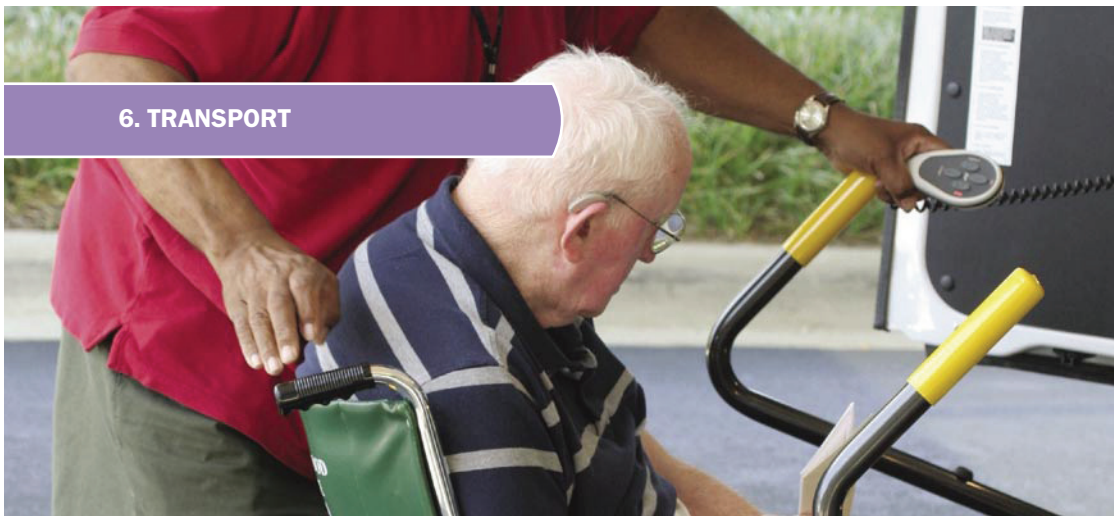


6. TRANSPORT



There is a whole range of services, both practical and financial, that are designed to help you and the person you care for get out and about. Whether it is a routine trip to the GP, or a fun day out with your family, the local and national schemes detailed in this chapter should ensure that you get where you need to go. A good starting point for information on all forms of transport for people who have a disability or are less mobile is the Door to Door website (www.dptac.gov.uk/door-to-door).

Financial Help

One of the main ways of getting help with travel costs is to apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA), a benefit that has a mobility component for people under the age of 65 who have an illness or disability that affects their ability to get around. This money can then be used to pay for travel expenses and can also help the recipient access other schemes, such as Motability and the Blue Badge Scheme (described later in this chapter). People who have a low income or receive certain benefits may be able to claim help with public transport costs to receive NHS treatment, see chapter four for further information.

Visiting a person in hospital is often costly for carers, especially as hospital parking charges can be expensive. The Social Fund, which is administered by Jobcentre Plus (0845 608 8661), makes one-off payments, loans and grants to those on means-tested benefits or those on low incomes and in crisis. It may be possible to apply for help with transport costs to visit someone in hospital if there is no other means of getting help.

There are some local organisations that help with travel costs. The Croydon Crossroads Carers Support Service (020 8667 9893) offers a Transport Grant

for carers of up to £30 a month for travel expenses for social occasions. Grants are awarded on a first come first served basis, while funding is available.

Croydon Mencap (020 8662 9201 www.croydon.cswebsites.org) has a Transport Scheme for carers aged 65 or over who are looking after an adult with a learning disability, which enables you to claim back the money spent on taxis to take the cared for person to and from an activity. The Carers' Information Service (020 8649 9339 option 1) can reimburse carers for transport costs to and from our training sessions. Other organisations may do the same, so it is worth checking with them.

Using a Car

There are various organisations giving advice to disabled drivers and carers. The Mobility Information Service (01743 340 269, www.mis.org.uk) provides information on driving assessments, driving lessons, vehicle adaptations, wheelchair accessible vehicles and much more. Mobilise (01508 489 449, www.mobilise.info) offers information and advice and has a casework service for members to help deal with issues like complaints. The Queen Elizabeth Foundation Mobility Centre (020 8770 1151, www.qef.org.uk) offers advice and assessments to people who wish to begin, or return to, driving following an illness, injury or accident.

The Motability Scheme (0845 456 4566, www.motability.co.uk) allows people who get the higher rate mobility component of DLA or the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement to use this money to hire or buy a new car. The person with the disability does not need to be the person who will drive the car, so parents of disabled children can use this scheme too. The Motability Scheme can also help towards the cost of driving lessons for young people aged 16-24 who receive higher rate DLA motability component. The Family Fund (0845 130 4542 www.familyfund.org.uk) may also be able to contribute towards the cost of driving lessons for parent carers of severely disabled children.

The Blue Badge Scheme enables people with severe walking difficulties to get parking concessions, even if they are not the driver, such as parking on single or double yellow lines. Badge holders can only use it for their benefit though, so if a trip is for someone else and they are a passenger and staying in the

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vehicle, the Blue Badge cannot be used simply to let the driver benefit from convenient parking. The scheme does not apply to off-street car parks, private roads and most airports. For an application form contact Croydon Council Travel Services Team on 020 8726 7100. You can access an online Blue Badge map at www.bluebadge.direct.gov.uk that can be used to find the location of Blue Badge parking bays across the UK.

