



Transport and mobility

Regulations are in place to ensure that by 2020 all buses, coaches and trains comply with certain minimum accessibility standards. At present, these standards only apply to new-built vehicles.

Buses

'Easy access' buses have no entrance steps and can be lowered to kerb level for the benefit of disabled passengers. They only operate on certain routes and times so it is a good idea to check with the local transport executive (**GMPTE**) or 'Traveline' before setting out. If a service is 'low floor' it should also be marked as such on the bus time table.

Traveline ☎ 0871 200 2233 web link: www.traveline.org.uk

The government has recently introduced a National Concessionary Travel Pass that entitles the over 60s and disabled people who qualify to free off-peak travel on local bus services anywhere in England. For the Greater Manchester area only, there is a Concession Plus Pass which allows free travel at **all** times on local buses for people with certain specified illnesses and disabilities. If you want to find out about the concessions that are available contact GMPTE Passes and Permits on: 0161 244 1050.

Trains

Although facilities for disabled people are generally good, particularly on intercity services, if assistance from staff is required (for example to enable a wheelchair user to get on or off the train) it is advisable to book this at least 24 hours in advance. Contact National Rail Enquiries or the train operating company's helpline so that they can make the necessary arrangements.

National Rail Enquiries ☎ 0845 7484 950 web link: www.nationalrail.co.uk

If the person you look after has a visual or hearing impairment, suffers from epilepsy or is in receipt of a disability-related benefit they may qualify for a Disabled Persons Railcard. A one year card costs £18 but entitles both the holder **and** someone traveling with them to 1/3 off most rail fares. Full details of the scheme can be found on the website www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk or

pick up the leaflet 'Rail Travel Made Easy' from any main rail station. People aged 60 or over can also get 1/3 off standard and first class rail fares with a Senior Railcard.

Some concessions only apply locally. Within Greater Manchester there is free off-peak travel on trains and trams for people with a National Concessionary Travel Pass (see above) while those with a Concession Plus Pass are entitled to free travel at all times.

Coaches

New coaches should be wheelchair accessible and coach drivers are required by law to provide 'reasonable' assistance to disabled passengers (for example to help them embark and disembark).

Some major coach companies, including National Express, offer concessionary fares to people who qualify as disabled on scheduled services. More information about these (and the routes on which 'easy access' coaches operate) can be obtained from the National Express website or by ringing the company's disabled persons travel helpline on: 08717 818179.

Taxis

According to the Department for Transport, although disabled people travel less than other members of the public they are likely to use taxis (otherwise known as hackney carriages) and private hire vehicles (sometimes called minicabs) 67% more often. Unfortunately, the regulations that apply to buses, trains and coaches do not yet extend to taxis or private hire vehicles, making accessibility a real issue.

Notwithstanding the above, licensed taxi and minicab drivers do have certain legal duties in relation to people with disabilities. This includes carrying guide, hearing and assistance dogs free of charge and making 'reasonable adjustments' to their working practices in order to accommodate disabled passengers. You can find out which taxi and minicab operators provide wheelchair accessible vehicles by contacting Wigan Council's licensing section.

Licensing section Wigan Council, Town Hall, Library Street, Wigan WN1 1YN
☎ 01942 404627 📧 licensing@wigan.gov.uk web link: www.wigan.gov.uk

If you, or the person that you look after, find it difficult using other forms of public transport there is a special voucher scheme that provides substantial discounts on ordinary taxi fares. In order to qualify, you must be in receipt of certain benefits or be unable to walk more than 400 metres (440 yards). The vouchers can be used instead of cash to pay for taxi journeys but scheme members

purchase them at only a quarter of their value (so, for example, you can buy £20 worth of vouchers for just £5).

To find out more about the travel voucher scheme contact GMPTE on: 0161 244 1050. When you join, you will be issued with a user card but must give up any other GMPTE passes or permits that you may have. This means that you will lose your right to concessionary bus travel although the card can still be used for free or discounted travel on trains and trams.

