

Dial a Lift Passenger Charter

Our commitment to you



A service supported by
RURAL TRANSPORT FUND
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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Our Commitment to you

This charter is a statement of our commitment to provide a high quality affordable and accessible Dial-a-Lift service to all our passengers. We value the importance of our passengers and want to provide a service which meets their transport needs and the needs of the wider community.

We pride ourselves on the quality of staff and volunteers working within the Community Transport sector who are committed to ensuring our passengers journey is a safe and enjoyable experience.

We recognise our responsibilities to our passengers and therefore have outlined our commitment to you within this document. We welcome your comments and feedback in an attempt to continually improve and ensure we provide a fair and equitable service for all.

If you have any further questions about Dial-a-Lift or any of the other services that we provide please do not hesitate to contact us from a landline on our direct line 028 79300123 to speak to an administrator who will be happy to provide you with further information.

Service Specification

What is Dial a Lift?

Dial-a-Lift is a transport option for individuals living in rural areas who are unable to, or have difficulty accessing local basic services due to a lack of transport (e.g. access to a car or public transport).

Dial-a-Lift can be used for a variety of purposes including:

- Local shopping
- Some local health services (e.g. doctor, dentist, chiropodist, optician, health centre)
- Local pharmacy
- Post Office or banking
- Training and/or local employment
- Visiting friends and family

Dial-a-Lift cannot be used for the following purposes:

- Hospital inpatient appointments
(For the purposes of Dial-a-Lift, a hospital inpatient appointment is regarded as an admission to a hospital or clinic for treatment that requires at least one overnight stay)
- Home to School transport

The Dial-a-Lift service is for access to local services only. If you wish to travel further, we will offer alternative options and where possible, link you with the wider public transport network (e.g. your local train or bus station).

Type of Service

Dial-a-Lift is a demand responsive service, tailored to meet the needs of our individual members. Ideal for specific journeys where the passenger selects their pick-up and drop-off times.

Members should be aware they may be asked to share transport resources when possible and where it is deemed appropriate to do so.

Service Availability

The Dial-a-Lift service is currently available Monday to Friday from 8am – 6pm. Due to budgetary restrictions within the Rural Transport Fund the resources available may be limited in some areas.

Service Amendments on Public Holidays

Dial-a-Lift operates a restricted service during the following public holidays: (This may entail a limited number of vehicles being available and/or reduced operating hours).

- St. Patricks Day
- Good Friday, Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday
- May Day (Start of May)
- Spring Bank Holiday (End of May)
- 12th & 13th July
- August Bank Holiday

There will be no Dial-a-Lift services available during the following Public Holidays:

- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Day

During the Christmas period 24th – 31st December, restricted services will be available with prior notification given to all members.

Service Restrictions

- Children under 5 travel free on Dial-a-Lift
- Children under 16 must get membership form signed by parent or guardian
- Children under 16 travel for half fare and must be accompanied by parent or guardian
- Vulnerable adults can travel unaccompanied if permission is given on membership form
- Essential Escorts as identified on membership form travel for half fare
- Family Travel: when two or more members of the same family, living at the same address are travelling collectively: fares are as follows
 - First two family members travelling pay the full fare appropriate for each single or return journey.
 - Any additional family members pay £1.00 for each single journey.

Membership

Criteria

To qualify for Dial-a-Lift you must become a member of your local Community Transport organisation and agree to abide by their terms and conditions.

To be eligible for individual membership, you must meet the following criteria:

- Live in a rural area i.e. an area not covered by the Urban Door to Door Scheme
- Have difficulty accessing everyday services due to lack of transport

Priority Groupings

In the event that the demand for Dial-a-Lift services exceeds the amount of resources available, trips will be prioritised based on the following categories of members:

- ▶ Older People (60+)
- ▶ People with disabilities
- ▶ People with no access to suitable public transport – this is considered as
 - More than 1 mile from the nearest bus stop
 - A route that provides less than two return journeys per week between the hours of 10am and 4pm; on
 - Being on a route that only provides services outside of the hours of 10am to 4pm
- ▶ People with dependants – dependants include children under 18, older people and dependants with disabilities.
- ▶ Others

If services are still over-subscribed then other restrictions may apply.

