

Kingston Council Assistance with Travel Policy

Adult Social Care

Introduction

Kingston Council is committed to promoting independence, personal choice and control for the most vulnerable people in the borough which includes the provision of supported travel, where appropriate, to enable people to be mobile and remain independent.

This policy explains the principles of the Council's approach for the provision of travel support, the types of travel support that may be provided, how the Council will assess someone's needs for travel support and the factors that it will take into account.

As part of a group of policies that cover Assistance with Travel for all ages, this policy applies to all adults aged 18 years and above (and their Carers) who access care and support services provided directly or commissioned by Adult Social Care and / or are in receipt of Direct Payments or Personal Budgets.

This includes:

- Older People
- People with physical disabilities, including sensory impairments
- People with mental health needs
- People with learning disabilities

This policy does not cover travel assistance for young people within the age group of 18-25 who are in full time education and have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Legal Framework

The Care Act 2014 and associated Regulations and statutory guidance provide the legal framework for the assessment of social care and support needs and for determining eligibility for adult social care support with effect from April 2015.

This means that travel assistance, whilst not guaranteed, will be considered as part of a broader assessment of needs based on the national eligibility criteria for adults and carers, and on the duty to meet needs through a care and support plan. Supported travel assistance will generally only be provided to people, where following an assessment, it is determined that this is necessary because the person has no other travel option available in line with the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy.

Adult Social Care has a legal duty to provide or arrange for the provision of social care and support to people who are eligible for funded social care support from the Council. In certain circumstances the service may include travel assistance.

The Care Act 2014 sets out that duty as follows: 'The national eligibility criteria sets a minimum threshold for adult care and support needs and carer support needs which local authorities must meet. All local authorities must comply with this national threshold'. The Act details that:

'Local authorities should consider the adult's ability to get around in the community safely and consider their ability to use such facilities as public transport, shops or recreational facilities when considering the impact on their wellbeing'.

General Principles

In line with the national policy of promoting independence for adults with social care needs, this policy is based on the assumption that people will travel independently to access care provision, except where assessment shows that this is not possible, and it is based on the following core principles:

- The provision/funding for travel support will **only** be considered if someone is eligible under the [Care Act 2014](#):
 - The adult's needs for care and support arise from or are related to a physical or mental impairment or illness and are not caused by other circumstantial factors.

- As a result of the adult's needs, the adult is unable to achieve two or more of the outcomes specified in the regulations and outlined in the section 'Eligibility outcomes for adults with care and support needs'.
 - As a consequence of being unable to achieve these outcomes, there is, or there is likely to be, a significant impact on the adult's wellbeing.
- People not eligible under the Care Act 2014 would be supported to seek travel support through signposting to options such as Dial-a-Ride, blue badge applications, freedom passes and travel buddies for example where appropriate.
 - The Council will arrange for the provision of travel support to enable people to access community activities, work experience, reablement, care services, or respite care, as agreed in their care and support plan, (also known as a care plan) only where they are unable to travel independently and/or parents/carers are unable to provide travel support.
 - The assessment of need for travel support provision will be an element of someone's care needs assessment; i.e. no service will carry an automatic entitlement to travel support. If someone has a family member or friend who helps with their care, the council will involve them in the assessment and support planning process, and they will be offered an assessment in their own right (called a Carer's Assessment).
 - People identified as suitable, will be encouraged to undertake travel training and will only be expected to travel independently if they complete the training successfully and following assessment it is deemed safe for them to do so.
 - The provision/funding of travel support is designated a desirable service and is **not** therefore guaranteed as part of a care package.

- Where it has been determined, following a needs assessment, that travel support will be included in the care and support plan any costs to the local authority will be included in the calculation of someone's personal budget or as a direct payment. By law, the local authority must disregard the mobility component for care charges if individuals are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment.
- Existing users currently getting transport as part of their care plan, and who as a result of this policy will no longer be eligible for commissioned travel, will be asked to use their PIP/ DLA mobility to cover their travel costs. Additional transport costs will be considered via a Disability Related Expenditure claim where these costs are above the PIP/ DLA mobility component amount received.
- Where someone either has a Motability vehicle which they drive themselves, or is driven by a family member on their behalf, it is expected that consideration will be given as to whether it is reasonable to expect them/ the family member to use that motability vehicle to travel to the location of a care service/activity.

Eligibility

People will participate in an assessment of their social care needs in accordance with the Care Act 2014, which will include an assessment of their mobility and, where appropriate, an assessment of their need for travel support to enable them to access the services that have been agreed as the most appropriate and cost-effective way of meeting someone's identified outcomes.

