

CÙRAM IS SLÀINTE NAN EILEAN SIAR

WESTERN ISLES HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP



ADULT SOCIAL CARE ASSISTED TRANSPORT PROVISION

POLICY STATEMENT

2023

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Adult Social Care: Assisted Transport Provision

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1. Policy Statement

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on behalf of the Western Isles Integration Joint Board is committed to promoting independence across all areas of service provision and seeks to ensure that all service users are able to live and travel as independently as possible.

The benefits of independent travel on an individual's physical and mental health and wellbeing cannot be over emphasised and the provision of assistance with transport can help people to access work, leisure and key services promoting health and facilitates key elements of Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013. Summary guide: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-accompany-social-care-self-directed-support-scotland-act-2013/>

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar does not have a statutory responsibility to provide assisted transport, therefore it is not normally available. However, consideration will be given in very exceptional circumstances, in line with eligibility criteria as outlined and explained within this policy.

The over-arching aim of this Policy is, therefore, to provide a definition of 'Assisted Transport' that offers clarity, equity, and fair access to available transport and travel arrangements for vulnerable service users, whilst reducing the level of dependency on transport provided by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

1.1 The Policy is underpinned by the following key principles:

- **That a service user's benefits are used to meet their own transport needs:** This policy rests upon a general assumption and expectation that service users will meet their own needs for transport to access services and/or support. For example, where a service user has Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in place, it will be assumed that these benefits will be used to directly meet travel cost requirements.
- **That all other options will have been explored:** Assisted transport provision should be considered after all other options have been exhausted and the person has no other support (NB: This must be evidenced in an application for funding of transport costs)
- **That service user safety is not compromised:** Assisted transport will only be provided by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar if alternatives are either unavailable or inappropriate i.e., via an assessed outcome and/or it is the only reasonable way to allow a person to safely access an eligible service.
- **That any financial risks are assessed:** Assisted transport will only be provided if there is a risk of financial hardship and a failure to provide assisted travel/transport could lead to greater expense at a later date, subject to review and re assessment.
- **That assisted transport provision is cost-effective and subject to regular review:** Any arrangement for assisted transport provision must be the most cost-effective option and will be subject to regular review.

- 1.2 This policy aims to reflect national and local priorities by promoting independence; prevention; choice and control; healthy living; improved quality of life; dignity; and provision of local accessible services and facilitate key elements of Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guide-social-care-self-directed-support-scotland-act-2013/>
- 1.3. This policy recognises that a reasonable charge may be applied for the provision of funded transport. This would be a low, fixed rate, charge which would not be subject to a financial assessment, but would be compliant with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, *“Contribution Policy for Adult Social Care and Support (Non-residential) within a Self-directed Support System.”*
- 1.4 This policy and procedures takes into consideration recommendations made in Transport for Health and Social Care (Audit Scotland 2011),

“Considering transport needs when planning and delivering services can help make services more efficient by getting people to the right place at the right time.”

http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/health/2011/nr_110804_transport_health.pdf

2. Associated Definitions and Abbreviations

- 2.1 **Service User** – A service eligible person in receipt of statutory care and/or services
- 2.2 **DLA** – Disability Living Allowance
- 2.3 **ADP** - Adult Disability Payment
- 2.4 **PIP** – Personal Independence Payments
- 2.5 **SDS** – Self-Directed Support
- 2.6 **IJB** – Integration Joint Board

3. Policy Objectives

3.1 The overarching aim of this policy is to reflect national and local priorities as set out in Social Care (Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013. It also acknowledges the recommendations contained within, Audit Scotland's 'Transport for health and Social Care.'

https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/health/2011/nr_110804_transport_health.pdf

And 'Reshaping Care for Older People.' A Programme for Change 2011 -2021

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00434007.pdf>

3.2 The specific aim of this policy is to reflect national and local priorities by promoting:

- Independence rather than dependence
- Prevention rather than just intervention
- Duty of care for Users, Carers, and families
- Choice and Control
- Healthy Living
- Improved quality of life
- Dignity
- Access to local accessible services
- Improve Public Protection arrangements, enabling people to live healthier lives in safer communities.
- Build community resilience.
- Maintain services for the most vulnerable people whilst addressing financial challenges.
- Support, develop and make the best use of workforce resources.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to adult social care service users and sets out how an individual is assessed as eligible for funding for transport by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

5. Defining Assisted Transport Provision in the Western Isles

5.1 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar acknowledges that the ability of its Service Users to access Social Care by appropriate means of transport is an essential component of their care pathway.

5.2 Assisted Transport, in Social Care, is transport primarily provided for people over the age of 18 who cannot use public transport independently due to disability or health problems. In addition, they could also and have no reasonable access to private transport to enable them to access 'community activities' (a community activity being defined as a care and support service that an individual attends away from their home as an integral part of an adult's care plan).