Membership Charges

Membership to the Dial-a-Lift **service** is **free**; however an organisational membership fee may apply.

Forms

Membership forms are available on request. Speak to an administrator within your local Community Transport organisation.

Fares

Dial-a-Lift fares are charged based on the distance travelled. These fares are subsidised through the Rural Transport Fund on the Dial-a-Lift service. A copy of the Dial-a-Lift fare costs structure is shown below. (Please note these fares may be subject to change, however members will be notified in advance of any fare revisions).

Passenger Miles	Single Fare
0 < 5 miles	£3.00
5 < 10	£4.00
10 < 15	£5.00
15 < 20	£6.50
20 < 25	£7.50
25 < 30	£8.50
30+	+ 30p per mile

Assisted Rural Travel Scheme (ARTS)

The Assisted Rural Travel Scheme (ARTS) is a project funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Agriculture (DAERA). It allows any passenger with a current SmartPass to travel free or half fare on the Dial-a-Lift services operated by your local Community Transport organisation.

Free travel within NI is offered to people holding the following types of SmartPass:

- **65+ Senior SmartPass**
- **60+ SmartPass**
- **Blind SmartPass**
- **War Disablement SmartPass**

Half Fare concession is offered to people holding the **Disabled Persons SmartPass** including:

- People in receipt of DLA Mobility
- Partially sighted
- Learning Disability
- Drivers whose driving licence has been revoked for medical reasons

SmartPass Application Process

A SmartPass application form is available from your local Translink depot or by telephoning Translink's contact centre on 028 9066 6630.

All SmartPass applications must be verified by the Rural Transport Fund administration team within the Department for Infrastructure. Your local Community Transport organisation will complete this verification process on your behalf; this must be complete before SmartPasses can be used on the Dial-a-Lift service. Therefore there may be a short period of time after registration but prior to verification when a fare will be charged for journeys travelled. The same will apply when an existing members SmartPass expires and is waiting for the new pass to be re-verified.

A passenger's SmartPass must be presented each time they travel on a Dial-a-Lift journey in order to benefit from the fare concession under the Assisted Rural Travel Scheme. If the SmartPass is not presented, then the regular fare will be charged to the passenger for that journey.

Booking a Journey

Bookings can be made by contacting your local community transport office on 02879300123. All requests for transport should be made as soon as possible but bookings can be taken up to 4pm at least 2 working days before the day of travel. We cannot guarantee availability of vehicles so book early to avoid disappointment.

Bookings are currently accepted on a first come first serve basis but as demand increases we may need to prioritise bookings or limit the number of times each member can travel per week or month. To avoid disappointment individuals are advised to give as much notice as possible.

Members should not over run the agreed time of the booking, as this may have a knock on effect for later bookings. Except in the cases of genuinely unforeseen circumstances, a passenger may be charged if their booking over runs and subsequent bookings have to be cancelled to accommodate this.

Cancellations

In the event of a change in booking, passengers must notify the office without delay. A cancellation fee may apply – this will be at the discretion of your local Community Transport organisation, in accordance with their Cancellation Policy.

Should a member fail to turn up for a booking, or give insufficient notice of cancelling, we reserve the right to levy the full charge for the booking.

Persistent cancellations may result in membership being suspended for a period of time or revoked permanently. This will be at the discretion of your local Community Transport organisation. It is therefore important that members familiarise themselves with each Partnership's cancellation policy.

In the event that a passenger cannot be provided with transport, we will not be liable for making alternative travel arrangements for members.

We reserve the right to reject or cancel any booking if the purpose for which the vehicle is to be used is inconsistent with the aims, objectives or terms and conditions of Dial-a-Lift.

In the event of adverse weather conditions or an unexpected vehicle maintenance requirement, journeys may need to be rescheduled or cancelled at short notice. We will do our best to accommodate passengers

and provide them with alternative arrangements, however safety is of paramount importance and we will not take any risks which may result in injury or damage.

Terms and Conditions

The Dial-a-Lift service is funded by the Department for Infrastructure through the Rural Transport Fund. To travel on the Dial-a-Lift service you must register and become an individual member of your local Community Transport organisation, and agree to abide by their terms and conditions.

