



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Adult Social Care

Transport Policy 2025

Principles, Process and Guidance

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1. Introduction to the Adult Social Care Transport Policy

- 1.1. The Darlington Adult Social Care Transport Policy aims to provide people with consistent, and equitable guidance outlining under which criteria the local authority determines people's eligibility for transport and its decision-making process.
- 1.2. The Adult Social Care (ASC) Transport Policy clarifies how Darlington Borough Council applies transport eligibility decisions and what evidence is considered to support a final decision with regards transport access. We also ensure people are kept informed and involved, where possible, at all stages.
- 1.3. The ASC Transport Policy outlines the formal appeal process (Appendix 5) if people want to appeal against any transport eligibility decision outcome where they feel the outcome or the Council's decision-making process has been unfairly applied. Also, if the Council have not fully considered supporting evidence or information supplied with the original application or referral.
- 1.4. The Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024 supersedes the Darlington Borough Council Transport Policy 2011. This is to comply with current national statutory legislative and policy duties that Adult Social Care need to comply with and in compliance and delivery of our standard operating practice model of strength-based practice. The Policy aims to align with the ambitions achieving the priorities of the Darlington Borough Council Plan and Adult Services Social Care Vision.
- 1.5. The Care Act 2014 provides the local authority and Adult Social Care with statutory duties including assessing adults needs and application of people's eligibility with regards to the National Eligibility Framework for adults and unpaid carers (Appendix 1 and 2). Personal eligible areas of need are determined with a person during a strength-based Care Act assessment, reassessment, or review.
- 1.6. The Care Act assessment jointly identifies with people their eligible support needs and the personal outcomes they wish to achieve need and identify the eligible outcomes that the local authority has a duty to arrange and support people to achieve non eligible needs by providing people information and advice in accessible format to local community public facilities and options. People's eligible outcomes may include the need to access to transport to enable them to be remain independent and safeguard their wellbeing.
- 1.7. The Health and Social Care Act 2022 outlined a 10-year vision and puts '**People at the Heart of Care**' with main ambitions including for Adult Social Care so:
 - **People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support.**
 - **People find adult social care fair and accessible.**

- ***People have choice, control, and support to live independent lives***

1.8. The Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024 supports the Darlington Borough Council Plan 2024 by promoting the vision that Darlington is *a great place to live and work* and through “A well-connected, clean and sustainable borough”

1.9. Therefore, the Darlington Adult Social Care Transport Policy promotes these core values and priorities of:

- (a) Addressing inequalities.
- (b) Efficient and effective use of resources.

1.10. By living well and being able to access the community and resources when needed the aim is for more people to have healthier and have a better quality of life for longer.

1.11. The Darlington Adult Social Care (ASC) Transport Policy does not apply for people who need to attend National Health Service hospital appointments as this comes under the NHS responsibility through the NHS Patient Transport Service.

1.12. The ASC Transport Policy also does not apply for people living in long term residential or nursing care homes as it is expected that their service provider will support people’s personal needs including their access to community resources and transport.

2. The Aims and Objectives of the Adult Social Care Transport Policy

2.1. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care commits to principles of social inclusion which values and promotes people’s potential based on the principles of:

- (a) Promoting people’s maximum potential for independence and improved wellbeing.
- (b) Promoting equality and social inclusion recognising the diversity of people’s needs.
- (c) Maximising people’s ability for choice and control over their daily lives.
- (d) Improving people’s quality of life so live the life in a way that matters to them.
- (e) Providing quality services which safeguard people’s dignity, respect, and wishes.

(f) Ensuring people's safety and have robust risk assessment systems in place.

(g) Have sufficiency of local high-quality accessible transport provision.

2.2. The Adult Social Care (ASC) Transport Policy adopt these principles so people accessing transport have arrangements to ensure their individual support needs are met.

2.3. The Transport Policy has regards to Darlington Borough's Equality Policy Council 2023 – 2027

2.4. We ensure that we make reasonable adjustments for people with legally protected characteristics.

2.5. Where people appear to have *significant difficulty* to understand the adult social care processes e.g. due to having a cognitive impairment, under the Care Act 2014 the local authority has a duty to arrange an independent advocate to support people during their assessment and support planning process. This enables people's views, wishes and choices to be expressed and understood.

2.6. Adult social care will jointly explore with people all community travel options including their potential for travel independence and what support can be arranged including travel training. This provides an opportunity to further assess people's mobility and road safety awareness and determine their future transport support needs.

