

Public transport and concessions

About this factsheet

This factsheet provides information on practical and financial assistance with public transport that may be available to people who are aged 60 or over, or those who are disabled. It includes information about community transport schemes that people with disabilities may be able to access.

We also publish Factsheet 73 *Driving and parking*, which includes details on renewing your driving licence, the Blue Badge scheme, arranging for disabled parking bays and electric scooters.

The information given in this factsheet is applicable in England. Different rules may apply in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Readers in these nations should contact their respective national Age UK organisation for information specific to where they live – see section 10 for details.

For details of how to order other Age UK factsheets and information materials go to section 10.

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1 Financial help for people with mobility problems

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit for people who become disabled and make a claim before age 65. It has a care part and a mobility part. DLA is not affected by your savings or your income.

The mobility part is for people who cannot walk, have great difficulty walking or who need someone with them when walking outdoors. It is paid at two rates: higher and lower:

- The higher rate is awarded to people who are unable to walk or are virtually unable to walk; have had both legs amputated at or above the ankle; are both deaf and blind; are severely sight impaired or blind or to certain severely mentally impaired people with severe behavioural problems who need care or supervision both day and night.
- The lower rate is for people who can walk but who normally need someone with them for guidance or supervision when walking outdoors.

You can claim whether you live alone or with others – what matters is that you need the help, not whether you are getting help. Normally you must meet the conditions for at least three months but there are special rules for people who are terminally ill. See Age UK's Factsheet 52, *Disability Living Allowance*, for details and rates of payment.

Important: A new benefit called Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will be introduced in 2013. PIP will eventually replace DLA. Like DLA, PIP will have a mobility component with two different rates of payment – a standard rate and an enhanced rate. The criteria for getting PIP mobility component will be different from those for DLA. Entitlement will be based on an assessment of your ability to plan and follow a journey, and the distance you can move.

PIP will be introduced for new claims first, starting in Merseyside, North West England, Cumbria, Cheshire and North East England in April 2013. Outside these areas DLA will still be available to new claimants until June 2013 when all new adult claimants will have to claim PIP.

The government plans to phase out DLA for adults of working age between October 2013 and December 2016, and then to decide whether to reassess people aged 65 or over and already receiving DLA when PIP is introduced. The government has said that DLA will remain for children aged under 16 for the time being.

For more information about PIP, see Age UK Factsheet 87, *Personal Independence Payment*.

2 Buses

Information about bus services, such as fares, routes and timetables, is usually available locally from the company operating a particular service and/or the local transport authority.

2.1 Concessions

Older and disabled people are entitled to a free bus and a minimum concession of free off-peak travel on a local bus anywhere in England.

Off-peak times are between 9.30 am and 11 pm on working days and all day at weekends and public holidays.

If you are a woman, the age of eligibility for concessionary travel is your State Pension age. If you are a man, it is the pensionable age of a woman born on the same day. For more information about State Pension see Factsheet 19, *State Pension*. There is a State Pension calculator that enables people affected by the pension age changes to see at what age they become eligible for their State Pension and related benefits. You can find it on the Gov.uk website (see section 9).

Some services are not covered by this provision; these are:

- services where most seats can be reserved, such as coaches
- temporary services that run for less than six weeks, eg shuttle buses to special events
- tourist services or services on vehicles of historical interest, eg open-top tours
- rail replacement service

- services where extra provision, such as refreshments or car parking, are included in the fare.

Local authorities (councils) may offer further concessions to their residents, for example concessions on trams or rail travel, or travel during peak hours, but these will only apply in this local authority area.

Where local authorities offer more generous schemes they are allowed to make a charge for a bus pass, as long as a free bus pass providing the statutory minimum concession remains available as an option.

For more information about the scheme in your area and how to apply, contact your local authority.

2.2 People with disabilities

More buses become wheelchair-accessible as older, inaccessible vehicles are replaced by modern, low-floor buses with ramps, but it will take until 2017 before all buses are fully accessible. Modern buses are also easier for people who have difficulties in walking, climbing steps or holding handrails as they have level access or lower entry and exit steps and easier to grip handrails.

Contact the local authority, the bus operator's customer service or a local disability group for information about accessible buses in your area.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) produced a booklet *Accessible travel – information for disabled and less mobile people* that can be downloaded from their website. You can also access more detailed information for people with disabilities on the Gov.uk website (see section 9).

3 Trains

Information about train services, reservations and fares is available from railway stations, travel centres and approved travel agents. You can also contact the National Rail Enquiry Service for advance timetable and fare information (see section 9).

