



Neath Port Talbot  
Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Adult Services

## Assisted Transport Policy

April 2019

***Building Safe and Resilient Communities***

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Adult Services ('the Council') is committed to promoting independence across all areas of service provision and seeks to ensure as many people live and travel as independently as possible within their own communities. Travel to work, leisure and other key activities is a crucial aspect of everyday life, which should be achievable without a great deal of difficulty and where possible, independently.
- 1.2 This policy has been developed to provide a strategic approach to delivering transport that is consistent, transparent and clearly outlines the framework through which the Council provides transport services. The policy applies to all adults aged 18 years and above who access community services, including short breaks/respite, provided directly or commissioned by the Council.

## **2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 2.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is the legislative framework that sets out the Council's duty to assess an individual's need for care and support services. The Council will have a duty to meet that need if the need cannot be met by the person's own resources or community resources.
- 2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 outlines principles and ways of working which include the responsibility for ensuring sustainable developments for individuals to connect with their local communities and the needs of the present being met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This links directly to the well-being principles underpinning this policy.

## **3. AIMS OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to reflect local and national priorities and complements the Council's approach to delivering Adult Social Care. The policy is underpinned by the Council's Plan for Adult Social Care 2019 – 2022, and adheres to our principles of:
- Promoting independence
  - Maximising choice and control
  - Supporting a healthy lifestyle
  - Improving quality of life
  - Maximising dignity and respect
  - Developing local and community networks

## **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 4.1 This policy outlines how the Council will ensure a consistent and equitable way of supporting individuals in the provision of Adult Social Care Assisted Transport.
- 4.2 This policy sets the criteria that will be used to assess how adults access transport to services identified in a care and support plan and provided by the Council.

- 4.3 The overriding principle of this policy is that the decision to provide transport is based on needs, risks and outcomes and on promoting independence. The Council is committed to promoting independence across all areas of service provision and seeks to ensure that people live as independently as possible within their own communities and continue to access services and support in ways which meet their needs.
- 4.4 As the need for transport is not an eligible need in its own right, but simply a means of accessing services, this policy rests upon a general assumption and expectation that people will meet their own needs for transport to access services and/or support.
- 4.5 Funded transport will only be provided if, in the opinion of the assessor, it is the only reasonable way to allow the person to safely access an eligible service. Where there is appropriate transport available (for example personal, taxi funded via Mobility Allowance, vehicles provided under the Motability Scheme e.g. provided and paid via mobility allowance, or public transport, including voluntary community transport schemes), it will be assumed that the individual will use this as a first option.
- 4.6 Individuals who have the physical and/or mental ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from family, friends, or support providers will do so. Staff from Adult Services will signpost individuals to appropriate transport options in order to promote the independence of that person.
- 4.7 People who qualify for concessionary travel (i.e. bus passes) will be expected to apply for and use these as and when appropriate according to assessed needs, with support from their care manager to apply if needed. Where access to a companion bus pass would enable the person to travel by means of public transport, this will be considered for their carer/companion. The constraints of concessionary travel will also be taken into account during the assessment.
- 4.8 If eligible, the provision of transport will be agreed from a designated pick up and return point within the Neath Port Talbot boundary. Trips that do not form part of an agreed care plan will be the responsibility of the service user (or their family / carer).
- 4.9 The provision of assisted transport to enable young people to access schooling (under the Council's *Home to School Travel Policy*) or other services does not confer a right to Council funded transport in adulthood. This will form part of any transitions discussions and the community care assessment of need.

## **5. ASSESSING NEED FOR TRANSPORT**

- 5.1 Assessment for assisted transport will only be considered where the person is eligible for a community service provided by the Council in order to meet an assessed eligible need. The assessment must be part of the assessment of a person's outcomes and needs, and will be considered at any subsequent care and support plan review(s).
- 5.2 In completing this assessment, emphasis will be placed on the person's strengths and capabilities, and focus on solutions that enable them to do things for themselves rather than become dependent. The assessment will aim to establish whether it is safe and reasonable to expect the person, or their representative, to make transport

arrangements. As part of the assessment, all transport options will be examined and the outcomes will be identified and evidenced.