2.7. By increasing the number of people able to safely travel independently with or without support including access to shared public transport this promotes people remaining or becoming more independent and self-resilient. This can reduce people being unnecessary reliant on transport arrangements enabling the local authority to better manage their transport capacity and direct transport arrangements to those with the highest need.

2.8. Darlington Borough Council Travel advisors (Appendix 4) offer support to people to look at their best travel options and concessions, promoting greener travel options for journeys within and outside the borough and contributing to our *keep greener* ambition.

3. Assessment and determining Eligibility

3.1. Under the Care Act 2014 in England, local authorities have a duty to assess the needs of individuals and their carers and ensure that eligible needs are met, including transport if it is necessary to achieve an eligible outcome.

- 3.2. Local authorities must carry out a needs assessment for adults requiring care and support and a carer's assessment for their carers.
- 3.3. The assessment will identify specific outcomes that the individual wishes to achieve, such as work, education, or community activities.
- 3.4. Transport may be considered an eligible need if the individual cannot access necessary services or activities without it.
- 3.5. If transport is essential to meet an identified eligible need (e.g., attending a day centre, or engaging in the community), the local authority may be required to provide or arrange suitable transport.
- 3.6. The Care Act requires that individuals with eligible needs receive a personal budget. This budget can include funds to cover transport if it is deemed necessary for meeting the person's care and support needs.
- 3.7. Carers' needs are assessed separately. If transport is required for the carer to perform their caring duties or maintain their own well-being (e.g., respite activities or accessing support services), it may also be considered eligible.
- 3.8. The local authority should make reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities or mobility issues to ensure their transport needs are met effectively.
- 3.9. If transport needs are not being met, individuals or their carers can:
 - Request a review of their needs assessment or care plan.
 - Use the local authority's complaints procedure.
 - Seek advice from advocacy services or legal support organizations specialising in social care law.
- 3.10. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care delivers strength-based approaches through effective engagement and co production with people working together during their adult social care journey from their first contact, during their assessment process and reviews.
- 3.11. By working in partnership with people we will explore all appropriate options, for both eligible need and delivering our Care Act duty by the prevention of people's needs, reducing and delaying people requiring statutory support. Therefore, we will continually support people to explore all community options that promotes people's optimum independence and enable them to seek their own transport solutions and where appropriate provide unpaid carers with a break from their caring role and promote their own wellbeing.

- 3.12. Adult Social Care also has a duty to provide people with tailored information, advice, and guidance in the right formats and languages which enables them to make informed choices to how they can best meet their needs including knowledge or the availability of universal community transport. This includes people who may be self-funding so they can be signposted to appropriate resources and can access service independently from the local authority.
- 3.13. Following a Care Act assessment a personalised care and support plans will clearly record a person's eligible care and support needs and how these will be met. This includes consideration of travel needs.
- 3.14. When considering people's needs for transport Care Act assessments must consider the consequence of not meeting people's eligible needs including the prevention of needs from arising or escalating and the affect and overall impact to their health, independence, and wellbeing.
- 3.15. Providing transport enables people to meet their assessed needs and achieve their personal outcomes including their ability to access community services such as day care opportunities, attending college, volunteering, or accessing and maintaining employment.
- 3.16. The Care Act 2014 National Eligibility Framework domains for adults include:
- (a) *Accessing and engaging in work, training, education, or volunteering.*
 - (b) *Making use of necessary facilities or services in the local community including public transport and recreational facilities or services.*
- 3.17. Through the Care Act 2014, unpaid carers (those supporting a person with necessary care and support but not being paid) must be offered a Carer Assessment, to assess support to maintain their own personal health and wellbeing and being able to have a regular break from a caring role, as wished. By assessing for unpaid carer eligible needs, the arrangement of transport for the person they care for to access their eligible services can also provide unpaid carers essential time out from caring to focus on their own health and wellbeing needs.
- 3.18. Under the **Care Act 2014**, unpaid carers have the right to refuse to provide transport or any other form of care for the person they care for. This is because the Act explicitly acknowledges that caring should not come at the expense of the carer's own well-being or impose unreasonable demands on them.

- 3.19. During a carer's assessment, (or through discussion as part of the development of the cared for person assessment) the carer has the opportunity to state which tasks they are willing and able to undertake and which they are not.
- 3.20. The local authority must respect the carer's decision and plan accordingly to meet the needs of the cared-for person without relying on the carer's unwilling involvement e.g.: consider alternative solutions, such as:
- Public or community transport schemes
 - Specialist transport services
 - Including transport costs in a personal budget for the cared-for person.
 - Arranging other forms of support to meet the needs.
- 3.21. If circumstances change or the carer's willingness/ability to provide transport is altered, they can request a reassessment.
- 3.22. **Practical Considerations:**
- 3.23. Unpaid carers cannot be compelled to provide transport or any other support under the Care Act. However, their refusal may prompt the local authority to re-evaluate the care plan for the cared-for person to ensure their needs are met in another way.
- 3.24. Providing people with tailored and accessible local information, advice and guidance formats includes signposting people via digital / online information including access to websites including the Darlington Borough Council and Living Well website. This links our ambition for people to be digitally included and confident as a priority ambition of Darlington Council's Digital Strategy 2023.
- 3.25. The Darlington Borough Council Digital Strategy 2023 priorities include more people being able to access digital platforms and being supported to navigate appropriate websites and apps including increased knowledge of local, available opportunities to find and apply for transport solutions at a time and arrangements that suits them.
- 3.26. Assessing how people can access transport will also provide an opportunity to consider what other options can be available to them and explore before referring for transport. This includes understanding the options of transport support available to them.
- (a) Assistance needs when accessing local public transport e.g.travel buddies on buses

- (b) Access to appropriate family transport driven by parents/carers as appropriate.
 - (c) Access to a personal Motability Car which also can be driven by family/
Personal Assistant
 - (d) Consideration of access to travel in a Personal Assistant's car. This should be clearly identified in the support plan, including timings, costs, and considerations of employer responsibilities in relation to insurance and risk management plans.
 - (e) Local Taxi Service – individually or shared with joint risk assessment and understanding the availability of local adapted taxi vehicles.
 - (f) Transport either Council supplied or commissioned vehicles which are wheelchair accessible with trained transport assistants.
- 3.27. There will be a joint exploration of appropriate opportunities for people with the potential for safe community travel independence including short term support or travel training. This provides an opportunity to assess people's mobility, road safety and future support needs.
- 3.28. Some services offer short term support interventions focused on people attaining independence goals including their potential ability to travel. The assessor should explore with the person the option for support to develop independent travel through use of available resources e.g. Reablement, Direct Payment, Day services etc.
- 3.29. Adult Social Care Occupational Therapists and Mental Health professionals can assess and provide information regarding a person's daily living skills and levels of mobility and social functioning including people's ability to safely access different forms of transport. Also, can offer advice to the likely impact on people's physical and mental health conditions which may arise if people travel on long travel routes or on shared transport and what other options are needed.
- 3.30. Where an unpaid Carer's assessment has identified their need for breaks from a caring role and need protected time to focus on their own wellbeing there will be consideration to the impact on an unpaid carer if are expected to or are regularly transporting the person, they care for to eligible resources to meet their needs and reasonableness of them continuing to undertake this.
- 3.31. Therefore, adults will be seen as eligible for transport once all appropriate safe community options and access to personal independent travel, including independent travel training and access to local universal transport options have been explored. This includes considering the health and safety risk considerations

for people and other passengers.

3.32. People will remain central and kept informed with regards any transport accessibility decisions and other decisions made on their behalf, so people remain at the heart of all we do.

4. Determining and meeting people' transport needs

4.1. Where it is assessed that a person's priority outcomes include the need to access community resources, and their eligible needs can only be achieved through the provision of transport then the local authority has a duty to explore a transport options.

4.2. An Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist can provide specialists reports which provide specialist advice regarding a person's ability to access types of transport including any reasonable adjustments or requirements e.g. transport with hydraulic platforms, mobility equipment and advising what support is needed so effectively provide people support to manage potential anxiety and manage any behaviours that challenge.

4.3. Specialist Assessment reports can detail if a person has the:

- a) Ability to walk independently outside their home.
- b) Ability to access in/ out of their home safely.
- c) Ability to weight bear and transfer from their seat.
- d) Ability to walk short / longer distances with walking equipment or support from another person.
- e) Risk of falling – History of falls- have they been referred to the Falls Service?
- f) Ability to get in and out of different types of transport safely and support needed.
- g) Ability to safely use stairs, manage gradients and whether any ramps are needed.
- h) Energy levels relating to a health condition – making long travelling times difficult.
- i) Risks of harm to themselves or others relating to their health condition including uncontrollable movements and known triggers for them and how can be managed.