3.1 Senior Railcard

The Senior Railcard is available to anyone (including visitors to Britain) aged 60 or over. It costs £28 for one year or £65 for three years and allows you to save one-third of the cost of most rail fares in Great Britain. There may be other offers for cardholders such as reduced-price membership for art or food societies; see www.senior-railcard.co.uk for details.

The leaflet *Senior Railcard* includes more details and an application form; it is available from railway stations or the network of rail-appointed travel agents.

To apply, take the completed form and proof of your age, such as passport, driving licence, to your nearest staffed railway station or rail-appointed travel agent. You can also make a purchase online at www.senior-railcard.co.uk or by phone from your nearest train company telesales. For train company telesales numbers contact National Rail Enquiries (see section 9).

3.2 People with disabilities

Disabled Persons Railcard

The Disabled Persons Railcard costs £20 for a year (or £54 for three years) and it allows you to save one-third of the costs of most rail fares in Great Britain. If you are travelling with a companion, they are entitled to the same reduced rate. The leaflet *Rail travel made easy* has more details and an application form and is available from most staffed railway stations; from the headquarters of the train-operating companies; by post from the Disabled Persons Railcard Office (see section 9 for details); or you can download it from www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk.

Discounts for people who travel in their own wheelchair or those who are registered blind or who are partially sighted

People who need to stay in their own wheelchair during a journey and do not hold the Disabled Persons Railcard can still get discounts on single and return tickets. They can get the same discounts for one travelling companion.

Registered blind and partially sighted people who do not have a Disabled Persons Railcard can also get discounts but only if they travel with a companion. You must show a document confirming your disability when you buy a ticket or when travelling. There is more information in the leaflet *Rail travel made easy* (see above).

Arranging assistance for disabled and mobility-impaired passengers

Train companies can provide special arrangements for disabled or mobility-impaired passengers. For example, they may be able to arrange for staff to help you off the train when you get to your destination or when you have to change trains. You need to contact the train company as far in advance as possible and at least 24 hours before the journey.

To find out which train company you need to contact to make arrangements, contact National Rail Enquiries (see section 9). There is more information in the leaflet *Rail travel made easy* (see above).

Stations and trains

Access and facilities for disabled people vary between stations. Contact the train company that runs the station for information before you travel.

For people with hearing and speech impairment, stations normally display printed timetables. Many ticket office windows have been fitted with induction loops to help hearing-aid users. Most stations display arrival and departure details on visual display units. For people who are visually impaired, train arrivals and departures are usually announced over loudspeakers.

Many stations have toilets that are accessible to wheelchair users and convenient for other disabled travellers. Some toilets for disabled passengers are kept locked to deter vandalism and a notice will indicate where a key can be obtained. Some toilets are fitted with National Key Scheme locks (see section 8).

Facilities on trains also vary. Newer trains are designed to allow full access for people with disabilities, including people in wheelchairs, but older trains may be less accessible: ask before you book your ticket.

For more information and to check if a station has accessible facilities see Gov.uk website (see section 9).

4 Coaches

Information on routes, fares, timetables and facilities can be obtained from coach companies or from most travel agents. You can also use the Gov.uk website to plan your journey (see section 9).

4.1 Concessions

There is no national concessionary scheme at present but you may want to contact your coach operator to see if they offer any discounts.

National Express offers Senior Coachcard to people who are 60 or over. It costs £10 (plus £1.50 p&p) and you save a guaranteed 1/3 on standard fares throughout the UK for 12 months. You can purchase a Senior Coachcard online, by phone, and at any of National Express outlets or high street agents. See National Express website for more details and to apply.

4.2 People with disabilities

Facilities for disabled people vary between coach stations. Check with your travel agent or the coach company what facilities are available at both ends of the journey and along the way.

Many coaches are not accessible to some disabled people because they have steps. Most cannot carry wheelchair passengers unless the coach has been specially adapted or the passenger is able to sit in a normal coach seat and their wheelchair can be folded and stowed in the luggage lockers. Many coach operators will provide assistance for disabled people, although seven days' notice is usually required so the arrangements can be made.

For more information see the Gov.uk website (see section 9).

5 Planes

5.1 Concessions

Some airlines may offer concessions for older people. The qualifying age may be different for different airlines. For details of any concessions that may be offered for a particular journey, and the qualifying conditions, contact a travel agent or the airline.

5.2 People with disabilities

Contact the airline and/or the airport before you travel, to find out what facilities are available for people with disabilities at the airport and on the plane, and whether any particular arrangements need to be made. Make sure you let the airline you're travelling with know what your needs are at least 48 hours before flying.

