



**Assisted Transport
Policy
Vulnerable Adults and Older People**

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Part 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Transport costs are an everyday expense for all citizens and as such should be met through personal resources. The introduction to transferring Walsall citizens who are eligible for social care provision to this position began with a subsidised charge for transport and will now progress towards full costs of transport being met by the citizen. There will be some exceptional circumstances. (See Section 5 - Determining Need)
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to define clearly those citizens who will be assisted/supported to access transport in a fair equitable and transparent way, which will always seek to maximise the use of public and community transport and to reduce dependency as far as it is reasonable and safe so to do.
- 1.3 The Department of Works and Pensions include in their financial assessment for people with disabilities and opportunity for people to claim various allowances to assist with costs towards their mobility. The benefits that people receive for this purpose are expected to be used to help them access care services that is part of meeting their needs.
- 1.4 All of this policy operates within the Walsall Adult Social Care Operating Model that was approved by Cabinet in June 2013. This includes the importance of preventive measures to reduce the need to rely on state funding where appropriate and a commitment that for those who need on-going care and support that this is taken in the form of a personal budget (as laid out by Cabinet in April 2013).

Part 2: Legal Framework

- 2.1 Walsall Council has a duty to assist some citizens with transport arrangements in certain circumstances set out in:
 - Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948
 - Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970.
- 2.2 The Council also has a responsibility to respond to requests for assistance by assessing needs and determining eligibility for services under the NHS & Community Care Act 1990 and Department of Health 'Prioritising need in the context of Putting People First: A whole system approach to eligibility for social care' 2010. People's needs for transport will be assessed in the same way as other eligible needs under Walsall Council's policy of helping those with critical and substantial social care needs.

Part 3: Assessment of Need

- 3.1 An assessment of need under section 47 of the NHS & Community Care Act 1990 forms the basis on which the Council responds to requests for assistance. The purpose of the assessment is to identify and evaluate individuals' presenting needs and how these needs impose barriers to that citizen's independence and/or well-being. Information from the assessment is used to determine eligibility. When eligible needs, which are critical or substantial, are identified a person centred support plan is developed in collaboration with the individual describing the support that can be provided to overcome barriers to independence and well-being, both immediately and over the long term.
- 3.2 The need for transport must be part of the initial assessment of a citizen's needs and can only be provided where the citizen is eligible for a service as

set out in the Council's eligibility criteria, Fair Access to Care Service (FACS) for Community Care Services, and where mobility related benefits and transport concessions are unable to meet the assessed eligible need. This means that only those needs that relate to critical and substantial risks to their independence will be considered alongside how the person may be asked to make a contribution to those costs through any benefits they receive.

- 3.3 The individual citizen, and where appropriate their carers, advocates or representatives, have a right to be consulted and involved during the assessment and planning process and their views taken fully into consideration.

Part 4: Principles

- 4.1 As part of Walsall Council's commitment to inclusion and independence, citizens who can travel to community activities either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers will be encouraged and expected to do so.
- 4.2 Following an assessment of need assisted transport will only be provided to meet an assessed need. The transport support provided will be appropriate to enable the need to be met, and where mobility benefits and expenses are insufficient to cover all the transport costs. Assistance with transport will provide value for money and will be cost effective. This will be given to the person as part of their personal budget (which may be in the form of a Direct Payment or as a Managed Account). Where the transport is to be provided by the Council this will have to be as part of a "managed account".
- 4.3 All citizens who are in receipt of social care provision will be supported to access public and community transport already available throughout the borough. Exceptional circumstances will be considered where evidence can be provided that the transport costs of those citizens are above the average cost incurred as an everyday expense. In these circumstances, if a citizen is eligible, they may be able to utilise part of their personal budget to contribute a proportionate amount towards the cost of transport which is over and above the average everyday expense.
- 4.4 Citizens who qualify for concessionary travel will be expected to apply and use this as and when appropriate according to their assessed needs.
- 4.5 The Council will always seek to apply the principal of reasonableness when it expects citizens to make their own travel arrangements. This will include an exploration of all travel options, identification of outcomes to be achieved and evidence to support the decision made.
- 4.6 The capacity to travel independently will always be subject to a risk enablement assessment taking into account all relevant factors, including where appropriate the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- 4.7 Where there is a choice between travel options, both of which adequately meet the citizen's needs; the Council will prefer use of the most sustainable travel option which minimizes the impact on the environment.
- 4.8 Travel training should be offered to all people who may have an assessed need for transport but who also have the potential to undertake travel on their

own with some training and support. The funding for this travel training should also be considered within the personal budget. In line with the Walsall Council Operational Plan for Adult Social Care an investment in travel training to assist a person to become more independent is a significant way of meeting an eligible person's needs. In the future this means that they may not have the same needs when reviewed/re-assessed.

Part 5: Determining need

The decision to provide assistance with transport must be part of a community care assessment or review and be part of the support planning process. The purpose, cost and outcomes of any assistance with transport must be clearly stated in the support plan. Factors that need to be considered when determining whether assisted transport is necessary to meet an eligible need include:

- That the needs identified meet the eligibility criteria that they are critical or substantial in the impact on the person's life and how their care needs are to be met.
- The extent to which the citizen can travel independently (including own transport; any vehicle purchased under the Motability scheme; public transport; walking with or without support; or via any other independent or naturally supported means);
- Any barriers to independent travel and how these can be addressed;
- Whether the citizen is able to access transport provided by others (family, friends, paid carer, support worker);
- Whether the citizen is accessing the nearest service to meet their needs;
- The availability of public transport;
- Whether the citizen would be able to travel independently having undergone a travel training programme;
- Time taken to travel to service destination;
- Citizen's disability, frailty or physical health;
- Citizen's emotional state and ability to cope with independent travel;
- Whether a volunteer could support the citizen with their travel requirements;
- Whether the citizen is eligible for benefit related to their mobility needs for which they haven't yet applied;
- Whether the citizen receives a benefit to facilitate their mobility needs and the extent to which this is being utilised for transport purposes or any other transport related expenses;
- Whether the citizen has a concessionary bus pass and if not whether they need assistance to apply;
- Cost of alternative means of transport, for example community transport, volunteer transport, or collective pooling of personal budgets;
- Carer's support needs e.g. support to remain in employment, education or for their leisure and volunteering activities;
- Risks to self and others.

There will be some citizens who by exception will continue to need help with funding their transport as part of their support plan and they will pay the full cost of the transport. These costs will be included in the calculation of their personal budget.