- 5.3 The need for, and purpose of transport should be clearly stated on an individual's assessment and resulting Care and Support Plan.
- 5.4 Provision of assisted transport will only be considered to enable people to travel to and from services they are assessed as needing to meet their social care needs following a Care Assessment. Any transport provided will be appropriate for that need, will provide value for money and be cost effective.
- 5.5 When assessing eligibility for transport and feasibility of different ways to access provision of services, the following factors will be taken into account:
  - Access to existing transport
  - Access to mobility allowance or alternative funds
  - Assessment of mobility
  - Assessment of ability to travel independently
  - Identification of appropriate transport provision for those eligible
  - People may have the financial means to fund their own travel arrangements
  - Outcome of a period of travel training
- 5.6 If it is established during the assessment process that the person can travel to a community activity that meets their outcomes, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers, the Council will not provide transport, or pay for travel costs. However, this does not prevent people using their own financial resources to pay for transport should they choose to do so.

## **6. PEOPLE WILL NORMALLY NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR TRANSPORT IF**

- 6.1 They have the physical and/or mental ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers.
- 6.2 They have their own vehicle, access to a family vehicle or a Motability vehicle which they drive themselves.
- 6.3 They have a Motability vehicle of which they are themselves not normally the driver.
- 6.4 Where the individual has access to a family/household vehicle, consideration will be made regarding whether it is reasonable to expect the person's family and friends network to help them travel to the location of the care service/activity.
- 6.5 They are in receipt of the Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) / Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outdoors in the community. They will only be eligible for transport if they are assessed as not capable of independent travel or if the mobility element of the benefit does not fully cover their needs (due to distance from services, the nature of the disability, wheelchair type, carer support requirements, etc.). As part of the full financial assessment, the Council will also help maximise their access to any benefits they may be entitled to.
- 6.6 They live 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 intervention, the care home will make provision to support independent travel if they are responsible for transport arrangements.
- 6.7 They live in settings where their care needs are funded by the Council, e.g. residential care, supported living schemes (such as those for people with a learning

disability or younger adults with mental health disorders), or shared lives placements, as the cost of the placement should cover the full range of support needs, including transport, to attend community activities.

- 6.8 Where the individual is reliant on a relative or other carer to drive a Motability car, consideration must be given to supporting the carer's respite needs. Nonetheless, if an individual or carer makes the decision that the car will not be used for the intended purpose the onus must be on the individual and/or carer to make appropriate alternative arrangements. The Council must also ensure that a carer's reluctance or inability to assist with transport does not prevent an individual from accessing a service that meets their assessed needs and the individual/carer will need to make alternative arrangements.
- 6.9 Where there is conflict between the individual and carer regarding Motability cars, the Council 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 individual-carer relationships and the need to avoid creating unnecessary conflict. The Council may also need to consider safeguarding issues.

## **7 PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Based on the above principles / criteria, the following guidance will be applied when identifying the need for Neath Port Talbot CBC assisted transport:

- 7.1 Where a person is able to walk, use assisted mobility (motorised scooter, wheelchair/aids) either independently or with support from family, friends, support worker, volunteer, etc. to get to a local community service including college and it is reasonable for them to do so, transport will not be provided.
- 7.2 Where a person can use public transport, voluntary transport, or community transport either independently or with reasonable support (family, friend, carer, support worker, etc.) to get to and from community activities including college, transport will not be provided.
- 7.3 Where people contribute towards the provision of a shared community vehicle, this should be used to transport them to community activities including college under the assessment of need.
- 7.4 Where a person has access to a vehicle, for example belonging to themselves or their carer, the assessment of need will take account of this. The assessment will need to consider whether the vehicle can be used to access community activities including college.
- 7.5 Where feasible and reasonable carers who have transport will be asked to assist in supporting travel arrangements to services.
- 7.6 Where it is identified in a carer's assessment that not providing transport would place an unreasonable responsibility on a carer then assisted transport will be considered under an assessment of need.
- 7.7 In all other circumstances, provided all transport options have been considered, evidenced and recorded, assisted transport will be considered.
- 7.8 All requests for assisted transport will be considered by either a Team Manager (or equivalent manager), Service Manager or relevant Adult Services Resource Panel.

