlothian Charging Policy.

The full charge for transport to a Community Care Service is £1 per journey.

5. ARRANGING TRANSPORT

If the person is assessed as eligible for support with transport we will arrange this within a reasonable timescale.

If the person does not qualify for support with transport we will inform them of the reasons for our decision.

Travel arrangements will be regularly reassessed at review or reassessment of the individual's needs.

Any review and proposed change to, or removal of, transport will be discussed with the individual

If the person disagrees with the assessment they have the right to appeal through the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership Appeals process by writing to:

Midlothian Health and Social Care
Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road
Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 3AA

Or sending an e mail to: social.work@midlothian.gov.uk

Or telephoning: 0131 271 3645