

**ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 AUGUST 2024**

ADULT SOCIAL CARE TRANSPORT POLICY 2024

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the updated Adult Social Care Transport Policy.

Summary

Introduction and rationale for change

2. The Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024 has been redesigned and developed with the Transport Team service with regards to changes needed based on:
 - (a) The current and last Council Transport Policy is 2011 and therefore does not comply with current legislation including the Care Act 2014 and the national eligibility framework for adults and carers and therefore we are not compliant with our statutory duties.
 - (b) The Health and Social Care Act 2022 which local authorities must meet are aligned to the Care Act in particular in meeting and providing for people's needs and promotion of health, independence and wellbeing.
 - (c) A review of transport eligibility needs to be underpinned by Strength based practice approaches and promoting independence including access to Reablement and enabling people to decide their own travel options, where appropriate through provision of information and support.

Strategic Overarching aims and ambitions.

3. The ASC Transport Policy 2024 want to ensure people can access the right services, at the right time and links to the principles of:
 - (a) Meeting the ambitions of the Darlington Council Plan by:
 - (i) Addressing inequalities and a healthier and better quality of life for people enabling access.
 - (ii) Efficient and effective use of resources.
 - (iii) A clean, green borough that facilitates efficient movement and reduces carbon emissions across the borough.

4. The updated Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024 outlines:
 - (a) The principles and underlying strategic and operational arrangements, process and decision-making process and engaging people throughout the process.
 - (b) Highlights how options and assessments consider people's strengths, assets and community opportunities before application for assisted transport – with a revised adults referral application.
 - (c) Describes the process, risk management, making reasonable adjustments and if needs change.
 - (d) Outlines the Council charging process and our statutory duties.
 - (e) Provides information and advice, including local transport options and concessionary travel.
 - (f) Explains how people can appeal or complain regarding the outcomes of eligibility decisions regarding assisted transport resources.

Proposals

5. The Adult Social Care Transport Policy proposes that assessors work closer with people to look at all options with the first option of looking at potential for independence and community resources and short-term support including:
 - (a) Reablement and Occupational Therapy support and personal equipment provision to increase mobility and social inclusion.
 - (b) Explores the preparation for adulthood pathways.
 - (c) Improved information and advice – Transport information including green travel, responsive travel and public transport concessions.
 - (d) Considering unpaid carers in their assessments and commitment to carers strategy to enable unpaid carers wellbeing in regularly transporting their cared to eligible services, e.g. day care.

Commissioning Transport and Charging

6. The proposed Adult Social Care Transport Policy clarifies the responsibility under the Care Act eligibility decision process with regards enabling people to achieve their outcomes including access to day opportunities, volunteering, work and the community.
7. Therefore where an assessment identifies eligible needs and a person requires the provision of assisted transport then the local authority must arrange this. Currently there are inconsistencies and the current policy advises that people in receipt of the higher level of national disability benefits and mobility must use these benefits to pay for their own transport, e.g. to assessed internal day care.

8. Through Case Law and the Care Act outcomes where a person has assessed eligible needs, and having explored all alternative options e.g assisted transport or Direct payments, then people’s transport needs should be funded. Therefore, the new Transport Policy updates this so a consistent application made in future decision making.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that scrutiny note the changes to the revised Transport Policy 2024.

Reasons

10. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons: -
 - (a) The Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024 has been developed with regard to enhancing the current process of referral pathways and application and is required to be updated in line with Care Act and other legislation so we deliver our statutory duties.
 - (b) Application of the consistency of assessing and eligibility of funded transport arrangements (supported by the Legal advice) and financial assessments so people can more frequently access necessary resources and be less isolated.
 - (c) Promotion of people’s safe independence so less reliant on arranged transport services or on their unpaid carers or paid carers for transport.
 - (d) There is no anticipated impact to increased volume of reviews if implemented as new assessments and routine scheduled care and support reviews will be in compliance with the new policy.
 - (e) Ensuring that assisted transport and Council resources are targeted to people with the highest need.
 - (f) Improved joint working with the Transport Teams regarding maximising capacity and resources.

**Joss Harbron,
Assistant Director Adults**

Supplementary papers

Transport Policy 2024 (revised from 2011 version)
Equality Impact Assessment

Joss Harbron: Extension 5278

Council Plan	All reports should detail the relevance of the proposed decision(s) to the Council Plan and its priorities (adopted by Council in July 2024). LIVING WELL – a healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most- This policy will encourage and enable people to
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	<p>remain independent in their homes for longer and therefore reduce the need for larger packages of support or admission to residential care.</p> <p>COMMUNITIES – working together for safer, healthier and more engaged communities- Recommendations within this report will aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents of Darlington</p>
<p>Addressing inequalities</p>	<p>This links to the core principle of addressing inequalities and efficient and effective use of resources, and specifically addressing health inequalities to narrow the gaps in health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Local authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under S.149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires local authorities to have ‘due regard’ to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act; • advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; • foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. <p>There are 9 ‘protected characteristics’ - age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, race, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. As a council we also consider people who are on a low income, carers, people who live in a rural location and care leavers. This policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment.</p>
<p>Tackling Climate Change</p>	<p>The Council is committed to being carbon neutral to 2040. We need to consider the carbon impact of the decisions we make. This refreshed policy will deliver positive impacts by supporting people to explore all transport options whilst promoting independence, potentially reducing climate related risks.</p>
<p>Efficient and effective use of resources</p>	<p>This policy will encourage and enable people to remain independent in their homes for longer and therefore reduce the need for larger packages of support or admission to residential care.</p> <p>There is no additional costs associated with this policy.</p> <p>The Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024 has regard to enhancing the current process and referral pathways and application requires updating in line with Care Act and other legislation so we deliver our statutory duties.</p> <p>It will encourage the promotion of people’s safe independence so less reliant on arranged transport services or on their unpaid carers or paid carers for transport.</p>

	<p>There is no anticipated impact to increased volume of reviews if implemented as new assessments and routine scheduled care and support reviews will be in compliance with the new policy.</p> <p>It will ensure that assisted transport and Council resources are targeted to people with the highest need.</p> <p>There will be Improved joint working with the Transport Teams regarding maximising capacity and resources.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	Recommendations will aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents of Darlington
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and disorder.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	Applicable to all people with care and support needs and their unpaid carers
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision, although is a policy change.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers