

Fact Sheet 5

Local Transport and Travel

If you are travelling with someone with a disability, getting around can mean that you need to do more planning beforehand and you might need to use a more expensive means of transport. There are a few services locally which can help.

Handicabs

Handicabs provide specialist transport for people with serious mobility difficulties. They run two schemes in East Lothian: Dial-a-Ride and Dial-a-Bus. Their vehicles are specially adapted to carry both wheelchair users and other passengers safely and comfortably. You need to fill in a short form to register with Handicabs before you can use their services.

Dial-a-Ride

- Provides a door-to-door transport service for people with limited mobility who are unable to use ordinary buses.
- The service operates 7 days per week and journeys are usually undertaken to places within Lothian.
- There is a subsidised mileage charge.
- Each fare paying passenger can take one escort free of charge.

Dial-a-Bus

- Provides transport from home to local shopping centres for people who cannot manage by ordinary bus.
- The service operates at least once a week from most areas in Edinburgh and the Lothians.
- The person can bring a relative or a friend with them as an escort if required. Alternatively they can ask Dial-a-Bus to

arrange for someone to help them with their shopping.

- The driver will give any help needed to get on and off the bus.
- A wheelchair is available for loan for short periods.
- There is a reasonably priced flat charge.

For more details contact:

Handicabs Midlothian and East Lothian
Unit 4, Whitehill Business Centre
Dalkeith
EH22 2QD

Dial-a-Ride - 0131 663 0163

Dial-a-Bus - 0131 663 5184

Travelling by Bus

East Lothian currently has several bus services that are wheelchair accessible including the "Gaberlunzie" service which serves rural areas. The local Postbus service is also wheelchair accessible.

For details of the Gaberlunzie service, contact Eve Cars and Coaches on 01368 865500.

For information on Postbus routes, you can phone the Royal Mail Customer Service Centre on 08457 740740 or access their website at www.royalmail.com/postbus.

Travelling by Train

If you and the person you care for intend to travel by train, railway staff can help with getting on and off, carrying luggage or helping you get a connecting train. You can also get specialised journey information and seat reservations. To get assistance with your journey, you need to contact the train company

at least 24 hours in advance. If you don't have the contact details for the train company, phone National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50.

Disabled people can get a reduction on train fares by applying for a Disabled Persons Railcard. People registered as visually impaired and their companion get substantial discounts on their tickets. This concession applies whether or not they have a Disabled Persons' Railcard. Blind and partially sighted people can also buy a reduced cost season ticket to cover the cost of travel for themselves and a companion.

For disabled people who travel regularly by train, it might be worth buying a Disabled Persons Railcard. For a small annual fee, this gives you one third off the cost of most train journeys for the disabled person and a companion.

You qualify for a Disabled Persons Railcard if you:

- Are registered visually impaired.
- Are registered deaf.
- Have epilepsy that is not fully controlled by medication.
- Receive Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance (High rate mobility and/or high or middle rate care component).
- Receive Severe Disablement Allowance, War Pensioners Mobility Supplement or Service Disablement Pension (for 80% or more disability).

Application forms are available from staffed railway stations or contact:

The Disabled Persons Railcard Office
P.O. Box 1YT
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE99 1YT
Tel: 0191 269 0303

Travelling by Car

Motability

Motability is a non-profit making charity, set up through a government initiative, which helps disabled people and the people who care for them to become more mobile. People who receive the high rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or war pensioners' mobility supplement can use this to buy or lease a new or used car. Motability can also help people to use their allowance to buy a new powered wheelchair or scooter.

Cars bought through Motability can be adapted to suit disabled drivers' needs but disabled people don't need to drive to benefit from the scheme. Children from the age of three and non-drivers in receipt of the qualifying benefits can apply for a car as passengers. For further details contact:

Edinburgh Driving Assessment Service
Astley Ainslie Hospital
Edinburgh
EH9 2HL
Tel: 0131 537 9192

Motability
Goodman House
Station Approach
Harlow
Essex
CM20 2ET
Tel: 01279 635666

Exemption from Road Tax

People who are receiving high rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement can apply for exemption from road tax. The vehicle to be taxed must be used solely for their purposes, whether they drive it or not. Claimants of the benefits mentioned above should automatically be sent a VED exemption form by the Department of Work and Pensions. You can then apply for a tax exempt disc from the Vehicle Licensing Agency.

British Red Cross (Scotland)

The Lothian Branch of the British Red Cross provides a transport and escort scheme for disabled or older people who are unable to

travel independently. The service is mainly intended to be used for travel to clinics and day services. Trained volunteers act as escorts on journeys and wheelchair accessible vehicles are available. Users are asked to pay a contribution towards costs but no one is refused a service if they cannot pay.