4.4. A functional assessment can then rate a person's mobility under three levels:

- a) No mobility impairment/ Independent with/ without walking equipment.
- b) Limited mobility impairment/ Needs support of another people or walking equipment.
- c) High / complex mobility impairment/ Full support and accessible transport need.

4.5. Specialist functional assessment reports can also provide advice to guide transport staff to make appropriate transport decisions including advice on people's requirements for personal equipment and support they needs during journeys. This enables the Council making specific reasonable adjustments and determining which type of transport is needed.

4.6. Following the transport eligibility decision Darlington Borough Council will consider the person's requirements for journeys required frequency and destination from home. By matching these needs against current transport availability and provision of the personal support needed then an offer can be made to allocate transport that enables a person to travel safely.

5. The process to determine the provision of Transport organised and commissioned through the Council (excluding transport organised through a Direct Payment)

5.1. Once a Care Act assessment has determined a person is eligible for funded transport to enable them to meet their care and support needs, and for an unpaid carer, people should be supported, request their assessor or an appropriate representative to make an application. (Appendix 3).

5.2. Darlington Borough Council will undertake an eligibility evaluation for a person to access transport under their eligibility process. This determination will consider assessed priority eligible needs, management of risks, individual choice and the times, venues and journeys needing to be regularly needed and support needed.

5.3. In procuring transport Darlington Borough Council will access the Darlington Council Transport Framework considering the availability and suitability of current transport providers and journey routes matched to people's needs. This includes appropriateness of accessing shared transport vehicles as also enables efficiency within current transport capacity which is more cost effective.

5.4. If there are no current suitable or available transport to meet a person's needs Darlington Borough Council will communicate to the assessor, referrer and person

in a timely way so can discuss any temporary transport, e.g. current waiting list for a particular transport type or pursuit of alternative transport options of commissioned services in the short or longer term. If agreed a person can remain on the transport waiting list until a suitable transport place becomes available.

- 5.5. If during their transport evaluation Darlington Borough Council identifies any other personal issues or risks not already highlighted in the original referral, they will defer to the referrer/ assessor to clarify or request the consideration of meeting needs or making alternative transport arrangements which can be more appropriate for a person.
- 5.6. Adult Social Care and the Council Darlington Borough Council Transport will need to share appropriate personal and health information where necessary with transport providers to enable people's personal needs and safe travel to be arranged.
- 5.7. Transport providers also will need to have details of people's health contingencies plans, emergency contacts, best access to home properties information and preferred communication needs. A consent form will be shared and signed detailing which personal information will need to be shared and for what purpose.
- 5.8. Any personal information sharing will be with regards to national statutory Data protection legislation and protocols.

6. Identifying suitable transport and support

- 6.1. Once eligibility for transport is agreed the Darlington Borough Council will consider the determined needs and what transport options are available and are appropriate for people's needs.
- 6.2. There is no single definition or measure determining what a reasonable distance or maximum travel time for people but determined by what appears "reasonable" for that person with regards to their wellbeing, circumstance, and needs.
- 6.3. Geographical isolation may be a factor when assessing an individual's ability to access community transport especially where they live in rural areas with limited transport. This can and can be a contributory cause of increased social isolation and poor physical and mental health.
- 6.4. People living in rural or outlying areas of the Borough may experience additional barriers in terms of the frequency of public transport and whether current transport such as the Council's Responsive Transport service can schedule regular transport routes nearby to people's homes. This includes the safety and risks of a person walking to 'virtual bus stops' to access public transport especially if have assessed cognitive or mobility impairments and need to be at a specific destination at certain times.

- 6.5. The availability of appropriate alternative and affordable means of transport will be considered during Care Act assessment eligibility determination as well as enabling people to exercise their right to choose and decide which arrangements works best for them and their family.