Other public transport options

'**Ring and Ride**' provides a door-to-door accessible minibus service enabling people with limited mobility to go shopping, attend health appointments and undertake various other short, local journeys. You must be registered to use the service and there is a standard charge per trip. The fare is reduced if you have a GMPTE concessionary pass or permit and people with travel vouchers can use these instead of cash.

If you are travelling with a wheelchair on any form of public transport you are likely to find the **Ricability** guide 'Wheels Within Wheels' extremely useful. The publication can be obtained by post from Ricability or downloaded, free of charge, from their website.

Motoring

There are many issues, both legal and financial that as a driver - or the carer for someone who drives - you ought to be aware of.

Driving licences

When you apply for a driving licence, you are required to let the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) know of any disability or medical condition that may affect your ability to drive. If you already have a licence but become disabled, or if there is a change to an existing disability or medical condition, the DVLA must also be notified. In some cases, it will recommend specific vehicle adaptations which are then recorded on the driving licence.

Drivers Medical Group DVLA, Swansea SA99 1TU ☎0300 790 6806 📧
eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Practical help

Many people who become disabled find driving difficult, particularly if their movement or co-ordination has been impaired. The **Forum of Mobility Centres** (FMC) is a network of 17 independent organisations covering the whole of the UK which can provide advice about adaptations and an independent assessment of a persons driving ability. **Wrightington Mobility Centre** is the closest centre locally and the only one of its kind in the North West. Assessments are also provided to carers who need to transport someone with restricted mobility in their car.

The FMC in partnership with the consumer research charity, **Ricability**, has produced several motoring guides for people with specific disabilities. The guides, which cover conditions such as arthritis, multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy, can be obtained by post from Ricability or downloaded from their website.

Driving lessons

Driving lessons are not just for learners - they can often benefit those returning to driving after a long period of incapacity. An increasing number of driving schools and instructors provide specialist tuition to disabled people and may even have a car with basic adaptations. For more information about these, contact Wrightington Mobility Centre.

Whether you are learning to drive or simply looking to increase your skills and confidence, the cost of driving lessons can be a significant drain on resources. Limited assistance is available for carers in the form of Wigan Council's 'Time for Carers' Grant and from the Family Fund which provides driving lessons to the parents and carers of severely disabled children. People aged between 16 and 24 who are in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of DLA can also apply to Motability for help (see below).

The Family Fund 4 Alpha Court, Monks Cross Drive, York YO32 9WN ☎0845 130 4542 ✉info@familyfund.org.uk web link: www.familyfund.org.uk

Refresher courses

Wigan Council's Road Safety Team, in partnership with the Driving Standards Agency and the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) runs occasional free courses for mature drivers who want to brush up on their motoring skills. For those who want it, the IAM also offers a free driving assessment.

Details of forthcoming courses can usually be found on the events page of the Wigan Council website or in publications such as 'Borough Life'. Alternatively, contact the Road Safety Team.

Road Safety Team Wigan Council, Civic Buildings, New Market Street, Wigan WN1 1RP ☎ 01942 488250 ✉ road.safety@wigan.gov.uk web link: www.wigan.gov.uk

Choosing and financing a car

If you are looking for a car suitable for a disabled person, Ricability publishes several excellent guides. Titles include:

- Choosing a car;
- Getting in and out of a car;
- Getting a wheelchair into a car.

Another good source of information is the RADAR guide 'Get Motoring' which you can order or download, free of charge, from their website.

RADAR 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF ☎ 020 7250 3222 ✉ radar@radar.org.uk web link: www.radar.org.uk

Commercial loans, hire purchase agreements and the like have long been the most popular way of raising vehicle finance, but for a significant number of disabled people the **Motability** scheme offers a more affordable solution.

Motability

If the person you are looking after, is in receipt of the War Pensioners Mobility Supplement or the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, the Motability scheme allows them to exchange their benefit for a new car. In most cases, this is done via a 'contract hire' or leasing arrangement which includes insurance, maintenance and a replacement vehicle every three years. Adaptations can also be provided, often at no additional cost, through Motability's 'managed adaptations programme'.