If the person you care for has a Blue Badge they may be able to get a disabled parking bay created outside their home if there is no available off-street parking within 100 metres and regular shortages of on-street parking. The bay can then be used by anyone who has a Blue Badge. For further information contact Croydon Council's Infrastructure Traffic Design on 020 8667 8249.

The person you care for might be exempt from paying road tax if they receive the higher rate mobility component of DLA. This can be for their own vehicle, or that of a nominated carer. Contact the DWP Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00 and request application form DLA 403. If eligible, an exemption certificate will be sent that can be used when obtaining the road tax disc.

Drivers who travel into central London between 7 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday, have to pay an £8 daily congestion charge. However, if the person you care for has to go to a hospital in central London and has to use a car because they are unable to use public transport, they may be eligible for reimbursement of the congestion charge from the hospital. Ask at the hospital reception about this as each one has its own policy. Blue Badge holders are exempt from the charge once they have completed a registration form and paid a one-off £10 fee. The process takes about ten days, so it is important to apply well in advance of the hospital appointment. For more details contact Congestion Charging London on 0845 900 1234 or go to www.tfl.gov.uk.

Wheelchair users may not have to pay value added tax (VAT) if they buy a specially adapted vehicle or have an existing vehicle adapted, or if they lease a Motability vehicle. However, not every vehicle or adaptation will qualify for the relief, and there are strict definitions for terms like "wheelchair user" that are used to decide who can get the relief. The supplier should be able to advise and you can also get information from the HM Revenue and Customs Charities Helpline on 0845 302 0203, option 3 or see www.hmrc.gov.uk.

Drivers are legally required to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

(DVLA) if they have a medical condition which might affect their driving ability. If you have any concerns about the driving ability of the person you care for, contact the DVLA Helpline on 0870 600 0301 or visit www.dvla.gov.uk. The Queen Elizabeth Foundation Mobility Centre (020 8770 1151, www.qef.org.uk) has rear entry vehicles available for hire for wheelchair users with a terminal illness and it also offers wheelchair user safety training and adapted vehicle driving tuition.

Using Public Transport

General information about public transport, including accessibility, is available from the 24 hour Travel Information Call Centre run by Transport for London (TfL) (020 7222 1234, www.tfl.gov.uk). The Croydon Mobility Forum has produced *An Easy Guide to Accessible Transport in Croydon* which is available from Social Services for Adults (020 8726 6500). Transport for All (020 7737 2339, www.transportforall.com) has a helpline for disabled and older public transport users in London.

If the person you care for travels on their own, or is keen to try, the Travel Mentoring Scheme (020 7027 5822, www.tfl.gov.uk) aims to give people with disabilities the information and confidence they need to make more use of public transport. It offers free advice on planning a journey using an accessible route and can provide someone to accompany the person for the first few times they use a bus, underground or train service.

The Freedom Pass gives free travel on trains, trams, the underground and Docklands Light Railway in Greater London, and on buses throughout England. There are two types of pass: the Disabled Person's Freedom Pass, for which you must have an eligible disability, and the Older Person's Freedom Pass for those over 60. Application forms for both passes are available from Croydon Council Travel Services Team (020 8726 7100).

Rail

Many train stations have ramps and lifts, wheelchair accessible toilets and good quality visual and audible information. All Docklands Light Railway (020 7363 9700, www.tfl.gov.uk/dlr) stations are accessible and every train

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has a designated wheelchair bay. The Croydon Tramlink (020 8681 8300, www.tfl.gov.uk/trams) is also fully accessible.

National Rail Enquiries (08457 48 49 50, www.nationalrail.co.uk) produces a National Rail Map for People with Mobility Difficulties that shows all the railway stations in Britain and gives useful information, such as where you can get onto platforms without having to use any steps. The booklet *Rail Travel Made Easy* is available from larger rail stations and gives information about accessibility and fare concessions.

If assistance is needed at the station or in boarding the train, you will need to book this with the Assisted Passengers Reservation Service. Ring the train operating company of the train you want to travel on at least 24 hours in advance. If your journey involves using the trains of more than one company, you only need to contact your local company, who will arrange for assistance throughout the whole rail journey for you. You can get the assistance line numbers for the various train companies from National Rail Enquiries, but the main three that operate in the Croydon area are: First Capital Connect (0800 058 2844), Southern Trains (0800 138 1016) and Southeastern Railway (0800 783 4524).

If the person you care for is over 60 they can buy a Senior Railcard and save a third on most rail fares. You can get application forms at most stations, or ring 0870 942 3648 or visit www.senior-railcard.co.uk. The person you care for can get discounted rail travel when they book the ticket if they are a wheelchair user who has to stay in their wheelchair for the duration of the journey, or if they are registered as visually impaired and they are travelling with you or another person. If they do not qualify for this, they may be eligible to buy a Disabled Persons Railcard, which allows them and one accompanying adult to buy discounted rail tickets. Contact Disabled Persons Railcard on 0845 605 0525 or visit www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk.