7. Considering Unpaid Carers needs

- 7.1. Darlington Borough Council remain committed to valuing and recognising the needs of unpaid carers through delivering their Care Act 2014 responsibilities and promoting the objectives of the local partnership Darlington Commitment to Carers 2023- 2028 strategy.
- 7.2. Where it has been identified that an unpaid carer can provide personal transport through a carers assessment an assessor can consider whether an unpaid carer by undertaking regular transport commitments for the person, they care for has an impact on their own wellbeing and sustaining a caring role and time sufficiency to enable them to have suitable breaks from caring.
- 7.3. If an unpaid carer's assessment determines that providing regular transport to a person they care for as would place an intolerable demand on them transport for the person, they care for can be considered. It will also be considered to whether the cared for person may also be eligible for Disabled Bus and Rail concessions (appendix 4) and any transport training in the first instance.
- 7.4. If an unpaid carer, family/ friends are identified as being able to or continue to provide transport needs to enable a people to achieve their eligible outcomes this must be recorded on a person's electronic records and Care and Support Plan to how their transport eligible needs are being met and what the contingency plan is if replacement transport arrangements are needed.
- 7.5. Where the person's unpaid carer who are current meeting an adult's eligible needs including transport needs is under the age of 18, they will be considered as a Young Carer and should be referred to the Children's Service for an assessment under the Children's Act 1989.
- 7.6. DBC will assess the impact and appropriateness of a young person undertaking a caring role and the impact on them. This should also be considered as part of the Preparing for Adulthood pathway arrangements with a young person and family with regards to a young carer becoming an adult carer under a Whole Family approach.

8. Travel assistance - Young adult's process

- 8.1. Travel assistance will be assessed for young adults following an application to Darlington Borough Council to review eligibility and decide on the most appropriate transport to meet a person's travel needs considering a range of options for the young person. This policy will also be used in conjunction with the Home to School Travel policy for younger adults.
- 8.2. Types of assistance will be based on looking at all available and least restrictive options with an emphasis on the promotion of independence, inclusion, choice, and value for money in ensuring needs are met underpinned by strength bases approaches.
- 8.3. Options for people to pursue may include:
 - a) Bus passes – advice on eligible concessions.
 - b) Travel training with an independent travel trainer using public transport.
 - c) Minibuses, shared taxis with or without passenger assistance.
- 8.4. It is acknowledged that the young person may require a flexible approach to travel to and from the education establishment dependent on their living arrangements e.g. to and from their family home, or commissioned service e.g. respite and/or a combination. This should be considered in the support plan.
- 8.5. There remains a Council duty to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of passengers and staff so should a person's behaviours be likely to put themselves or others at risk. Therefore, Darlington Borough Council can reserve the right to withdraw travel at any time pending a review by the appropriate lead assessment or specialist team.
- 8.6. This includes linking to the SEND Co Ordinator to provide a copy of the Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) so be sent to the Darlington Borough Council with any medical or essential information.
- 8.7. Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Accessibility Strategy this supports inclusion in education and for children and young people to fulfil their full potential for independence and be active citizens within their community.
- 8.8. Travel assistance arrangements will be reviewed to ensure remain appropriate, cost effective and are regularly used. If ongoing participation in reviews are continually refused by a person or family, which is a statutory legal responsibility for the local authority to undertake at least annually, or if a change of needs the Transport service may reserve the right to withdraw the transport meanwhile.
- 8.9. A younger person's mobility, equipment and support will be confirmed so ensure arrangements to support people on transport is in place. People's wheelchairs must

be maintained for safety by the person and the Transport service will also undertake periodic risk assessments.

- 8.10. Seatbelts must be worn throughout journeys as a requirement when accessing public transport, so people are safe and have successful journeys. Harnesses, car seats or alternative seating can be provided further to individual assessments so weight / height information will need to be ascertained.
- 8.11. Passenger assistants will have appropriate standard training including First Aid, Manual handling, so provide appropriate support to people during the journey experience balancing the needs of all those who travel with them.
- 8.12. If a young person's behaviour starts to impact on safety to themselves and others on transport journey, then the transport provider may need to stop the vehicle and pull over to safely to manage the situation. A review of the appropriateness of the continuation of current transport review may follow as a person may need alternative transport meanwhile until a longer-term solution made.
- 8.13. Staff also have MIDAS training and emergency training, and all passengers will be advised to emergency exits and procedures on transport.

9. Financial Charging

- 9.1 Where transport is to be arranged for a person with assessed eligible care and support needs to meet their eligible personal outcomes it will be recorded in their care and support plans on electronic case records and will be part of a care and support plan which is subject to Council financial assessment and individual budget assessment.
- 9.2 When it is identified on a person's care and support plan that eligible services are being provided the plan should outline whether this is through a commissioned arrangement or self-directed care including Direct Payments.
- 9.3 Therefore, a person will be made aware in receiving eligible services the Council will undertake a financial assessment under the non-residential Council charging policy and will be liable for potential contribution. The financial assessment team will determine if there is the requirement for an individual weekly contribution, and if so how much the contribution will be will based on circumstances.
- 9.4 Unpaid carers are not charged for their own carer's direct services.
- 9.5 The Council's Finance Team completing individual financial assessments will consider evidence of people's weekly income and necessary outgoings including Disability Related Expenditure which considering people's necessary additional costs related to

their disabilities or illness which cannot just be met through any awarded national welfare benefits.

