

Chapter 10

Travel and getting about



For many young people, getting about on their own is an exciting part of becoming more grown up, but for some this will always be difficult without support. This chapter looks at ways of making travel easier and includes information about special allowances and concessions available to disabled young people.

TRAVELLING TO COLLEGE

Help for all young people

All young people aged up to 19 can get discounted local bus travel with a BusID if they live permanently in the city. Local students in further education (FE) and high education (HE) can

also get discounted bus travel with a student key card. Full-time FE students age 16 to 19 can get a third off their rail travel to and from college with a Sussex Student Card. For more details on all these schemes see the sections on bus and rail travel later in this chapter.

Help related to disability or SEN

If you think your child will need support getting to and from college, flag it up during their transition planning meetings at school and with their LDD adviser. Brighton & Hove City Council has a transport policy statement for FE students which they publish on their website in the section on Student Support. They summarise the policy for students with SEN as follows: "If you have special educational needs and you/your family/your school or college feel you cannot travel by public transport, your case will be looked at on an individual basis. We will seek specialist advice if we feel it is needed. If taxi transport is provided, it will be free."

Help for people on a low income

The council can help with travel costs over the first £10 a week for some students on a low income. In order to qualify for this, students must be living in the city and under 19 on 31st August before their course starts. Their course must be full time and at a school or college within the city but over three miles from their home. And they or their family must be on Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance or Child Tax Credits with a household income of £16,190 or less. They do not normally help with travel costs for part time students, students over 19, students at private colleges or colleges outside Brighton and Hove. They can make exceptions in special circumstances. For example, for a young person with SEN, if there isn't a course more locally that suits their needs.

Check the policy on the council website under “Student Support” for more detail about travel assistance.

You can apply for travel support on a form called PS1 which you can get from Brighton & Hove schools and colleges or from the council at School Futures, Brighton & Hove City Council. Call 01273 290525 or email: bryan.deakin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

Some schools and colleges offer independent travel training to help young people learn to get about on their own. Parents may worry about a child’s vulnerability, but there are lots of advantages in the long run if your child can learn to travel independently – including opportunities to participate in social and leisure activities, training, further education and employment. And just think how it might free up your time if you don’t have to be your child’s chaperone or taxi service. Ask if your child’s school or college is offering this training, what it will involve and how you can support your child to learn this skill. Giving this a try should not mean your child’s existing transport arrangements are cancelled.

Amaze is working with the Grace Eyre Foundation’s Travel Buddy Project to offer training to parents and their teenagers to support the young person to travel safely. Contact Amaze if this is something you would like to help your teen with.

‘My son’s self-confidence and self-esteem have blossomed. In his eyes, the world has become accessible and he feels that he fits in with his peers, which is so important to a teenager.’

JOURNEY PLANNING

Planning a journey in advance, especially if it’s unfamiliar, is important and there are lots of local and national resources that can help.

A good place to start for both national and local travel information and journey planning is Brighton & Hove City Council’s website www.journeyon.co.uk. It provides information on bus, coach, train, walking or bike journeys. Or call the council’s Public Transport Team on 01273 292480 for advice on local services.

There is a good journey planner for travel across the UK at www.transportdirect.info and, if you’re planning to travel in and around London, Transport for London (TfL) has a journey planner on its website at www.tfl.gov.uk as well as information on assisted travel.

For local and national rail travel, contact National Rail Enquiries or visit their website at www.nationalrail.co.uk. National Rail Enquiries provides travel information for disabled passengers and people with reduced mobility.

For coach journeys, National Express has an Assisted Travel service. Call 08717 818179.

Online resources like Google maps or sites like www.streetmap.co.uk allow you to plan journeys from one point to another and provide you with text and map details you can print out.

BUS TRAVEL

Local bus travel

Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company offers a free BusID card which gives discounts for 5 to 19 year olds up till the end of August after the student's 19th birthday, if they are permanent residents in the city. It offers reduced fares at any time and special discounts on Saver passes (weekly, monthly, etc). The old style BusID cards are being replaced by a smartcard called 'The key'. There is no charge for the card.

