



London Borough of Merton Adult Social Care Services Assisted Travel Policy

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Introduction

This policy clarifies the London Borough of Merton's (LBM's) position with regard to assisted travel provided for residents who are in receipt of adult social care services.

The policy addresses assisted travel delivered and or commissioned by (e.g. day centre buses and taxis) or funded through (e.g. concessionary fares - including Freedom Passes and Taxicards) LBM.

1. Aims of the policy

The main aims of the policy are to:

- Provide a set of eligibility criteria for assisted travel that is fair and consistent, and founded on principles of independence and empowerment, as well as meeting the duty of care specified in the relevant legislation and guidance.
- Enable practice to develop whereby customers are supported to make informed choices and utilise public transport or make private arrangements which are more convenient and flexible.

2. London Borough of Merton General Eligibility Criteria

There is no automatic entitlement to assisted travel. It is expected that individuals will meet their own travel needs, except where they meet the eligibility criteria outlined below.

For an individual to access assisted travel from LBM Adult Social Care services, all of the following circumstances must apply:

- The individual must be eligible for services from LBM as set out in the 'Fair Access to Care Services' (FACS) eligibility criteria for Adult Social Care services', and as such becomes a customer. The provision of assisted travel to enable young people to access schooling or other services does not confer a right to LBM funded transport in adulthood. This will form part of any transitions discussions.
- The customer is unable to make their own transport arrangements **or** does not have access to private or public transport. LBM may take into account the fact that the customer a) receives the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance; b) has a Freedom Pass; c) has a Taxi card; d) is a member of the Capital Call Scheme, Dial-a-ride or the Merton Community Transport Scheme, and can use these independently. Assisted travel will also not usually be provided to customers who have access to a Motability Vehicle funded by the mobility component of their DLA.

- The customer is travelling to and from services they have been assessed as needing to meet their social care needs following a Community Care Assessment.

Where a working age customer in receipt of DLA mobility component expresses a preference for a particular service, even though there are suitable services closer to their home, LBM may agree to the placement but may not provide assisted travel. In these circumstances the customer would need to make their own transport arrangements, or this could be arranged by LBM and recharged to the customer.

If an individual is not FACS eligible, then they are signposted to alternative assisted travel options as appropriate.

3. Concessionary Fares Eligibility Criteria

LBM is a member of the London Wide Freedom Pass and Taxicard Schemes administered by London Councils.

The eligibility criteria are based on the statutory requirements as detailed in the Transport Act 2000 and the Road Traffic Act 1991, as well as the requirements of the London Wide Scheme.

LBM may use its' discretionary powers to introduce criteria other than the statutory minimum required in either scheme. Where these changes are significant, LBM will consult with appropriate organisations and representative stakeholder groups (typically via Partnership Boards) whose members may be affected by these changes).

The interpretation of the statutory criteria may be amended without recourse to formal consultation, where they are minor changes or where those changes reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Transport, Transport for London or London Councils.

The wording of the criteria below may also be altered as necessary for the purpose of communicating them more clearly or circulating these to customers or members of the public. LBM may review the suitability and efficacy of both schemes from time to time and may consider alternative schemes that also meet the statutory requirements.

LBM may require individual applicants to be assessed for either scheme even if they have provided evidence from a doctor or other professional.

Specific Criteria:

3.1 Criteria for Taxicard and Capital Call Schemes

LBM residents who have a substantial and permanent physical or sensory disability that affects their mobility and means they are unable to use public transport without extreme difficulty, are eligible for Taxicards. The scheme is not available to individuals with temporary disabilities, or on the basis of mental health difficulties or impairments.

Individuals who hold any of the following are automatically eligible:

- | Disability Living Allowance Mobility Component at the HIGH rate.
- | War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.
- | Registration as a blind person.

An individual has an entitlement of a given number of trips allocated on an annual basis. This allocation cannot be carried over into the following year. The allocation may vary from time to time. Taxicard trips should not be used for regular medical appointments.

The Capital Call Scheme

This Scheme enables members (individuals with mobility problems) to use minicabs as subsidised door-to-door transport. The scheme is funded externally, LBM do not fund this. Individuals who are eligible for a Taxicard may apply to this Scheme.

3.2 Criteria for Freedom Passes for Older People or for People with a Disability

Freedom Passes are issued to older people and to people with a disability throughout the London area.

3.2.1 Older People

Individuals are eligible for a Freedom Pass if:

- Their principle residence is in LBM.
- They were born on or before 5 May 1951.

Applications are made through local post offices and LBM residents will need to submit proof of age and confirmation of address.

There has been a change in legislation, so if an individual was born on or after 6 April 1950 and 5 April 1955, they will no longer be eligible for a Freedom Pass on their 60 th birthday. Download the table available on the London Councils website address below to find out when you become eligible for free travel. You can apply up to 14 days ahead of your eligible date.

http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/freedompass/eligibility

Details of travel options for individuals holding an Older Person's Freedom Pass are as follows:

- **Tube, DLR London Overground and Tramlink services** - individuals can travel free at anytime weekdays and at anytime on weekends and public holidays
- **National Rail Services** - individuals can travel free from 09.30 on weekdays (or from 09.00 on certain routes as shown on the Freedom Pass map available on the Transport for London (TfL) website at <http://www.tfl.gov.uk>) and at anytime on weekends and public holidays.
- **Bus services** - individuals can travel free at anytime of day or night within the Greater London area on all bus services operated on behalf of TfL which display the appropriate sign.
- **National Buses** - individuals can travel free on many other bus services in England as demonstrated by the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) 'Rose' printed on their Freedom Pass.
- **River Services and Cable Cars** - individuals can travel at reduced rates.

