

Fact sheet 9: Help with transport



Travelling with children is often hard work, but if your child is disabled it can be exhausting, emotionally draining and more expensive. So it's worth exploring the help that may make getting out and about more manageable.

The mobility component of disability living allowance (DLA) is the first benefit most parents claim if a disabled child needs extra help with getting around. It's payable at two rates. If your child needs someone to keep them safe or to help them find their way around, the lower rate is payable, from the age of five, for children who need significantly more help than others of the same age. About six months before your child is five most claims for DLA are reviewed and this is an opportunity to make a claim for the mobility component. If your child's ability to get around

is severely restricted by their disability, the higher rate is payable to children from the age of three who are unable to walk or make use of their ability to walk. If your child is aged two and a half and already receives the care component of DLA at the high rate, you should be contacted and asked if you wish to make a claim for the mobility component.

You may not have to pay road tax: If your child is awarded the higher rate mobility DLA and your child uses the car to get about, you can apply for a 'Certificate of Exemption from Road Tax'. The Department for Work and Pensions should automatically send you the form with the award.

You may get help to buy or lease a car: Motability is a scheme that allows you to use the higher rate mobility part of your child's DLA to lease or buy a car or a wheelchair. For more information about Motability ring 0300 456 4566 or see their website www.motability.co.uk

The mobility component of DLA continues to be paid even if your child is away from home, for example at residential school or in hospital.

The Blue Badge Scheme: If your child is two years old and either getting the higher rate mobility DLA or has a 'permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking', you can apply for a blue badge. This allows the holder to disregard some parking restrictions, making it much easier to park very close to places you are taking your disabled child. In Brighton and Hove, you can apply for this through the local Parking Office (01273 296622). The badge is also available to families with children under two who, because of their medical condition, need to travel with bulky medical equipment or be close to a vehicle for emergency medical treatment. People with severe disabilities in both arms who drive non-adapted vehicles regularly but can't operate parking meters can also apply now.

Help with getting to hospital: You can get help with fares to take your child to hospital if you're on Income Support, or sometimes if your income is very low. Most hospitals have someone who reimburses fares on the spot, so make sure you take proof of IS, and a ticket as proof of the journey.

If you don't have a car and travelling on public transport with your child is not possible, ask whether you can get an ambulance, hospital car or help with taxi fares. Speak to the hospital social worker or your consultant.

If you have to take your child out of area for treatment, or for a second opinion, you may be able to get help with travel costs. Ask your consultant to write to the Clinical Commissioning Group for you, explaining that the journey is necessary, and you should get it paid.

Help with getting to school: If your child travels more than two miles to school (up to 8 years), or more than three miles (over 8s), your local authority (LA) should provide free transport for your child to get to school, but only if they agree that there is no nearer suitable school. There are extra rules about free transport if you are on a low income. And if your child's disability means they cannot walk to school you can apply for transport however close the school is to your home. Older children may be encouraged to learn to travel independently even if they are at a special school. If your child gets transport (taxi or minibus) it's worth checking who has responsibility for your child's health and safety during these journeys. Ask yourself lots of 'what if's?' so you can negotiate away potential risks. What training is undertaken and what protocols are signed up to by drivers and escorts to safeguard your child's well-being? If your child could have transport because they are disabled and you take them instead, the LA can meet your costs; most do this by offering a flat rate per mile. If your child is at a residential school a long way away and you need to make breaks in your journey, your LA or social services may pay an amount for refreshments as well as mileage. Any transport arrangements are likely to be reviewed each year at your child's Annual Review. Call Home to School Transport at the LA for more information on 01273 293501 or ask Amaze for advice.

For more information contact:

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Helpline: 01273 772289

Email: info@amazebrighton.org.uk

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This fact sheet is one of a wide range produced by Amaze and available via our helpline or website. Others you may find particularly useful are: (4) Claiming DLA; and (10) The Practicalities of Home: adaptations and large equipment.
