

Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

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Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate Adult Social Care

Assisted Transport Policy

Updates, Revisions and Amendments		
Version	Details of Change	Date
1	Creation of Policy document	June 2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bridgend County Borough Council ('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.
- 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 away from their home which is provided by the Council as part of a Care and Support Plan, but the principles of the policy may also be applicable to relevant Children's Social Care teams as required.

2. Legal and regulatory 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 (Wales) Act 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 2020 – 2025, and adheres to key principles of :
 - Empowering service users and carers
 - Promoting independence
 - Better responses

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 community services identified in a Care and Support Plan and

provided by the Council. This policy does not cover accessing a post-16 educational setting and the Council's Home to School or College Transport Policy should be consulted for further information relating to this. The Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate will not meet any additional costs associated with the transport of learners to and from post-16 education settings.

- 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 The need for transport is not an eligible need in its own right, but a means of accessing care and support services required to meet assessed need. Sometimes, the Council needs to provide transport to attend a service to meet the assessed needs of the person, but this is a separate assessment to the need for the service itself. This policy rests upon a general assumption and expectation that people's own strengths and abilities will enable them to travel to access services and/or support, with the benefit of relevant training and support where applicable. Use of the resources available to them both as individuals and from the wider community will be fully assessed and taken into account when determining whether or not there is a need for the provision of transport.
- 4.5 Funded transport will only be provided if, in the opinion of the Council following an assessment process, it is the only reasonable way to allow the person to safely access an eligible service within the community. All appropriate alternative means of transport available (for example personal vehicles, taxi funded via Mobility Allowance, vehicles obtained under the Motability Scheme, or public transport, including voluntary community transport schemes), will be considered and it will be presumed that the individual can and will use these as a first option, unless individual assessment demonstrates otherwise.
- 4.6 Individuals who have the physical and cognitive ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from available family, friends, or support providers will generally be expected to do so, rather than via Council funded transport. Staff from Adult Social 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 assisted to apply for and use these as and when appropriate according to assessed needs and abilities, with support from a relevant and appropriate individual (social worker or family member for example) 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 Bridgend boundary. Trips that do not form part of an agreed Care and Support Plan will be the responsibility of the individual (or their family / carer).

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 as identified within their Care and Support Plan and in accordance with legislation. The assessment of transport needs must be part of the overall assessment of a person's outcomes and needs and will be considered at any subsequent Care and Support Plan review(s). For the purposes of this policy 'eligible need' does not include attending an educational setting as set out at Section 4.2.

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. 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 must 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 considered:

- Access to existing transport
- Access to mobility allowance or other funds provided to meet mobility needs
- Assessment of mobility
- Assessment of ability to travel independently
- Identification of appropriate transport provision for those eligible
- Potential outcome of a travel training programme

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 available 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 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 cognitive ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from available 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 and a driver is available.
- 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 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, and which it is reasonable to expect to be used to facilitate transport to the service/activity. They will only generally be eligible for funded transport if they are assessed as incapable of independent travel or if the mobility element of the benefit is already fully and reasonably utilised to fund their other mobility 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 or other setting 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. If the individual is assessed as having the ability to travel independently, or with minimal intervention, the service /other setting will make provision to support independent travel if they are responsible for transport arrangements.

7. Practical guidance

- 7.1 Based on the above principles / criteria, the following guidance will be applied when identifying the need for assisted transport but each case shall be determined on its own merit during the assessment process:
 - Where a person is able to walk, use assisted mobility (motorised scooter, wheelchair/aids) either independently or with available support from family, friends, support worker, volunteer, etc. to get to a local community service and it is reasonable for them to do so, transport will not be provided.
 - Where a person can use public transport, voluntary transport, or community transport either independently or with reasonable support (available family,

friend, carer, support worker, etc.) to get to and from community activities, transport will not be provided.

- Where people contribute towards the provision of a shared community vehicle, this should be expected to be used to transport them to community activities under the assessment of need.
- Where a person has access to a vehicle, for example belonging to themselves their carer, or their support provider 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.
- Where feasible and reasonable, carers who have transport will be asked to assist in supporting travel arrangements to services.
- Where it is identified in a carer's assessment that not providing transport would place an unreasonable responsibility on a carer then assisted transport may be considered under an assessment of need.

7.2 In all other circumstances, transport will only be provided to help meet an assessed need that cannot be met by the person themselves, having explored all alternatives. The transport provided will then be appropriate for that need, will provide value for money and be cost effective.

7.3 All requests for assisted transport will be considered by relevant service or team managers across the Directorate.

7.4 Transport to attend an assessed health need service (hospital, physiotherapy, doctor appointments, etc) will not be provided by the Council. An individual can seek an assessment from the NHS via their GP for transport services to the appointment they are required to attend.

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. For single occupancy taxis/vehicles to be used, relevant managers 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 vehicle to be used and consider any pertinent mobility or behavioural 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 worker should refer to the risk assessments completed by professionals in relation to the individual when undertaking the review / assessment.
- 9.3 Individuals 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 assisted 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 individual 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) in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and Best Interest Process, more information from which can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

11. Complaints / Appeals procedure

- 11.1 Should a person who accesses services or their carer be unhappy with the outcome of any assessment of their transport needs, , they should refer to the Council's Social Services Complaints Policy. This process has a clear route of appeal and timescales for handling complaints.
- 11.2 Individuals and/or their carers should be provided with information explaining how to complain about Social Services in Bridgend, 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.bridgend.gov.uk. The dedicated Social Services Complaints telephone number is (01656) 642253, or via email: socialservicescomplaints@bridgend.gov.uk

12. Principles of charging for transport

- 12.1 Under Part 4 and 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessment) issued under section 145 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

- 13.1 The policy reflects the Council's current position and will be reviewed every 2 years.

14. Resources

[Blue badge scheme](#)

[Contact Adults Social Care](#)

[Contact Children's Social Care](#)

[Concessionary travel bus pass](#)

[Motability scheme](#)