There is a different discount scheme for students over 19 who are at local universities and colleges (including City College, Plumpton, Northbrook and Sussex Downs). Find out more about how to get a Bus ID or student key card and how to use them on the bus company website www.buses.co.uk or the One Stop Travel Shop in North Street.

The company publishes a 'Bus Times' guide that gives details of bus routes and times and the number of vehicles adapted for easy access. You can get a copy of the guide from libraries, the council's Public Transport Team or at www.buses.co.uk

'She looks like any other teenager, but she's not like any other teenager. She's leaving school with a reading age of less than nine years. She still can't do independent travel on the bus, we have to practice journeys.'

National Free Travel bus pass

Anyone aged five or over with 'a physical or mental impairment' may be eligible for a National Free Travel bus pass which offers free bus travel with some time restrictions e.g. travel before 9am on weekdays.

Young people will be eligible if:

- they have severe walking disabilities or they cannot use both of their arms (they must provide proof that they are receiving either the higher rate of mobility component of DLA or the standard or enhanced rate of the mobility component of PIP)
- they are blind or partially sighted
- they are profoundly or severely deaf
- they are without speech
- they have a learning disability
- they are aged 18 or over and not permitted to drive, or likely to be refused a driving licence due to a medical condition, other than on the grounds of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol

They will need to provide proof: a letter from their doctor, DLA entitlement, their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) entitlement or a disability registration card.

The cards are issued by Brighton & Hove City Council. There is more detail and an application form on the council website or you can get the pass from the Brighton Customer Service Centre in Bartholomew House. Call 01273 291924 if you need any advice about eligibility or suitable documentation or email buspases@brighton-hove.gov.uk

If your child is over 18 and eligible for the bus pass but unable to use it because of their disability, they may be eligible for taxi vouchers instead. See the section below on taxi travel

EasyLink

EasyLink is a door-to-door transport service run by the Community Transport Service for people who find it difficult to use public transport. They run regular services for people to go

shopping. EasyLink buses have a passenger lift or low level floor, so they're ideal for people who can't manage steps or who use a wheelchair. Drivers are trained to help passengers on or off the bus and to make sure the journey is smooth and comfortable.

EasyLink buses serve all parts of the city from Portslade to Saltdean and provide a service to and from superstores, the city centre and local shops. Buses run Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays and return journeys cost £2.50 to £3.50. EasyLink also offers trips further afield and to places like the cinema. To register as a new user or to book a bus, contact Community Transport on 01273 677559 or email easylink@bhct.co.uk.

TRAIN TRAVEL

Local train travel for students

Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council have negotiated a discount season ticket scheme that provides a third off the cost of daily travel by rail from home to school or college, if the cost of the journey would otherwise be more than about £10 a week. The discount is available to full-time students aged 16-19 whose home address is in Brighton and Hove, East or West Sussex. It applies to most local train journeys (not to London) and season tickets of between one month and one year.

To get the discount you need to have a Sussex Student Card and local schools and colleges have application forms for this. If your school or college is outside Brighton & Hove, East Sussex or West Sussex contact the student support team for a form by email to bryan.deakin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

National train travel

The National Rail Enquiries website at www.nationalrail.co.uk provides information for disabled passengers about accessibility, train operating companies and the Disabled Persons Railcard, as well as accessibility maps that show which stations have lift access to platforms and information on staffing levels. If you haven't got access to the internet, call 0845 7484950. Another good website for advice on train travel for anyone who is disabled is www.disability-onboard.co.uk

If a young person has a disability that makes travelling by train difficult, they may qualify for the Disabled Persons Railcard which offers the young person and an adult companion a third off most fares across the UK. The card costs £20 a year, or £54 for three years. To get one the young person must provide proof they've received DLA at either the higher or lower rate for mobility for one year or longer, or at the higher or middle rate for personal care or they receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Young people who are registered blind or deaf, or who have epilepsy, can also apply. Contact the Disabled Person's Railcard office on 0845 6050525, or download an application form from their website at www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk. This site also has lots of other useful information about access and transport assistance.

National Rail also provides a Young Person's Railcard for 16-25 year olds which entitles the card holder to a third off rail fares. It costs £30 a year or £70 for three years. Visit www.16-25railcard.co.uk for more information.