The Department for Transport has published a code of practice called *Access to air travel for disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility*. You can download it from the Gov.uk website (see section 9).

Under European law, disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility have legal rights to assistance when travelling by air. For more information see the Equality and Human Rights Commission website (see section 9).

For more detailed information about air travel see the Gov.uk website.

6 Ferries and ships

6.1 Concessions

Some ferry companies offer discounts to Senior Railcard holders, and others may offer discounts to passengers above a certain age. Check with your travel agent or the ferry company to see what discounts may be available.

6.2 **Passengers with disabilities**

Facilities for people with disabilities vary both at terminals and on board. Check with your travel agent or the shipping company to see what facilities are available and to let it know of any requirements you may have.

7 **Community transport**

If you are disabled and cannot use ordinary public transport, and do not have access to a car, there are community transport schemes that you may be able to use. To get information on all community transport resource available in your area you can use the map provided on the Community Transport network website: www.a2binfo.net. Your local authority or your local Age UK also should be able to tell you what services are run in the area.

7.1 **Social cars**

In these schemes people volunteer to use their own cars to drive people who cannot use public transport. They can take you to visit a doctor, chemist or to go shopping, for example. Some schemes may take you to social events, or to visit friends or family.

In some areas the local Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) provides social car schemes (see section 9).

The local branch of the British Red Cross or St John Ambulance may run also voluntary car schemes (see section 9).

7.2 **Dial-a-Ride**

These schemes provide door-to-door transport for people who cannot use public transport. They use converted cars or wheelchair-accessible minibuses with fully trained staff.

Most Dial-a-Rides will only take you on local trips. Usually, you have to book your trips in advance and enrol as a member. There may be a call-out charge, and you will probably have to pay a mileage cost.

You should be able to get information about local Dial-to-Ride services from your local council or your local Age UK. In London, contact Transport for All (see section 9).

7.3 Taxicard/token scheme

These schemes have been set up on a local basis by some local authorities. They are for disabled people who cannot use the bus service due to difficulties with access. The schemes offer a number of concessionary taxi journeys each year. Contact your local council to find out whether it runs such a scheme and what concessionary fares it offers.

7.4 Shopmobility

Shopmobility schemes lend manual and powered wheelchairs and powered scooters to those people who need them to shop and use other facilities in town centres. There are schemes throughout the UK. For more information contact the National Federation of Shopmobility UK (see section 9).

8 National Key Scheme (NKS)

The National Key Scheme was set up to allow independent entry by disabled key holders to accessible public toilets which have been locked to prevent vandalism. NKS keys can be bought from the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) for £4. Also your local authority, the Tourist Office or local disability group may have stocks of the key for sale. For more information contact RADAR (see section 9).

9 Useful organisations

Assist UK

The national voice for disabled /independent living centres with information about Disabled Living Centres throughout the UK.

Assist UK, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Manchester M8 8QA

Tel: 0161 832 9758

Email: general.info@assist-uk.org

Website: www.assist-uk.org

British Red Cross

Provides information about individual and personal budgets, and the retail model for providing community equipment.

British Red Cross Office, 44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL

Tel: 0844 871 1111

Email: information@redcross.org.uk

Website: www.redcross.org.uk

Department for Transport

Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR

Enquiry helpdesk: 0300 330 3000

Website: www.dft.gov.uk

DIAL (the Disability Information and Advice Line)

DIAL UK is a network of local groups throughout the country providing information and advice to disabled people. They should be able to tell you if there is a group in your local area or it may be in the local telephone directory.

Tel: 01302 310123

Website: www.scope.org.uk/dial

Gov.uk

Gov.uk is the government website that provides online information on variety of subjects and services.

Website: www.gov.uk

Disabled Living Centres

There are local Disabled Living Centres throughout the country. They provide advice and information about a range of aids and equipment and can display and demonstrate this equipment. Further information about Disabled Living Centres and whether there is a centre near you is available from Assist UK.

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)

DPTAC advises the government on access to transport for disabled people. It has a website that gives information to disabled and less mobile people about travelling using all forms of transport.

2/23 Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0207 944 8011

Email: dptac@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://dptac.independent.gov.uk/>

Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

The DLF provides advice and information on disability equipment and assisted products. It has factsheets on a variety of subjects, including choosing wheelchairs and other equipment.