Travel Support Assessment

The Council will assess someone's need for travel support in 4 stages:

1. Assessment of the person's access to existing forms of transport or travel support

2. Assessment of the person's current level of mobility, including opportunities to improve mobility, e.g. physiotherapy or falls exercise classes.
3. Assessment of the person's current ability to travel independently including any specific factors such as sensory, cognitive impairments, psychological needs and/ or neurodiversity. These will be considered when looking at the appropriateness of travel training.
4. Identification of appropriate travel support

In carrying out its assessment, the Council will always take someone's individual circumstances into account however travel support will not *usually* be provided for:

- Hospital visits - someone may be able to claim a refund of reasonable travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) or through Disability Related Expenditure.
- Anyone with a primary health care need, including Continuing Health Care Needs.
- People living in establishments fully funded by the National Health Service.
- People who have been placed in the Borough for care purposes by other local authorities.
- People who live in residential care where the provider is being funded to provide 24 hour care including any transport support needs.
- People who choose to attend a service outside of their locality when a suitable service is available to them locally. This will be on a case by case basis and will depend on the service and activity.

- People whose travel needs can be met by a family member or friend. Individual conversations will be held with people and their carers/ family members/ friends to ensure this is a reasonable expectation. This will be discussed as a first option. Where this is not deemed to be acceptable or available, other options, including support with travel will be explored.

Funding

Support will be included within someone's care plan and the final personal budget allocation if:

- an individual is assessed under the Care Act 2014 eligibility criteria as having care needs that require travel support and
- these needs can not be met in any other way (including through use of those concessionary services that are universally available).

Any personal budget provided by the Council to meet people's social care needs, including needs relating to supported travel, may be subject to a personal contribution by the person following a financial assessment.

Review

People provided with travel support will have that support reviewed as part of any review or reassessment of their social care needs. As a result, travel support may be continued, increased, or removed as appropriate.

Where people are no longer eligible under the Care Act 2014 as a result of their review, their individual circumstances and needs will be looked at to ensure people will not be under financial hardship as a result of this policy. People will be supported to explore all options and encouraged to apply for concessionary travel initiatives such as a Freedom pass/ taxi card.

Consideration will also be given to a period of transition in place for people affected by this policy.

People will be supported to ensure that eligible transport costs are added to any Disability Related Expenditure as part of their Financial Assessment.

Appeals process

If people are unhappy about the outcome of their financial assessment, they will be able to start the review and appeals process which is described on the Kingston Council website under 'Paying for my support'.

Travel Training

If the travel support assessment finds that someone may be able to travel more independently in future following appropriate training or support, the person will be referred for a further assessment of their individual training/support needs by a competent travel trainer. An appropriate training plan will then be drawn up for agreement with the person and/or parent/carer as appropriate. As the travel training programme progresses the way in which the person travels to access social care support will change.

The core aim of travel training is to help people, who have the ability to develop the necessary skills and confidence, to travel independently. The Council also recognises the benefits of such training in developing someone's confidence and social skills. They may continue to need to be accompanied when travelling but may be able to learn how to use public transport with support.

Types of Travel Support

For eligible people, the Council will determine the type of travel support that is most suitable to meet people's needs. The types of travel support that may be proposed or provided may include, but are not limited to:

- Freedom pass – the provision of passes for older people and people with a disability, which provides free travel on almost all public transport in London. Where people have a freedom pass, they will be expected to use this for their travel journeys.
- Blue Badge – entitling those who are eligible to various parking concessions.
- Taxicard – subsidised transport in taxis and private-hire vehicles.
- Mobility allowance – the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance (or the mobility component of a Personal Independence Payment (PIP)) is a tax free benefit available to adults who have difficulties with mobility. There are two levels with different eligibility criteria – a higher rate and a lower rate
- Dial-a-Ride – this door-to-door service is operated by Transport for London and is for people who cannot use public transport. It provides its members with free door-to-door transport for things like shopping, visiting friends and getting out and about. The service is controlled centrally in London, but delivered locally.
- Community Transport – local Community Transport providers may provide the most appropriate and cost effective means of door-to-door travel for individual people and may levy a charge for the service.
- Voluntary sector transport – transport provided by the voluntary sector so that individuals can attend lunch clubs and other day care services.
- Care provider Transport - some care service providers may provide transport to enable people to attend day centres, reablement centres or to participate in other activities.

- Council-provided transport - The Council may provide transport in its own vehicles or in approved contractors' vehicles (e.g. private hires or minibuses) only where this is the most appropriate and cost effective means of providing travel support as an integral part of specific social care services.

Where the need for assistance to travel has been identified within a care plan and it has been determined that the most cost-effective option is for someone to make their own arrangements, a direct payment may be offered to them to pay for travel that is essential to the delivery of the care plan.

Policy review

A full review of the policy will take place a year after implementation. We will ensure we seek feedback from experts by experience and their carers.

Equality Impact Assessment

A full Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken and can be found [here](#).

Exclusions:

This policy does not cover travel assistance for young people within the age group of 18-25 who are in full time education and have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Young people in this category should apply for Travel Assistance by contacting Achieving for Children SEND Transport on telephone: 020 8547 4708.

The council has several policies that cover travel assistance across all ages. These include:

SEND - Home to School Transport Policy Statutory school age pupils 5 to 16 (Reception to Year 11)

Post-16 Home to School Transport Policy - Young people aged 16 to 18 and SEND pupils Aged 19 to 25 who are in full time Education and have an EHCP