Access and assistance with rail travel

If you're travelling by train you can book special assistance. There are several ways that you can book Passenger Assistance:

- Call National Rail Enquiries – dedicated operators will help you understand the best way to reach your station by accessible public transport, and they will connect you to the correct train company Passenger Assistance team for your route. Call on 08457 48 49 50
- Contact the train operating company responsible for the first leg of your journey directly. Brighton and Hove’s train operating company is Southern Trains and you can contact the company on 0800 138 1016
- Book online via the disabled person’s railcard website – look for the ‘book assistance for a future journey’ button on the home page.
- In person at any staffed train station.

The train operator can usually arrange for staff to meet you at your departure station, accompany you to the train and see you safely on board. Similar arrangements can be made at your destination station and at other stations if you need to change trains.

TAXI TRAVEL

Taxi companies provide wheelchair-accessible cabs, but there are a limited number of cabs available, so you might have to wait longer. It’s best to book them in advance.

If a young person is over 18 and qualifies for a National Free Bus Pass, but cannot use buses because of a disability, they may be eligible for £70 of taxi vouchers a year. The young person must be in receipt of DLA at the higher rate for mobility and be willing **not** to apply for the National Free Bus Pass – you can’t get both. To apply for taxi vouchers, contact the council’s Concessionary Travel Team. These local taxi companies currently accept taxi vouchers:

- Brighton Streamline (01273) 747474

- Brighton & Hove City Cabs (01273) 205205
- Brighton & Hove Radio Cabs (01273) 204060
- Car Cabs (01273) 414141
- Hove Streamline (01273) 202020
- South Coast Taxis (01273) 301111
- Taxi Link (01273) 595959

CAR TRAVEL

Free road tax

Young people are entitled to a free road tax (Vehicle Excise Duty) disc if they:

- Receive the higher mobility component of DLA or the enhanced rate mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Have a car which is only used by them or for them. The car could be owned either by the young person, or by their parent or carer
- You can claim for the exemption when you apply for a tax disc, on line, by post or at a Post Office that issues tax discs. Application forms are available from the government’s Disability Benefits team on 08457 123456 or visit www.gov.uk

Blue Badge scheme

If your child gets the higher rate mobility component of DLA (or the standard or enhanced mobility component of PIP), they will also be entitled to a ‘Blue Badge’. This allows the holder to disregard some parking restrictions and makes it easier to park close to places they’re visiting. In theory it is possible to get a Blue Badge if you don’t claim DLA but “have a permanent and substantial disability which means you are unable to walk; or you have very considerable difficulty in walking”. In this case

the council may send someone to assess this. But for most people it is unlikely they would meet this criteria and not be getting higher rate mobility on DLA. There is a fee of £10 for issuing the Badge.

If a young person has a Blue Badge, they or the person driving them need to stick to the rules about its use. For example, if they display the badge the wrong way round, or with the expiry date hidden, they can get a parking ticket.

To get a Blue Badge in Brighton and Hove, contact the Blue Badge section of Brighton's Parking Information Centre at Hove Town Hall on 01273 296622. You can also request an application form on the council's website or follow a link to apply on line.

Motability

Motability is a scheme which means some of the money from the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can be used to lease a car. If your child receives the higher rate mobility component of DLA or the enhanced rate of mobility for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and it has at least a year to run, you or the young person (if they are 16 and over) can use the mobility part of the allowance to lease a car, scooter or powered wheelchair. However, PIP's new tougher rules for assessing problems with walking, mean that some people that get higher rate mobility payments under DLA may not get the enhanced rate for mobility when they move onto PIP. This means you will have to give back their Motability vehicle. To help people in this situation, Motability are giving support and advice in the form of a 'transitional support package'. There is more information on their website at www.motability.co.uk or ring 0845 456 4566.

Motability may be able to offer extra support to drivers aged 16-24 (whether the young person or a named driver) through Pass

Plus. This is a free six-hour course provided by the AA, specifically designed to help young drivers to drive more safely. Successfully completing the course in addition to passing the driving test can reduce the insurance excess for young drivers. Contact Motability to find out more.

Learning to drive

You can begin to learn to drive at 17, unless you receive the higher mobility component of DLA or the standard or enhanced mobility component of PIP, in which case you can start learning at 16.

