

# 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. Services should consider your transport needs when they organise support or make appointments with you.

**TIP!** **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:

**Lower rate:** if your child needs someone to help them find their way around, this 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.

**Higher rate:** if your child's ability to get around is severely restricted by their disability, this is payable to children from the age of three who are unable to walk or virtually unable 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. See Factsheet 9b for tips for claiming DLA.

**TIP!** **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.

**TIP!** **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 call 01279 635 666 or see [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk).

**TIP!** **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.**

**TIP!** **The Blue Badge Scheme:** If your child is at least 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 that you are taking your disabled child. You apply for this locally through social services.

**TIP!** **The Family Fund:** If your child is severely disabled and you do not drive, The Family Fund can help meet the costs of lessons as long as you have the use of a car. They can also help fund travel costs to hospital, holidays and days out for your family.

**TIP!** Don't forget that many areas have local transport schemes for disabled people that may be able to help.

**TIP!**

**Help with getting to hospital:** You can get help with fares to hospital and overnight stays if you're on Income Support (IS), or for some people who get Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and others on a low income. 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 Health Authority for you, explaining that the journey is necessary and you should get it paid.

You can also ask for a **community care grant** for help with fares to hospital through your local **Department for Work and Pensions**. This budget is limited; even if you meet the criteria you may still be unlucky, there is no entitlement to a grant.

The **Department of Health's** website ([www.doh.gov.uk/hospitaltravelcosts](http://www.doh.gov.uk/hospitaltravelcosts)) is a good place to look for other sources of help.

**TIP!**

**Help with getting to school:** If your primary age child travels more than two miles to school, or if your secondary age child travels more than three miles, your LEA must arrange for your child to get to school. 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 you take your child, the LEA should meet your costs; most do this by offering a flat rate per mile. Disabled children who live within walking distance of school might still get help, so don't be put off from asking. If your child boards and you need to make breaks in your journey, it's reasonable to expect your LEA or Social Services to pay an amount for refreshments as well as mileage.

If the school named on your child's statement is closer but you cannot reasonably get your child there, maybe because your other children go to a different school, the LEA may make arrangements for your child's travel. You will need to ask about this and don't be afraid to be assertive! **Any transport arrangements are likely to be reviewed each year at your child's annual review.**

**TIP!**

**Contact a Family** produce a detailed factsheet about benefits, including claiming help with travel costs to hospital:

Freephone helpline: **0808 808 3555** (Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm)

[www.cafamily.org.uk/benefits.html](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/benefits.html)



This factsheet was written by aMAZE  
and the Audit Commission



aMAZE Brighton and Hove  
Charity No: 1078094