7.9 Transport to attend an assessed health need service (hospital, physiotherapy, doctor appointments, etc) will not be provided by the Council.

## **8 SINGLE OCCUPANCY**

8.1 If the individual has been assessed as having challenging behaviour they will have a risk management plan to manage safety, which specifies why a single occupancy taxi or any other vehicle provided under contract by the Council is necessary. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the social worker or assessor. Single occupancy will also be available when it proves to be a more cost effective means of transport for the Council.

8.2 When an assessment or review is carried out for services, an assessment for transport services should be undertaken at the same time and presented to the Resource Panel. For single occupancy taxis/vehicles to be used, the Resource Panel must approve that the above criteria has been met and a risk assessment must be completed.

8.3 The requirement for the support of an escort should be considered / agreed at the same time.

## **9 ASSESSING RISK**

9.1 If a person accessing services is eligible to receive assisted transport as part of their assessed need, staff should risk assess the suitability of the individual to be transported and consider any pertinent mobility issues, the wheelchair size and type (if applicable), whether a passenger assistant (escort) is required, any medical issues and any other information that may affect the environment or way in which the person is transported.

9.2 The social care professional should refer to the Positive Risk Taking Framework when undertaking a review / assessment.

9.3 Fleet and transport services will carry out a parallel risk assessment, where required, to ensure that equipment provided, etc, during transport is suitable for the individual.

9.4 Service users should be informed that not all wheelchairs are suitable for transport purposes and encouraged early on to purchase those that meet the criteria.

## **10 REVIEW AND TERMINATION OF SERVICE**

10.1 The continuation of the provision of transport and/or passenger assistants/escorts will be reviewed, along with other elements of the care package, at least annually. If a person's circumstances change then a re-assessment will be undertaken.

10.2 In the event that the proposed removal of transport results from the assessment/review, the user will be supported through an agreed time limited transition period to ensure any identified risks are mitigated and alternative arrangements can be made.

10.3 If an individual has been assessed as able to make their own transport arrangements but declines to do so, and as a result is unable to attend the service for which they have an assessed eligible need, this will be viewed as the person declining the service(s).

10.4 Where a person has declined a service which they are eligible for, the assessor will evaluate whether the person has the capacity to make this decision. If the decision is being made on behalf of another person, the assessor will check whether they feel the decision is being made in the best interests of the person who is eligible for the service(s).

## **11 COMPLAINTS / APPEALS PROCEDURE**

11.1 Should a person who accesses services or their carer wish to have the opportunity to challenge any decisions made should refer to the Council's complaints procedure. This process has a clear route of appeal and timescale for handling complaints and a dedicated Adult Services telephone line.

11.2 Individuals and/or their carers should be provided with information explaining how to complain about Social Services in Neath Port Talbot, which is available in accessible formats and different languages. The leaflet and details of the complaints procedure can also be accessed online via the Council's website [www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk). The dedicated Adult Services Complaints telephone number is (01639) 763445, or via email: [complaints@npt.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@npt.gov.uk)

## **12 PRINCIPLES OF CHARGING FOR TRANSPORT**

Under Part 4 and 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessment) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, a local authority must not charge for transport to a day service where the transport is provided as part of meeting a person's assessed needs.

## **13 REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

The policy reflects our current position and will be reviewed annually.

## **14 RESOURCES**

Blue Badge Scheme: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/5828>

Care Assessment: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1522>

Concessionary Travel Bus Pass: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1511>

Motability Scheme: <https://www.motability.co.uk/about-the-scheme/how-your-car-can-be-used/>