One of the main advantages of the Motability scheme is its flexibility. It doesn't matter that the person receiving the qualifying benefit cannot drive since the scheme allows them to nominate up to two other drivers. A parent or carer can also apply on behalf of a child (as long as the child is at least 3 years old and entitled to the highest rate of the mobility component).

Vehicle tax

If you belong to their contract hire scheme, Motability will arrange to tax your car and send the tax disc directly to you.

Other disabled drivers can get an exemption certificate, provided that they are in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of DLA or the war pensioners mobility supplement. People who get the mobility component should contact the Disability Contact and Processing Unit and ask for a certificate DLA 404. War pensioners will need to get in touch with the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency and request certificate WPA 442.

Disability Contact and Processing Unit Government Buildings, Warbreck House, Warbreck Hill Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY2 0YE ☎ 0845 712 3456; Textphone: 0845 722 4433

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency Norcross, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 3WP ☎ 0800 169 22 77 ✉ veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk web link: <http://www.veterans-uk.info/>

The Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge Scheme gives certain groups of disabled car users the right to park in accessible parking bays and parking restricted areas.

Some people - for example those who are registered blind or in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of DLA – will be automatically eligible for a badge, but others will need to show evidence of severe disability in order to qualify. There are no age restrictions (although special rules exist for children under the age of two) and the badge can be displayed on any journey taken by the disabled person – either as a driver or a passenger – which is for their sole benefit.

To apply for a Blue Badge download the relevant form from the Wigan Council website or contact your local Department of Adult Services office.

Department of Adult Services Wigan Council, Civic Centre, Millgate, Wigan WN1 1AZ ☎ 01942 827819 ✉ ssdhq@wigan.gov.uk web link: www.wigan.gov.uk

Personal mobility

Wheelchairs and walking aids

Walking aids and walking equipment are available on permanent loan from the NHS. They can also be bought privately but talk to your GP or physiotherapist first. Safety and independence may be compromised if equipment is unsuitable or inappropriately used.

The health service also provides wheelchairs for people who have more serious, long term mobility problems. The local wheelchair service is responsible for carrying out assessments and ensuring that any equipment provided is appropriate to the needs of the person using it. Referrals to the service are normally made by a GP, hospital consultant or social care professional.

If you want to find out more about the various types of wheelchair that are available, both manual and powered, the Disabled Living Foundation publishes a number of excellent factsheets about mobility equipment.

Disabled Living Foundation 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU 0845 130 9177 ☎ advice@dlf.org.uk Web link: www.dlf.org.uk

For powered wheelchairs a popular alternative to the NHS is Motability's 'Powered Wheelchair and Scooter Scheme'. This is similar, in many respects, to the car scheme referred to above and is only available to people in receipt of DLA or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.

Shopmobility

Shopmobility provides wheelchairs and scooters for people of all ages to use around Wigan and Leigh town centres. The service is open to anyone with restricted mobility (including non-residents) but you must be registered in order to use it. Shopmobility and the **British Red Cross Society** also provide manual wheelchairs on short-term loan.

Forum of Mobility Centres

**C/o Providence Chapel
Warehorne
Ashford
Kent
TN26 2JX**

Telephone: **0800 559 3636** (09:00 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Email: mobility@rcht.cornwall.nhs.uk

Web: www.mobility-centres.org.uk

Who is the service for: **Older people; people with a medical condition that impacts upon their ability to make appropriate decisions with regard to safe driving; people with a disability who think they may need special modifications to a motor vehicle in order to be able to control it safely; carers who need to transport individuals with restricted mobility in a motor vehicle.**

Service details: The Forum of Mobility Centres, a network of independent assessment centres around the UK, exists to assist and advise people to retain or regain independence as drivers, passengers or scooter or wheelchair users. The primary function of the Forum of Mobility Centres is driving assessment although some centres also offer advice on the selection of wheelchairs and scooters, driving tuition, fitting of adaptations and advice for disabled HGV, LGV or PSV drivers. The Forum of Mobility Centres also operates a national advice and information line, available on freephone number 0800 559 3636.