9.6 The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 section 73 (14) states that local authorities when assessing a person's ability to pay, should ignore as income the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment if received as people cannot be directed to fund eligible Care Act 2014 needs from their national benefits.

10. Managing service absences or change of need

- 10.1 Once a person is assigned transport including shared transport but later do not need this place on one or more days this must be communicated to Darlington Borough Council at the earliest opportunity. Where these absences are planned people should give 48 hours' notice to Darlington Borough Council. This enables another person to benefit on those days.
- 10.2 Where absences are unplanned and not communicated to Darlington Borough Council there may still be a financial charge for these transport days, unless waived by Adult Social Care under an exceptional circumstance basis, e.g. person was admitted as an emergency to hospital, an unforeseen home situation or sudden ill health.
- 10.3 It is essential transport capacity is maximised and the Council effectively manage their transport demand. Where a person has been absent, without advice to a return, for more than four weeks, this will be reviewed by the Adult Social care assessment team to determine whether a person still has eligible needs for transport, or if their needs have changed. If an absence is likely to be long term the transport allocation will be cancelled but can be reinstated later subject to review and immediate availability.
- 10.4 Where Darlington Borough Council receive concerns to the appropriateness of transport from their transport providers, especially where there are risks or concerns to the safety of others including drivers/ staff an urgent review will be needed.
- 10.5 A reassessment of a person's needs should consider all options or reasonable adjustments to see firstly if a person can remain travelling on current transport or may be able to consider other transport arrangements.
- 10.6 Reviews and reassessment of needs must balance the safety not just for the person travelling but for staff and other travellers' welfare under Health and Safety at Work 1974 legislation duties.

11. Reassessment of eligible needs / ceasing transport allocation

- 11.1 Following a Care Act review or reassessment if it is identified that a person is now more personally independent including by using universal public transport, they may no longer have an eligible need that the local authority has a duty to meet. This will be discussed jointly with the person when reviewing their care and support plan.
- 11.2 If travel is no longer needed, a written notice to cease their transport allocation with agreed timescales will be sent. People who are no longer eligible for transport will be provided with tailored information and advice regarding how to access local public transport options and available community services and contacts.
- 11.3 When an existing transport offer is to be cancelled people will be notified in writing and as appropriate to their unpaid carers or family in the right accessible formats. This will confirm the date transport will cease and agreed timeframes.
- 11.4 If during the notice period a person requests an extension to this timeframe this will be considered on an individual basis with not exceeding a further four weeks as endorsed by the key Adult Social Care assessment team in liaison with Darlington Borough Council. This will be balanced against the priority of people waiting and complexity of needs and risks.
- 11.5 Adult Social Care may consider funding alternative temporary transport in a short interim period if any transport continuity gap will impact on a person being able to attend an assessed resource and gaps will impact on their wellbeing or that of an unpaid carer.
- 11.6 It is expected that a person will actively confirm when new arrangements have been made and when effective from so the local authority can cease transport or temporary funded transport.
- 11.7 If Adult Social Care are no longer meeting a person's eligible transport needs, a person's care and support plan and electronic records will be amended to reflect these changes. The Brokerage and Finance Team will be advised to the effective date of the changes. This ensures people are not charged for this service and the provider contract ended.

12. The Appeals and Complaints process

- 12.1 People have a right to appeal with regards to any Council decision including regarding determination when a person is not seen as or no longer eligible for funded Council services including transport.