Buses

Most London buses are now accessible - they can be lowered to street level when they stop, have visual displays and spoken announcements and welcome assistance dogs. Wheelchair users can travel free, although anyone accompanying them will have to pay. Free travel on buses is also available to

anyone with a disabled person's or older person's Freedom Pass, and children and young people under the age of 18 who are in full-time education. If you need information about bus routes and timetables contact the TfL 24 hour Travel Information Call Centre on 020 7222 1234 or see www.tfl.gov.uk. The Bus and Tram Discount Scheme is available to help Londoners in receipt of certain income related benefits (who do not already receive any free or discounted travel concessions) to help them travel on buses and trams at a discounted rate. Once you have completed a form that is available at any post office, you are issued with a photocard which enables you to pay half price Oyster single fares on buses and trams and to buy bus and tram pass season tickets at half the adult rate. For details contact the Oyster Card Helpline on 0845 330 9876 or see www.tfl.gov.uk/discountcard.

Coaches

At the moment, coaches used on scheduled coach services are not always accessible to some disabled people, as they often have several steep steps up from the entrance door and most will not carry powered wheelchairs or scooters. National Express (08717 818 179, www.nationalexpress.com) can give information about assistance they can provide to travellers with disabilities and their carers using their coaches. People over 60 and certain groups of people with disabilities automatically qualify for reduced fares on their services. If you are travelling to and from Victoria Coach Station you can pre-book free mobility assistance by contacting them on 020 7027 2520, or visiting www.tfl.gov.uk for more information.

London Underground

Transport for London publishes *Access to the Underground* which gives details of steps, lifts, escalators and toilet facilities on the tube and DLR. It also produces free leaflets and tapes including large print tube maps, a tactile diagram of the underground and a talking underground map. It also provides a *Tube Access Guide* which is a map showing accessible stations; contact 020 7222 1234 for a copy or download it from www.tfl.gov.uk.

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Door-to-Door Transport

You and the person you care for may find it easier to use a door-to-door service, such as a taxi or community transport scheme. All of London's black cabs are accessible to wheelchair users and most have a variety of other features to make access easier. They can be booked in advance by calling the Taxi One Number booking service on 0871 871 8710; please note that there is a telephone booking charge. If you text the word HOME to 60835 you will be sent telephone numbers for two local licensed minicab operators plus the Taxi One Number for a black cab.

The London Taxicard Scheme enables people with mobility difficulties to get reduced fares in black cabs. People who receive the higher rate mobility component of DLA, or are registered blind, or in receipt of a War Pension Mobility Supplement are automatically eligible to join. Those with mobility difficulties that fall outside of these categories may still be able to join, after a mobility assessment. The Taxicard holder pays the first £1.50 shown on the meter, and Croydon Council pays the next £10.30 of the fare, if applicable. The Taxicard holder then pays any remaining charges. The amount paid by the council is increased for trips made at night or at weekends. The concession is limited to 108 trips per year. Bookings must be made in advance. Application forms are available from Croydon Council Travel Services Team on 020 8726 7100, or visit www.taxicard.org.uk.

If the person you care for has a permanent or long-term disability which stops them using public transport services they may be eligible to use Dial-a-Ride. The Dial-a-Ride service (0845 999 1 999, www.tfl.gov.uk) provides a pre-booked door-to-door minibus service in Croydon and the surrounding area that can be used for one-off trips and regular journeys. It cannot be used for daily trips to work or hospital appointments. There is a charge for the person with a disability but an accompanying carer can travel free.

Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (020 8662 1000, www.cnca.org.uk) has groups across the borough which provide a range of services to disabled, vulnerable and older people, and some offer transport. Croydon Accessible Transport (CAT) (020 8665 0861) has low cost minibuses and wheelchair accessible vehicles for hire by groups and individuals within the borough of Croydon. CAT also runs outings for Croydon residents.

Key Contacts	
Congestion Charging London	0845 900 1234
Croydon Accessible Transport	020 8665 0861
Croydon Council Travel Services Team	020 8726 7100
Croydon Crossroads Carers Support Service	020 8667 9893
Croydon Mencap	020 8662 9201
Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association	020 8662 1000
Dial-a-Ride	0845 999 1 999
Disabled Persons Railcard	0845 605 0525
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	0870 600 0301
DWP Benefit Enquiry Line	0800 88 22 00
DVLA Helpline	0870 600 0301
Mobility Information Service	01743 340 269
Mobilise	01508 489 449
Motability	0845 456 4566
National Express	08717 818 179
National Rail Enquiries	08457 48 49 50
Queen Elizabeth Foundation Mobility Centre	020 8770 1151
Senior Railcard	0870 942 3648
Southeastern Railway	0800 783 4524
Southern Trains	0800 138 1016
Transport for London	020 7222 1234
Travel Mentoring Scheme	020 7027 5822
If you cannot find the information you need, please contact the Carers' Information Service on 020 8649 9339, option 1.	