Charges / membership: There is generally a charge for assessments.

Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE)

**2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG**

Telephone (Main): **0161 244 1000** (09:00 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Telephone (Traveline): **0871 200 2233** (07:00 to 20:00 Mon – Fri; 08:00 to 20:00 weekends and bank holidays)

Telephone (Passes and Permits): **0161 244 1050** (09:00 to 16:30 Mon – Thurs; 09:00 to 16:00 Fri)

Web: www.gmpte.com

Service details: GMPTE is the body responsible for overseeing public transport services in the Greater Manchester area.

Medical Loan Service

**British Red Cross Society
4a Springfield Court
Summerfield Road
Bolton
BL3 2NT**

Wheelchair access Disabled toilets Parking

Telephone: **01204 369 625** (10:00 to 16:00 Mon – Fri)
Contact Person: Alison Foy

Email: AFoy@redcross.org.uk

Web: www.redcross.org.uk

Who is the service for: **Wheelchair and wheeled walking frames for short term loan to people going on holiday, those awaiting assessment from social services, anyone discharged from hospital and needing equipment for a short time, people with an injury requiring temporary use of a wheelchair.**

Service details: **Medical equipment available for short term loan. Service user is required to leave a £20 refundable deposit (more if using on holiday abroad). As this service is funded by donations from the public / clients, there is an opportunity to make a donation upon return of equipment. Service user has to make arrangements to collect and return items loaned as there is no home delivery service available from this office.**

Charges / membership: **Refundable deposit and donations.**

Referral method: **No formal referral required. Service user has only to ring and check availability.**

Motability

**Warwick House
Roydon Road
Harlow
Essex
CM19 5PX**

Telephone: **0845 456 4566** (08:30 to 17:30 Mon – Fri)

Textphone: **01279 632273**

Web: www.motability.co.uk

Who is the service for: **Disabled people, their families and carers.**

Service details: Motability is the UK's leading care scheme for disabled people. Since it was set up by the Government in 1977, it has provided millions of cars, powered wheelchairs and scooters to help disabled people and their families enjoy freedom and independence. Currently, there are over 500,000 people and their families enjoying worry-free mobility through motability.

The Motability Scheme enables those in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement to obtain a car, powered wheelchair or scooter through the contract hire or hire purchase schemes. The most popular is the Car Scheme, which provides a new car for three years with breakdown cover, comprehensive insurance, tyre changes, maintenance, repairs and a tax disc sent in the post at no extra cost. Non-drivers can also apply for a car, nominating two other people as drivers, and parents or carers can apply on behalf of a child.

As a national charity, Motability also raises funds and provides financial assistance to customers towards the cost of larger cars, adaptations, driving lessons and wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Ricability (Research Institute for Consumer Affairs)

30 Angel Gate
City Road
London
EC1V 2PT

Telephone: **020 7427 2460** (09:30 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Textphone: **020 7427 2469**

Email: mail@ricability.org.uk

Web: www.ricability.org.uk; www.ricability-digitaltv.org.uk; www.product-reviews.org.uk

Who is the service for: **Disabled and older people, general public, carers, families and friends of disabled or older people, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other health professionals.**

Service details: **Ricability is a national independent consumer research charity. It publishes practical unbiased information for older and disabled consumers based on thorough professional research.**

It has practical information on the following areas: assistive technology in the home, central heating controls, childcare products for disabled parents (baby carriers, bottles, warmers and sterilisers, highchairs, pushchairs and safety gates), community alarms.

They have a series of driving guides for disabled people: 'choosing a car', 'car controls', 'getting a wheelchair into a car'. There are booklets for drivers with specific impairments: 'motoring after amputation', 'motoring after brain injury' 'motoring after a stroke', 'motoring with arthritis', 'motoring with cerebral palsy', 'motoring with multiple sclerosis' and 'motoring with restricted growth'. There is a car search tool on the Ricability website where you can search on key measurements on over 400 car models.