- 12.2 Where people are assessed under the Care Act are determined as not eligible for Council arranged services then will deliver our duty to provide information and advice and guidance and signposted to local available services including community transport. They will also be given information regarding Darlington Borough Council Complaints procedure.
- 12.3 Where people want to appeal against a decision that advises that they are not eligible for transport they will need to provide medical evidence or information for consideration to determine any reversal of the original decision.
- 12.4 On the outcome of this appeal there may need to be a further Transport eligibility assessment, especially where people's needs appear to have substantially changed so a reassessment of needs may be required. This should be within four weeks of the appeal representation or earlier based on the priority of need, e.g., the start of an education term or breakdown in a home situation risk.
- 12.5 If a person remains unsatisfied with the written response following an appeal review, they will be given details to how to make a complaint through the Darlington's formal Complaints procedure. If people remain dissatisfied to the Complaints investigation decision, they will be provided with details of the Local Government Ombudsman process.
- 12.6 When following a joint health and social care assessment a person is determined as having full *primary health needs*, they may be eligible for full NHS funding with regards to NHS Continuing Health Care. The local health Integrated Care Board (ICB) will be responsible for arranging and funding people's eligible needs including arranged transport. A person will not be liable to a financial assessment or contribute to services under full NHS Continuing Health Care funding. Adult Social Care will remain supporting the person and these arrangements will be jointly reviewed.

13. Governance, Review and Impact of the Adult Social Care Transport Policy

- 13.1 The Governance and monitoring of the implementation and impact of this policy will be through the Adult Social Care Senior Management Team led by the Assistant Director who reports to the Directorate Management Team.
- 13.2 The implementation of the Adult Social Care Transport policy aligns to Darlington Council's key Policies and vision and enabling local authority to meet their statutory duties. This ensures more people have accessible social transport sufficiency and enables more people to remain in their own homes for longer and prevents premature admission to high-cost residential care, complex health and care packages or unpaid carers unable to continue in a carer's role.

- 13.3 The Adult Social Care Engagement and Co production' Stronger Together Strategy 2024- 2007 commits to working with people as equal partners including those with lived experience who are best placed to ensure we arrange and provide transport offers that meet people's needs now and in the future.
- 13.4 The implementation of this policy should not see an increase the demand or access for transport as does not widen the current criteria but makes people more aware of transport options available to them and the process. There is no evidence of any increased financial impact through the implementation of this policy and any future applications will continue through new assessment and routine planned reviews process.
- 13.5 Strength-based practice approaches promote people's independence enabling them to access their own transport solutions so practitioners will consider all transport options with people including independent travel with the objective of promoting people's choices and options, so travel is targeted at people with the highest need. We also look at prevent, reduce and delaying people's needs through our Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy 2024-2027.
- 13.6 The Adult Social Care Transport Policy will be reviewed in the first year and then bi-annually.

14. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 14.1 The Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024-2027 has regards to our duties under the Care Act 2014, so adults and unpaid carers are assessed, and their eligible needs determined by the national eligibility framework so are transparent decisions with people so meet their personal needs and aspirations.
- 14.2 We meet our Care Act duty to provide information and advice in the right accessible formats means we make reasonable adjustments in proving and signposting people to local resources and support them to make applications for transport.
- 14.3 With regards to our Public Equalities Duty under the Darlington Council Equality Policy 2023-2027 Adult Social Care consider the needs of people with legally protected characteristics when making decisions in planning for transport support. Staff will have mandatory Equalities training and demonstrate that they seek to combat any inequality or disadvantage that people may face including when accessing transport.
- 14.4 We are committed through the new Adult Social Care Engagement and Co production' Stronger Together strategy 2024-2027 which involve people as equal partners when we are planning and developing new Policy or protocols which may

affect them, so we are learning from their lived experiences to inform and co-produce future transport arrangements.

- 14.5 Adult Social Care are part of the Darlington Carers Strategy Steering Group and Learning Impairment Network engagement group and links to other community forums so together work in partnership with local people so engage them to jointly review the impact of the new policies. We will also take steps to engage with local community interest groups and engage seldom heard voices.
- 14.6 This Adult Social Care Transport Policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 1

Adults National Eligibility Framework – Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 replaces key previous adult social care legislation. The National Minimum Eligibility Threshold identifies those who are eligible for care and support or support. The Care Act 2014 promotes the principle of wellbeing and support to meet the daily living needs of adults.

The three criteria that an adult must meet to have eligible needs are:

1. The Adult is affected by a physical or mental impairment or illness.
2. There is a significant impact on their wellbeing.
3. The Adult does not have the ability to achieve at least 2 of the following outcomes.

National Minimum Eligibility Threshold Outcomes

1. Managing and maintaining nutrition.
2. Maintaining personal hygiene.
3. Maintaining toilet needs.
4. Being appropriately clothed.
5. Being able to make use of the adult's home safely.
6. Maintaining a habitable home environment.
7. Developing and maintaining family and other personal relationships.
8. Accessing and engaging in work, education or volunteering.
9. Making use of necessary facilities or service in the community (with transport)
10. Carrying out caring responsibilities for a child.