Learning to drive is expensive. The Family Fund offer a grant to help eligible young people aged 16 and 17 take the first steps in learning how to drive. The Driving Ambitions grant supports the young person to get started by funding a combination of:

- Provisional licence
- Theory test
- Learning materials, such as the Highway Code or Theory test book or DVD
- First taster lesson

This is only available for an eligible young person who has not yet had any driving lessons. For more information call 08449 744 099 or look at their website at www.familyfund.org.uk. The Family Fund cannot provide support for ongoing driving lessons. If you are between 16-24 and a Motability customer already, Motability may be able to help you with the cost of driving lessons. Contact their Grants team on 0844 800 0900 to discuss this.

There are several Independent Mobility Centres around the country which provide advice about learning to drive. The nearest centre locally is the Queen Elizabeth Foundation in

Surrey. Staff there can advise on what's available in Brighton and Hove and provide assessments to determine the support needed to help a person to drive. The centre also has a list of driving instructors who teach using specially adapted cars, or who have experience of teaching people with disabilities. They can also provide information and advice on getting a car adapted for the young person's needs.

The British School of Motoring (BSM) provides driving simulators which can be useful preparation before learning on public roads. Amaze can provide contact details for driving instructors that other parents have recommended who've taught young people on the autistic spectrum to drive.

The Theory Test

The driving test is made up of a theory and a practical section. Theory tests are usually held at test centres, which are generally wheelchair accessible and offer specialist facilities for disabled people. If your local centre isn't accessible to your child, they can take the test at home or at a different centre.

There are special arrangements for people who have difficulties with written language or working with computers when taking the theory test. It usually takes around 40 minutes to complete the written test, but disabled people can apply for additional time by completing the 'special needs' section on the application form.

The Practical Test

No matter how serious a young person's disability might be, they will take the same driving test as everyone else. When booking the practical test, young people should let the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) know about their disability because they may be entitled to extra time for the test. Call 0300 200 1122 or email customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk

If your child is on the autistic spectrum, the National Autistic Society has a useful leaflet about learning to drive which you can download from their website at www.nas.org.uk

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Brighton and Hove

The Fed (formerly the Federation of Disabled People), a local charity led by disabled people, publishes lots of really detailed access information for disabled residents and visitors to the city. You can call them on 01273 296747 or look at their online 'Accessible City Guide' at www.thefedonline.org.uk. The Fed has also recently piloted a new 'Call Ahead' project which enables a person with access requirements to 'Call Ahead' to a named person at a venue to check that their access requirements will be met. Visit www.thefedonline.org.uk/call-ahead to find out more.

Out of town

The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain is a good place to start looking at access elsewhere in the UK. See their website www.accessibleguide.co.uk. Another useful website is www.disabledgo.com, although this does not cover the whole country.

London can seem a challenging destination for disabled travellers, especially as many underground stations are unsuitable for disabled or wheelchair using passengers and there are no porters to help with luggage. On the other hand Transport for London (TfL) offer thorough information about transport accessibility. Find details on their website in the section "Getting Around". They also publish a free guide called 'Getting around London: your guide to accessibility' which gives details of step-free stations, lifts, toilets and other useful

information when travelling on the tube, buses and other forms of transport in the capital.

Shopmobility

This scheme operates in many city centres and shopping centres and means the disabled person can borrow a wheelchair or scooter. Some schemes also offer an escort to do the shopping. Brighton and Hove's Shopmobility is in Churchill Square Car Park 1, Level P3. Call them on 01273 323239. It's usually open Monday to Friday from 10am till 4pm, but opening hours can differ in the winter. It's a popular scheme, so book early. You need to register before the first time you use it and there is a small charge for hire. To find out about other schemes across the country, see the national Shopmobility website at www.shopmobilityuk.org, or call 0844 4141850.

Mobility equipment

The Brighton and Hove Daily Living Centre (DLC) in Kemp Town provides information and advice about mobility equipment, and your child can try out some of the latest products if you make an appointment with the occupational therapist (OT) at the centre, or visit the centre's drop-in from 10am till 4pm on Wednesdays. The drop-in sessions are popular, so you may have to wait before being seen.

If you want any further information or advice about transport issues, call the Amaze helpline on 01273 772289.