Digital TV – helping consumers know what products to buy

Ricability has carried out consumer testing on the ease of use of digital TV products. Reports include easiest to use products and useful information

on audio description, signing and submitting: www.ricability-digitaltv.org.uk All the reports are available on audio-cassette and audio-cd for visually impaired people.

Charges / membership: **All our information is free.**

Referral method: **Anyone is welcome to use our information – all of our information is available online.**

Ring and Ride

**Unit 1
Richard Street
Lower Ince
WN3 4JN**

Telephone: **01942 492252** (08:00 to 22:30 Mon – Sun)

Who is the service for: **People who have difficulty in using public transport.**

Service details: **Door to door accessible transport.**

Shopmobility (Wigan Borough)

Leigh:
The Garry Kay Centre
Spinning Gate
Leigh
WN7 4PG

Wigan:
Mesnes Terrace Car Park
Mesnes Terrace
Wigan
WN1 1QB

Telephone (Leigh): **01942 777985** (10:00 to 15:45 Mon – Sat)

Telephone (Wigan): **01942 776070** (9:30 to 16:15 Mon – Fri; 9:30 to 15:15 Sat)

Email (Leigh): leighoffice@wiganboroughshopmobility.co.uk

Email (Wigan): wiganoffice@wiganboroughshopmobility.co.uk

Web: www.wiganboroughshopmobility.co.uk

Who is the service for: **Anyone with any form of limited mobility, temporary or permanent.**

Service details: Our services are open to anyone with any form of limited mobility temporary or permanent, this could be someone suffering from angina, arthritis, asthmatics, post operative, pregnancy, and broken limbs. The list is endless but the service is open to all.

Once registered with Shopmobility, you are entitled to use our powered scooters or electric or manual wheelchairs daily Monday to Saturday. Our service is there to help you maintain your independence to shop and socialise for yourself. Whether you travel to town by car, taxi, bus or train we have developed a way for when you arrive at our office, we will be there to meet you with a powered scooter, electric wheelchair or manual wheelchair that will enable you to continue your journey and shop or socialise to your hearts content.

Children's Service

Shopmobility have a children's service, offering daily use of children's powered scooters, electric wheelchairs and manual wheelchairs. This service is available from our Wigan and Leigh offices.

Shoppers Sighted Guider Service

For the blind and partially sighted we also have a Sighted Guider Service, a volunteer will meet you at our office and take you shopping in Wigan or Leigh town centre.

Wheelchair Loan Service

If you are a registered client we will loan you a wheelchair for up to eight weeks at a time. Registered clients can also take advantage of the other services we offer.

Charges / membership: 12 months membership currently costs £10. There is an additional charge of £1 per day for use of equipment. This charge is applicable for the first two visits in any one week (Monday to Saturday). Any further visits in that week will be free. Visitors pay £4 per day.

The Wheelchair Fund

**50-52 St Paul's Avenue
Worsley Mesnes
Wigan
WN3 5LL**

Wheelchair access Public transport

Telephone (Shop): **01942 702287** (10:00 to 16:00 Mon – Sat)

Telephone (Helpline): **01942 233756**

Email: info@wheelchairfund.org

Web: www.wheelchairfund.org

Who is the service for: **All disabled people.**

Service details: **The Wheelchair Fund provides electric wheelchairs for people with disabilities.**

Referral method: **Referrals must be made by a health care or other professional.**

Home visiting service

Wrightington Mobility Centre

**Wrightington Hospital
Hall Lane
Appley Bridge
Wigan
WN6 9EP**

Wheelchair access Disabled toilets Parking Public transport

Telephone: **01257 256409** (08:30 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Email: mobilitycentre@alwpct.nhs.uk

Who is the service for: **Older and disabled people who wish to achieve independent mobility as drivers or passengers.**

Service details: **An assessment and information service for older and disabled drivers and passengers who wish to return to driving after illness, continue to drive or start driving. Information and assessment is also given for vehicle access, wheelchair loading, safe transportation and seating comfort.**

Charges / membership: **£50 charge for driving assessment; no charge for passenger assessment.**

Referral method: **Any.**

Home visiting service (passenger assessments only)