Appendix 2

Carers National Eligibility Framework – Care Act 2014

Unpaid Carers are eligible for support in their own right. The eligibility threshold is based on the impact their caring role has on their wellbeing. When determining carers eligibility Local Authorities must consider meeting needs under the following themes.

1. The carer's needs for support arise because they are providing necessary care to an adult.
2. As a result of their caring responsibilities, the carer's physical or mental health is at risk of deterioration.
3. The carer is unable to achieve any of the outcomes that the carer has identified as part of the carers assessment.
4. As a consequence of being unable to achieve these outcomes, there is or there is likely to be, a significant impact on the carer's wellbeing.

National Minimum Eligibility Threshold outcomes for carers:

1. Providing care to other persons.
2. Maintaining a habitable home environment in the carer's home.
3. Managing and maintaining nutrition.
4. Developing and maintaining family or other personal relationships.

Appendix 3

Darlington Borough Council Transport Information Sheet

1. Bus Ticket Discounts

- a) **Stagecoach Unirider** - available to all students in full time education either as an annual or term ticket used alongside student ID cards and available at University Contact : www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/north-east/unirider/
- b) **Stagecoach under 19 card** – free stagecoach under 19 ID card for discounted travel for all Stagecoach buses in Tyne and Wear, Teesside and Hartlepool when you board a bus . Contact: www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/north-east/under-19
- c) **Arriva Student and Young person’s saver** – available to anyone up to age 19 or in full time education for travel on Arriva Northeast buses available daily, weekly, 15 weekly or annual. Buy on bus, online or m-ticket app. Contact. www.connectteesvalley.com/young discounts.

2. Tees Flex- your bus, your way

On demand, shared bus service for Tees Valley connecting rural communities transporting to and from primary locations and wider local authority boundary area including healthcare facilities, educational establishments, retail clusters.

Technology directs you, through app algorithms to a ‘virtual bus stop’ within a short walking distance for pick up and drop up points. This matches your trip with others nearby enabling multiple passengers to seamlessly share the journey.

Tee flex has nine fully accessible minibuses and bookings are on a first come, first served basis and grouping passenger need in real time and assumes you want immediate travel and looks for availability for your requirements up to 30 minutes of your preferred booking time. People with a valid concessionary travel card can travel free after 9.30 Monday to Friday.

Download Tees Flex app or visit teesflex.co.uk and create an account with payment through paypal. contact number 0330 678 1545.

3. Darlington Walking and Cycling Hub – Tees Valley

The Darlington Active Travel Club is open for people to choose green, healthier forms of travel around Tees Valley and offer guided bike rides, learn to ride training and bike maintenance courses. Dr Bike MOTs and secure cycle parking. All activities are no charge.

The hub assists you to find out more about active and sustainable travel locally to get to work, school, shops or leisure.

Free weekly guided routes a) Beginners Tuesday 10am b) Intermediate Wednesdays 1am.

Contact: darlingtonactivetravel@sustrans.org.uk Tel: 07720 158 704.

4. Travel Advisors – travel greener and healthier

Travel advisors support people to take full advantage of all available travel options for your day-to-day journey needs including using latest transport Apps and planning tools and access the best ticket offers and information.

Supports connections with the Wheels 2 work e-bicycle and electric motorbike hire scheme and taking advantage of Darlington's Active Travel hub and includes Bike Buddy journey accompanied by a trained instructor.

Contact: traveladvisors@darlington.gov.uk Tel 07966 883805/07958 963646.

5. Home to School Transport

Contact: schooltraveltransport@darlington.gov.uk

6. Let's go Tees Valley - travel and transport

Contact: info@letsготeesvalley.co.uk

7. Volunteer Driver Service

Supported SRC Ltd. Contact: <https://www.supportive.org.uk/transport/#volunteer>

8. Disabled Person's Railcard

For people with difficulty travelling on transport.

Contact: Tel: 0345 605 0525 and <http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/>

9. Home to Hospital – NHS Patient Transport Service (PTS)

This is for planned, non-emergency patient transport where people need additional support due to difficulties in walking or / and managing gradients.

Please contact the hospital where you will be attending for guidance and booking.

Appendix 4