For further details contact:

British Red Cross Lothian Branch
East & Mid District Office
131 High Street
Dalkeith
EH22 1BE
Tel: 0131 654 0340

North Berwick Voluntary Car Scheme

The North Berwick Voluntary Car Scheme is a registered charity. It provides a volunteer driver and transport mainly for older people who need to attend health centres, dentists, shopping etc in the North Berwick area or who need to go to Roodlands Hospital.

- 48 hours notice of request for service is required.
- Service users are encouraged to give a donation for local trips and there is a flat rate for journeys to Roodlands Hospital.

For further details contact the co-ordinator Mrs Potter, on 01620 892101.

Concessionary Travel Permits

Travel at reduced prices on local bus and rail services is available to certain people through East Lothian Council. To be eligible you need to be of pensionable age or a disabled person over five years of age.

The disabilities which qualify are:

Severe learning disability or mental health difficulty.

Registered as partially sighted, blind or profoundly deaf.

Considerable and permanent difficulty in walking, or having lost the use of both arms.
A medical condition which disqualifies someone from holding a driving licence.

Additionally, any eligible person who is in receipt of Attendance Allowance, Severe Disability Allowance or Disability Living Allowance Care Component at the middle or high rate is entitled to a travel permit which allows a companion to travel with them at the same concessionary fare.

For further details and an application form, contact East Lothian Council's Transportation Department on 01620 827367.

The East Lothian Taxicard Scheme

The East Lothian Taxicard Scheme enables people who have a permanent and severe disability to use taxi services at a reduced cost. The service is available to East Lothian residents over the age of two who do not have access to their own transport and who are unable to use public transport, even with assistance.

The card holder pays a proportion of the metered fare. East Lothian Council will pay the rest up to a certain amount. If the meter goes beyond the stated amount the card holder pays the metered fare less a fixed sum.

Cardholders can make up to 104 trips per year.

Application forms are available from most Council offices or contact East Lothian Council's Transportation Department on 01620 827660

Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge Scheme is designed to help people with severe mobility problems, people who are registered blind and those with severe physical disabilities by allowing them to park close to shops, public buildings and other places. The eligible person may be travelling as a driver or a passenger. In most cases,

badge holders can park free and for an unlimited time in otherwise restricted areas provided their vehicle is not causing an obstruction.

If the disabled badge holder is not in the vehicle or will not be travelling in it for any part of a particular journey, it is an offence to display the Blue Badge.

People who receive the high rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or a war pensioners' mobility supplement, automatically qualify for a Blue Badge. Even if you do not, you may still get a blue badge if you have severe mobility difficulties.

For further details contact the East Lothian Council's Transportation Department on 01620 827367.

The WRVS Good Neighbours Scheme

The Good Neighbours Scheme in East Lothian is a registered charity that offers people in need the kind of informal help that a relative or friend might provide. Their service is for people who are having difficulties with daily tasks due to age or illness, because they are looking after young children or because they are caring for a relative.

Their service is staffed by trained volunteers and includes the provision of transport to health appointments, hospital visiting or other non-regular journeys. There is a mileage charge for transport.

The number for their local helpline is 01620 829337.

The Patient Transport Service

The Patient Transport Service is part of the Scottish Ambulance Service. It takes patients who do not have their own transport to and from out-patients appointments and clinics. People are often referred to the service by a doctor or other health professional. However, if you or the person you care for has a hospital appointment and you cannot get there on your own, you can phone the hospital that you will

be attending and ask if they will arrange transport for you through the Patient Transport Service. If you are a carer and you need to accompany the person you care for, let the hospital staff know so that they can book you a place on the transport. Please note that as there is a high demand for this service, only patients who are not able to access any other options (such as those outlined above) will be considered for the service.

The Patient Transport Service uses small ambulances to transport patients. It often collects other patients on the way and you may be picked up very early in the morning. However, within the Patient Transport Service there are also volunteer ambulance car drivers and you may be taken to hospital in a private car instead.

Other Services

Lothian Shopmobility

Shopmobility provides electric scooters and electric and manual wheelchairs in towns and shopping centres to help people who have mobility problems with their shopping. The service is free.

Shopmobility Lothian provides services at the Mound in Edinburgh and the Gyle Shopping Centre.

For details of opening hours and availability, contact the mobile service at the Mound on 0131 225 9559 or their office at the Gyle Shopping Centre on 0131 317 1460.