

## ALTERNATIVES TO OWNING A CAR FACTSHEET

Car ownership is not for everyone.

If you live in a city, Ultra Low Emission Zones (ULEZ), Congestion Charges and difficulties finding suitable parking can make car ownership costly and impractical.

For some of you, driving may have become more difficult, uncomfortable and stressful and you may be thinking about ways to manage without a car.

If you've decided you don't want a car, or are thinking of giving one up, this factsheet will help you think about alternatives.

### **Q I want the freedom of using a car without owning one, what are my options?**

**A** There are a number of ways you can drive yourself around without owning a car:

**Car sharing** can be an option in large cities and towns – and it can take different forms, like car clubs. You're asked to join the club and then you can pick up a car when you need it and return it to the same place. Some schemes allow you to make a one-way trip, so it's always good to ask.

'**Peer to peer**' car sharing schemes, are also available, where people with under-used cars rent them to others in their local neighbourhood.

There are also **Community Car Schemes** that offer 'pay-as-you-go', low-carbon vehicles.

You can find out more about these schemes and whether there is one local to you here - [www.como.org.uk/shared-cars/existing-schemes-and-operators](http://www.como.org.uk/shared-cars/existing-schemes-and-operators)

### **Q What if I need someone to drive me?**

**A** If you want to get from A to B without using public transport **taxis** are a good option.

They can be incredibly good value when set against the total cost of buying, owning and running a car. There are lots of online taxi apps like Uber that are quick and easy to use, but, if you have specific accessibility requirements, you should make them clear when you register. Once you set up an account you pay online so you don't have to pay the driver.

Some beneficiaries prefer to set up an account with a local taxi company and get to know a regular driver.

When you use a taxi, the driver must make reasonable adjustments to help you. This should include helping you get in and out of the taxi, assistance with your wheelchair and help to get to the door. There should not be any extra charge for this and the meter should start when the journey starts and stop when the vehicle stops. There should be no charge for loading and unloading a wheelchair.

It is useful to explain to the taxi company exactly what help you will need when you're booking the taxi.

If you don't want to use taxis, contact your local **Volunteer Transport scheme** where you can pre-book volunteer drivers who will come and pick you up in their own cars and take you where you need to go.

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All drivers are vetted and trained by the service provider. There is no charge for their time but you may have to pay for petrol at an agreed rate. They can get quite busy so it's good to book at least a week in advance.

### **Q I just want to make short journeys local to where I live. Are there better options?**

**A** A **mobility scooter, trike or Segway** might be an option for short journeys. A lot of you find this easier than driving, and finding a parking space, and they can be adapted to meet your needs.

You can view and try out scooters at your local Motability Centre and it is worth doing this to find out what suits you best before you buy.

Find your closest centre here - [www.motability.co.uk/contact/faqs/where-is-my-nearest-scooter-and-powered-wheelchair-dealer](http://www.motability.co.uk/contact/faqs/where-is-my-nearest-scooter-and-powered-wheelchair-dealer)

If you are not ready to buy a scooter but would like to give it a try (or need one away from home), ShopMobility is a nationwide network of centres which hire out mobility equipment such as scooters at a low cost and, sometimes, for free.

You can find your local service here - [www.shopmobilityuk.org/find-a-centre/](http://www.shopmobilityuk.org/find-a-centre/)

### **Q Public transport is an obvious solution, but can I get help with the costs?**

**A** **Public buses, trains, trams, underground trains or metro systems** are great ways of getting around and you can get concessions on most of these services

Most towns and cities have reasonable bus networks and you may be eligible for a free, local bus pass if you have a disability. Visit your local authority website to see what is available in your area, or use this link - [www.gov.uk/apply-for-disabled-bus-pass](http://www.gov.uk/apply-for-disabled-bus-pass)

If you have difficulty finding the information you need, the Trust can help.

If you live in London, and are over 60, you can get an Oyster card for free travel on trains, buses and the tube at - [tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/60-plus-oyster-photocard](http://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/60-plus-oyster-photocard)

In Scotland the National Entitlement Card gives you free bus travel if you are over 60, or have a disability - [www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/60plus-or-disabled/](http://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/60plus-or-disabled/)

You can also get the National Free Bus Pass once you reach state pension age, use this link to work out when that will be - [www.gov.uk/state-pension-age](http://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age)

### **Q There is no regular bus service in my area. Is there an alternative to public transport?**

**A** In rural areas, bus services are often few and far between; and even though the law says that you are entitled to help, many of you find getting on and off buses difficult and would be unable to travel standing up if the bus was full.

If that sounds familiar, **community transport** services may be an option. These include the volunteer transport schemes mentioned above and **Door to door or Dial-a-Ride schemes** – where you are picked up at your door, dropped at your destination, and given help getting on and off, and with bags and wheelchairs. These services are for people who have difficulty using public transport and there is usually a joining fee. However, you may be able to use your bus pass to pay for your journey.

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Local Authorities list their schemes on their websites, or you can find your local service at the following link - [ctauk.org/find-ct-provider/](http://ctauk.org/find-ct-provider/)

### **Q What if I prefer to travel by train? Can I get help with the costs?**

**A** A Disabled Persons Railcard gives you discounts on **train travel** and you can get one if you receive PIP at any rate [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

If you don't claim benefits contact the Trust to get help to apply.

### **Q Are there particular things I need to be aware of when travelling by train?**

**A** If you're travelling by train, especially at major city stations, it's a good idea to **book assistance** in advance. Station staff will be assigned to help you get onto the platform and board the correct train, using the station's wheelchair ramp.

On driver-only operated trains you must make sure that staff at your destination station know which train you are on. You can book assistance in advance by telephone or by telling the staff at your boarding station, who will usually let the staff at your destination know.

If you use a mobility scooter always check that you can take it on the train you're aiming for as some train companies restrict the size and weight of the vehicles they can carry by rail. It is also advisable to confirm that there are no engineering works going on when you wish to travel as, on these occasions, train services can often be replaced by buses or coaches, which are not always able to carry wheelchairs.

### **Q Where can I get further information?**

**A** If you have other questions or need more information, speak to one of the Health & Wellbeing team by calling **01480 474074**. We're happy to help.