60+ Concessionary Travel Scheme

In addition to the Older Person's Freedom Pass scheme, Londoners who reach 60 years of age will be able to apply for a new type of Oyster photocard; which will restore their entitlement to free travel on TfL services 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The concession will expire when an individual reaches the age of eligibility for the Older Person's Freedom Pass scheme.

3.2.2 People with a Disability

Individuals with a disability are eligible for a Freedom Pass if:

- They are blind or partially sighted, and hold a certificate of visual impairment
- They are profoundly or severely deaf
- They are without speech
- They have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has left them with a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to walk
- They do not have arms or have a long term loss of the use of both arms
- They have a learning disability, that is defined as, a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning
- In the event of applying for the grant of a license to drive a motor vehicle under Part III of the Road Traffic Act 1988, they would have their application refused pursuant to section 92 of the Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the ground of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol

These requirements are as detailed in the Transport Act 2000 and the Road Traffic Act 1991.

Applications are made through LBM, and documentary evidence of eligibility will be required, for example, from a GP or another medical professional.

In the event where the evidence provided is not satisfactory to the LBM assessor, or in lieu of such evidence, the applicant may be required to undertake a mobility or other assessment.

LBM may also require re-assessment of current users of either scheme as deemed necessary. This assessment may be undertaken by either the appropriate community team, or via a nominated external assessor (e.g. Occupational Therapist).

LBM may withdraw or cancel use of either scheme should the individual no longer be eligible.

LBM will facilitate the replacement of a faulty, lost or stolen Freedom Pass, charged at £10 to cover the cost of administration.

LBM will actively support the elimination of fraud, and may withdraw Freedom Passes where they are deemed to have been misused.

Details of travel options for individuals holding a Disabled Person's Freedom Pass are as follows:

- ***Tube, Bus, DLR London Overground and Tramlink services*** - individuals can travel free at anytime weekdays and at anytime on weekends and public holidays
- ***National Rail Services*** - individuals can travel free from 09.30 on weekdays (or from 09.00 on certain routes as shown on the Freedom Pass map available on the TfL website at <http://www.tfl.gov.uk>) and at anytime on weekends and public holidays.
- ***River Services and Cable Cars*** - individuals can travel at reduced rates.

Appendix 1

Legal Guidance

Legislation and guidance clarify the duty upon social service departments to assess the social care needs of individuals and to meet those needs, including assisted travel, where necessary.

The **Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act (1970)** places a responsibility on LBM to give assistance in accessing services that are provided to meet assessed needs. Assisted travel should be provided if, without its provision a customer would be unable to access the services that they are assessed as requiring in their care plan.

The Department of Health guidelines '**Fair Access to Care Services**' (FACS) makes it clear that assistance with travel as with other secondary or auxiliary services, cannot be considered separately from the broader assessment of need. This means that consideration of assisted travel is an integral part of the single 'FACS' assessment.

Other relevant legislation and guidance includes:

- Independence Well-being & Choice 2005
- Carers Act 2004
- Valuing People 2001
- NHS & Community Care Act 1990
- Disabled Person Act 1986
- 2012 Social Care White Paper

Appendix 2 Assessor Guidance

The assessment for assisted travel should be completed by a member of a community social work team and reviewed thereafter, as a minimum, during the customer's annual review or as the customer's circumstances change including that of any changes to their support network.

Assessments should be:

- **Holistic:** the assessor should consider the customer's overall travel needs and carry out the assessment accordingly, together with the subsequent travel routines.
- **Individually focused:** the assessor should consider the travel options available to the customer. Where the customer is living with family members, they should be consulted and a carer's assessment should be completed (which should record whether the carer is willing to assist the customer with travel and in which circumstances) and the carers' needs considered separately. There should be an acknowledgement of the significant contribution that carers and family members may be making to support the customer. The assessor should not assume that carers will agree to fulfil the assessed travel needs. In addition the assessor should consult with day services or residential workers or others as appropriate.
- **Balanced:** the assessor should make a balanced judgement; the travel options selected should be the lowest cost and/or those that promote the customer's independence most effectively.

As well as considering whether the customer meets the assisted travel criteria detailed in section 2 of the LBM Adult Social Care Services Assisted Travel Policy, an assessor should also consider:

- The physical and mental health and well-being of the customer.
- The customer's potential to undertake travel training or route familiarization, with a view to travelling independently, or with the support of others and any related vulnerability/risk.
- The customer's access to direct payments or individual budgets.
- The relative cost and value for money of any assisted travel options or combinations being proposed.
- The customer's financial standing and whether they are in receipt of mobility allowance or other financial benefits which can reasonably be applied to assist their travel.
- Where possible encourage the use of direct payments and individual budgets to enable the customer to address their own travel needs.

Additionally, the provision of assisted travel:

- Should be flexible enough to meet changing need.
- Should not automatically be a door to door service.
- Should have a charge levied where this is deemed possible as a result of an individual financial assessment.

Once it has been decided that a customer is eligible, then the LBM department arranging the assisted travel will be responsible for carrying out an individual risk assessment of the customer's personal, medical and escort (where deemed appropriate) needs.

Appendix 3 Process Flow Chart