The Dial-a-Lift terms and conditions may change with the needs of the service and funding available. Members will be notified in advance of all changes.

Dial-a-Lift is operated under a 10b Permit which allows the service to be provided for the benefit of members of the Community Transport organisations on a not for profit basis.

Our Commitment to Quality

Community Transport is committed to providing a quality affordable service to all members through the Dial-a-Lift service.

All providers of the Dial-a-Lift service have been accredited with the Investors in People quality standard which helps develop a skilled and knowledgeable staff and improved performance.

Performance

Reliability is a vital part of the Dial-a-Lift service and we will endeavour to arrive for all our journeys on time as per the passenger booking. However, please allow a 15 minute window on either side of the booking for flexibility; this is to allow for traffic conditions beyond our control. Driving times quoted will take account of safe and legal driving speeds.

Vehicles

There will be a range of vehicles used to provide the Dial-a-Lift services:

- Fully accessible minibuses with appropriate restraint systems
- Voluntary Car Schemes
- Local Private Transport Operators

All vehicles will meet minimum requirements and are serviced regularly by qualified engineers. All equipment is checked regularly and will be replaced immediately if faulty. All vehicles will be clean before entering service each day.

All external transport providers must agree to the Dial-a-Lift terms and conditions in advance of delivering services on behalf of Community Transport to ensure they also provide a quality service.

Staff

Our staff and volunteers are committed to providing members with a friendly quality service. All drivers will complete an Access NI check.

At all times they will:

- Be professional and courteous
- Wear their uniform (Staff ID will be presented to you)
- Consider your safety and comfort
- Notify you of any delays or alterations to the service

Minibus Drivers

All drivers are MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) trained. This includes 195 minutes of driver theory training, a theory test and assessed drive by a qualified Driver Assessor Trainer. MiDAS training is refreshed every 4 years by all staff.

Voluntary Car Driver

All volunteers involved with the Volunteer Car Scheme are provided with MiDAS for Car and MPV training. This is also refreshed every 4 years by volunteers. The Community Transport organisations are currently working towards, or have recently achieved, Investors in Volunteering accreditation.

Training in Passenger Assistance, 5 Steps to Safety, Basic First Aid and Manual Handling is also available to all staff and volunteers involved in the delivery of the Dial-a-Lift service.

Accessible Information

All information on the Dial-a-Lift service is available in accessible formats on request.

Policies

Carriage of Animals Policy

Only Assistance Dogs will be allowed to travel on the Dial a Lift service.

No Alcohol Policy

Passengers cannot consume or be under the influence of alcohol whilst travelling on the Dial a Lift service. This is for the safety and comfort of all our passengers.

Seatbelt Policy

All passengers are required to wear a seatbelt when they travel, unless the member is medically exempt and this has been notified on the membership form upon registration.

General Conduct

All passengers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful, tolerant, polite and friendly towards staff, volunteers and other members to ensure that everyone has a safe and pleasant journey experience. Bad language and/or bad behaviour will not be tolerated. Further action in relation to

this will be at the discretion of your local Community Transport organisation, in accordance with their Membership Policy.

Complaints Procedure

If a member would like to make a complaint about any part of the Dial-a-Lift service, please write to your local provider and they can provide a copy of the complaints procedure.

Details of the complaint should be recorded as follows:

- Date and time of incident
- Name of the person involved
- Nature and details of the complaint.

We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and respond upon investigation within 30 days. If customers are not satisfied with the response or action taken, the matter will be referred to the Board of Directors for further investigation.

If you are not happy with the response you have received, how the complaint has been dealt with, or would like independent advice, you can contact the Consumer Council at any stage.

The Consumer Council

Seatem House
28 - 32 Alfred St
Belfast BT2 8EN
Telephone: 028 9025 1600

Email: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Feedback

We welcome and value customer feedback in an attempt to continually improve the quality of the Dial-a-Lift service.

Contacts

Department for Infrastructure
Rural Transport Fund Department, Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8GB

Telephone: 028 9054 0663

CommunityTransport Association Northern Ireland
City East
72 Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 1GW
Telephone: 028 9094 166