5.3 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is committed to addressing potential barrier to participation by exploring every viable option to enable service users to safely attend out of home activities.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The agreement to fund assisted transport provision must be authorised by Partnership Services and Community Care Services management as part of process to agree a Support Plan.

6.2 Internal and external service providers must ensure that all service users are encouraged and supported to travel independently, including making optimum use of public/mainstream transport options and their own resources.

7. Eligibility

A principle of reasonableness will be adopted i.e., an exploration will be undertaken in any given situation as to whether it is reasonable to expect individuals to make their own arrangements, all transport options have been examined and the outcomes have been identified and evidenced.

7.1 There are criteria elements which individually and collectively highlight when assisted transport should be delivered:

A) Any transport provided must support the person to be as independent as possible.

B) A preventative approach should be taken at all times, to maintain a person's abilities.

C) Assisted transport provision should be considered only after all other options have been exhausted and the service user has no other support (this must be evidenced in an application for funding of transport costs).

D) Generally, assisted transport will be provided if:

- Statutory powers are in place and a person is attending a service as per an agreed care programme approach (See section 27 of Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/13/section/27>
- There is no other appropriate transport alternative, due to specific health and safety issues identified by the service. (Again, see section 27 of Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/mental-health-care-treatment-scotland-act-2003-code-practice-volume-1/pages/5/>
- A carer is caring for more than one dependent and the competing demands mean the carer is not in a position to provide assistance with transport – to be detailed as an outcome approved through a Carer Assessment by Partnership Services Community Care Services management.
- An assessed risk of financial hardship has been identified and a failure to provide assisted transport could lead to greater expense at a later date. (For example, a service user requiring to regularly access an inter-island service.)

E) The agreement to fund assisted travel is to be authorised Partnership Services and Community Care management as part of process to agree the Care Plan. Assisted transport may be provided subject to the conditions set out within a service users Care Plan. Please refer to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Self-Directed Support Policy information. Statutory guidance: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-accompany-social-care-self-directed-support-scotland-act-2013/>

F) Assisted transport will only be provided where it is clear that such assistance is essential in enabling the person to access community care or rehabilitation services and their own financial resources, including DWP DLA/ADP/PIP Mobility component have been exhausted and will not meet such costs.

G) All assistance with transport is to be provided in the most cost-effective way; concessionary travel and self-travel arrangements must be a primary consideration in any assessment

H) Income-maximisation, through a benefits review will be available – in order to ensure that people are in receipt of DLA, ADP, or PIP (including the highest possible rate of the mobility component to which the person is entitled)

I) Assisted transport provision may only be granted once all other options have been considered, evidenced, and recorded. Resources from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Social and Partnership Services will not be allocated to meet transport-related needs in the following cases:

- Where the service user is able to walk and/or use a mobility aid; either independently or with the assistance of others, to access a local community service.
- Where the person can use public or community-provided transport, and voluntary transport either independently or with support to get to and from community activities, including further education.

- Where the service user is in receipt of state benefit (DLA, ADP, PIP) to facilitate their mobility needs and it is considered reasonable for them to utilise the benefit for travel/transport purposes, unless the benefit is insufficient to meet the persons identified outcomes.

J) NB: It is acknowledged that certain medical conditions will cause fluctuation within service users physical or mental ability - this will be considered and reflected within the assessment process and care planning.

8. Utilising Local Services

8.1 This Policy promotes locally based services that are available and responsive to the needs of local people. It would be inappropriate to arrange a service outside of a service user's local area unless it is not possible to meet their assessed need in that area. People will be expected to access the support and services based nearest to where they live, so long as they are appropriate to meet the assessed, eligible needs and outcomes.

8.2 Where service users chose to access a service that is not nearest to where they live, they will be expected to self-fund to meet the costs of additional travel.

9. Mainland Placements

The following conditions apply where a service user's needs cannot be met locally, and a placement has been arranged on the mainland:

- The placement, unless it is a short-term placement, must be considered as the service user's home and all DWP benefits, including DLA/PIP mobility, must be used for the benefit of the service user at their placement.
- Where DLA, ADP or PIP mobility component is paid and a Motability vehicle is not in place, service users will be expected to contribute from their Motability component to supplement all travel placement costs (including any travel back to the Western Isles).

10. Complaints

10.1 Any complaints regarding the management of assisted transport provision in an adult care setting can be made through the Social Work Complaints Procedure, copies of which are available online and at any of the Islands' Council Offices.

11. Review

11.1 The Policy on Assisted Transport Provision will be kept under regular review to ensure legal compliance best practice. In addition, the entire policy and associated procedures will be reviewed every three years.