



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT INFORMATION SHEET

Community transport is a subsidised service often operated by charities, local councils or volunteer groups.

It can provide safe, accessible, and affordable travel options for people with a disability, such as a spinal cord injury, who do not have access to their own transport. This can be for essential trips, such as medical appointments or work, but also for social activities and community participation.

You can connect with people who can share their experience and advice via your local [SIA Community Support Group](#) and [SIA Support Network Facebook Group](#).



HOW TO ACCESS COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

You can usually find out the community transport options available in your local area through one of these routes:

- local council or authority transport web pages
- local disability organisations
- spinal injury charities or support networks
- GP surgeries, hospitals, or rehab centres

Once you've identified a service, check that you qualify.

Eligibility criteria might include:

- medical diagnosis / mobility restrictions
- inability to use standard public transport
- residence within a certain area

If you meet the criteria, then it's likely you'll need to register for the service before you can book with them. The service might ask for information such as:

- basic personal information
- your mobility or equipment needs
- whether you use a manual or power wheelchair
- whether you'll need a companion / carer to travel with you

Once you've registered, you'll need to book your transport. Many services require bookings 24 to 72 hours in advance. It can be helpful to ask about return journeys and expected pick-up windows as this will help you to plan your journeys and any care needs around this.

COSTS

Community transport is usually low-cost, subsidised, or donation based. Transport to and from medical appointments may be free, depending on eligibility. Some areas may offer travel passes or concessions. There can also be grants available for frequent travel.

TYPICAL TYPES OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Dial-a-ride / demand-responsive transport

- Advanced booking is normally required.
- Provides a door-to-door service, picking up and dropping off where you choose.
- Accessible vehicles are provided, as long as this is advised on booking.

Accessible community buses

- May need booking in advance but can also have timetabled routes each week.
- Routes often include local destinations such as town centres, GP surgeries, and supermarkets.
- Most buses will be lower floor or adapted minibuses, but it's useful to contact the service beforehand to explain your individual needs and make sure these can be met.

Non-emergency patient transport

- This is transport for people who need assistance to get to medical appointments, usually hospital appointments.
- There are usually eligibility criteria for this service, and these can vary from area to area.
- When booking, make sure you explain your needs, such as whether you'll be travelling in your wheelchair or will need mobility equipment transported along with you.
- Be aware that hospital transport may be picking up other patients during the journey, making travel time longer.

Volunteer driver schemes

- This is when volunteers use their own cars to provide transport for essential journeys.
- This service will need pre-booking.
- As this service usually involves private cars, volunteer drivers might not always be able to accommodate wheelchair users who can't transfer out of their wheelchair. Check in advance as to whether your needs can be accommodated.

THINKING ABOUT YOUR NEEDS

It's important that you think about your needs, both in terms of your comfort and your safety, when travelling by community transport. This will help make your journey as smooth and easy as possible.

TIP! ... Be aware that community transport may be picking up other users during the journey, making travel time longer.

Here are some other things to consider before booking community transport:

- Does the vehicle you'll be travelling in allow you to manage your comfort, skin care and posture?
- Think about your travel time; will you need to carry out pressure relief during your journey? How can you best manage your skin during your journey?
- Will you need any assistance to board or alight from the vehicle?
- Do you need any other equipment to help with your journey, such as cushions, straps, etc?
- Do you need a headrest for your journey? You might find you require one, even if you don't need one day to day.
- Is there a suitable way to secure your wheelchair within the community transport vehicle?
- Do you know how your wheelchair can be secured in a vehicle and how to instruct others to assist you with this?



FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- Dial-a-ride: search local council pages or search dial-a-ride and your local area to find services local to you
- [Community Transport \(Royal Voluntary Service\)](#)
- [Transport services for the elderly and disabled \(Age UK\)](#)
- [Accessible Transport & Companionship \(Driving Miss Daisy\)](#)
- [Community Transport \(Driving Mobility\)](#)
- [Community Transport Association](#)



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For more information, visit our [Travel Hub](#) or contact us at:

Spinal Injuries Association, SIA House, 2 Trueman Place, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes, MK6 2HH

e: travel@spinal.co.uk t: 0800 980 0501 (freephone support line: Monday - Friday 10.00am-4.00pm)