380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU

Tel: 0845 130 9177

Email: info@dlf.org.uk

Website: www.dlf.org.uk

You can also visit the Equipment Demonstration Centre where a large number of items are displayed. The Centre does not sell, hire or lend equipment. If you would like advice from trained staff you need to ring for an appointment; tel: 020 7289 6111.

Disabled Persons Railcard Office

Disabled Persons Railcard Office, PO Box 11631, Laurencekirk, AB30 9AA
Tel: 0845 605 0525
Textphone: 0845 601 0132
Email: disability@atoc.org
Website: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Disability Rights UK

Disability Rights UK is the UK's largest disability campaigning organisation, with a membership of over 900 disability organisations and individual campaigners

12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF
Tel: 020 7250 3222
Minicom: 020 7250 4119
Website: www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Equality and Human Rights Commission

It has statutory remit to promote and monitor human rights; and to protect, enforce and promote equality across the nine "protected" grounds - age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

FREEPOST Equality Advisory Support Service FPN4431
Tel: 0800 444 205
Textphone: 0800 444 206
Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Disabled Motoring UK

Disabled Motoring UK represents the interests of disabled drivers, passengers, scooter and wheelchair users and their friends, families and carers. It provides information and advice.

Disabled Motoring UK, Ashwellthorpe, Norwich NR16 1EX
Tel: 01508 489 449
Email: info@diabledmotoring.org
Website: www.mobilise.info

National Express

Tel: 0871 781 8181

Website: www.nationalexpress.com

National Federation of Shopmobility UK

Tel: 0844 41 850

Email: info@shopmobilityuk.org

Website: www.shopmobilityuk.org

National Rail Enquiry Service

National Rail Enquiries, Customer Relations, Freepost RSEH-TBGE-HBJJ
Plymouth, PL4 6AB

Tel: 08457 484 950

Textphone number is 08456 050 600

Website: www.nationalrail.co.uk

St John Ambulance

Volunteers provide a range of patient transport services, transferring patients to a wide range of non-emergency medical appointments such as admissions to and discharge from hospitals, clinics and nursing homes.

27 St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BU

Tel: 08700 10 49 50

Website: www.sja.org.uk

Transport for All

Provides specialised advice, information, advocacy and training to both service users and providers of accessible transport in London.

336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA

Tel: 020 7737 2339

Email: contactus@transportforall.org.uk

Website: www.transportforall.org.uk

Women's Royal Voluntary Service

The WRVS offers practical support to older people. Contact them to find out what services they offer in your area.

Website: www.wrvs.org.uk

10 **Further information from Age UK**

Age UK Information Materials

Age UK publishes a large number of free Information Guides and Factsheets on a range of subjects including money and benefits, health, social care, consumer issues, end of life, legal, issues employment and equality issues.

Whether you need information for yourself, a relative or a client our information guides will help you find the answers you are looking for and useful organisations who may be able to help. You can order as many copies of guides as you need and organisations can place bulk orders.

Our factsheets provide detailed information if you are an adviser or you have a specific problem.

Age UK Advice

Visit the Age UK website, www.ageuk.org.uk, or call Age UK Advice free on 0800 169 65 65 if you would like:

- further information about our full range of information products
- to order copies of any of our information materials
- to request information in large print and audio
- expert advice if you cannot find the information you need in this factsheet
- contact details for your nearest local Age UK

Age UK

Age UK is the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged. We provide advice and information for people in later life through our publications, online or by calling Age UK Advice.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

In Wales, contact:

Age Cymru: 0800 169 65 65

Website: www.agecymru.org.uk

In Scotland, contact:

Age Scotland: 0845 125 9732

Website: www.agescotland.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact:

Age NI: 0808 808 7575

Website: www.ageni.org.uk

Support our work

Age UK is the largest provider of services to older people in the UK after the NHS. We make a difference to the lives of thousands of older people through local resources such as our befriending schemes, day centres and lunch clubs; by distributing free information materials; and taking calls at Age UK Advice on 0800 169 65 65.

If you would like to support our work by making a donation please call Supporter Services on 0800 169 87 87 (8.30 am–5.30 pm) or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/donate

Legal statement

Age UK is a registered charity (number 1128267) and company limited by guarantee (number 6825798). The registered address is Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA. VAT number: 564559800. Age Concern England (charity number 261794) and Help the Aged (charity number 272786) and their trading and other associated companies merged on 1 April 2009. Together they have formed Age UK, a single charity dedicated to improving the lives of people in later life. Age Concern and Help the Aged are brands of Age UK. The three national Age Concerns in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have also merged with Help the Aged in these nations to form three registered charities: Age Scotland, Age Northern Ireland, Age Cymru.

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