

8. GETTING ABOUT

Getting out and about can often be a problem if the person you care for has difficulty in moving around. Here are some schemes that can help.

Blue Badge scheme

The scheme is for people with disability who travel as drivers or passengers. A Blue Badge can be obtained through your local *Worcestershire HUB*. To qualify for a Blue Badge you will need one or more of the following:

- to be in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance
- to be a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
- to be registered blind
- to have a permanent & substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking
- to have a severe disability in both upper limbs not be able to turn a steering wheel by hand, even if the vehicle is fitted with a turning knob
- to have use of a motor vehicle supplied by a government health department.

Breakdown Services

The AA offers discounted rates for membership to Blue Badge holders. The RAC also offers a specific service for Blue Badge holders, called Response.

Community Transport Schemes

These schemes are provided for people in the community who cannot use public transport for a particular journey or when there is no public transport available. The car schemes are run through volunteer drivers using their own car, whilst Dial a Ride uses minibuses, often adapted for wheelchairs. A basic fee is charged and the journey has to be booked in advance. Contact

Worcestershire Association of Carers for a leaflet on local schemes.

The *British Red Cross* also run a transport and escort service for a nominal per mile charge. Contact your local Red Cross office.

Concessionary bus passes National scheme for free travel. Contact your local *Worcestershire HUB*.

Taxis

Several firms have cars that are specially adapted to accommodate wheelchairs and disabled people. Some taxi companies now accept bookings by fax, text or email; ask your taxi driver.

Trains

Different types of railcards are available which offer reduced fares. Many stations offer wheelchair access and there is usually space for wheelchair users on trains. Rail providers offer a service to escort an older or disabled person to the right platform and make sure they catch the right train. This will also apply for connections. Ring the individual train providers, ideally 48-hours in advance, to make your arrangements.

Shopmobility Schemes

These schemes offer hire of manual or powered wheelchairs, or powered scooters for use around shopping centres or town centres. In this area, schemes operate in Worcester, Evesham, Hereford and Birmingham Central. Large shopping centres e.g. Merry Hill, Redditch, Cardiff, Gloucester and Cheltenham, also operate similar schemes. Shopmobility in Worcester has a directory of shopmobility schemes with full details. Large show grounds and centres, e.g. Three Counties, NEC, often have a wheelchair loan service. It is always worth asking. Contact the *National Federation of Shopmobility UK* (NFSUK).

St Johns Ambulance provide a range of patient transport services, transferring patients to a wide range of non-emergency medical appointments such as admissions to and discharge from hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and other medical facilities.

Red Cross

Assistance with transport and an escort can be provided for people who can't get about easily or use ordinary transport. Medical short term loans for equipment such as wheelchairs, bed rests and commodes are also available through the *Red Cross*.

Motability enables a disabled person to use their government-funded mobility allowances to obtain a new car, powered wheelchair or scooter.

MAVIS (Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service) offers practical advice on driving, car adaptations and car choice for people with disability, either as driver or passenger.

RADAR National Key Scheme provides keys to access toilets for disabled people that are fitted with the National Key Scheme Lock, so avoiding vandalism. Contact points vary. Try your local council, local Tourist Information Centres or *RADAR*.

Just can't wait card

This card can be obtained for people who may need to get to the toilet quickly where there is not a public toilet available. The aim of this is to request staff in a shop or other public place to use a toilet. Not all establishments will offer the use of their toilet and the facility may not have any particular accessibility features, but it may be worth a try! Available from *Incontact*.