

Northumberland County Council

General Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)

Specification

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Introduction: Description of Lots

Details of the 7 Individual Lots which will be included in the DPS are as follows:

Lot 1 Transport for Social Services Passengers including Children Excluded from Mainstream Education.

There are 3 elements to this lot:

Transport for vulnerable adults attending day centres, care homes and horticultural units, the main features of which are:

1. Adults ranging from 18 years upwards to pensionable age
2. Often necessitating the deployment of a passenger assistant who, along with the driver, will be required to attend any training programme specified by the Council.
3. Proven track record of taxi operator for reliability and sensitivity is essential.
4. Passengers have a variety of needs including dementia, epilepsy.
5. Passengers are often physically frail and have mobility problems and therefore require assistance between their home residence/day centre and the contracted vehicle.
6. Passengers often require wheelchair accessible vehicles. Journeys are typically to Day Centres & Horticultural Units
7. Arrival times at these units are generally between 0900hrs-0930hrs and departure times are generally from 1530hrs to 1600hrs.
8. Journeys are usually to establishments within Northumberland but can involve journeys to out of county units such as Percy Hedley in North Tyneside.

Transport for vulnerable children attending children's homes, sure start centres etc., the main features of which are:

1. Children range in age from birth to 18 years.
2. May require passenger assistants, even if a child is attending a mainstream school.
3. Children are vulnerable, for example, they are often from abusive backgrounds & may themselves display challenging behaviours.

4. Journeys are often required at short notice and at irregular times, for example at weekends and/or night time depending on the nature of the situation.
5. Proven track record of taxi operator for reliability and sensitivity is essential.
6. Transport can be to a vast range of locations, mainly within but sometimes beyond the border of Northumberland to schools, social care offices, soft play areas for family contacts, children's homes, refuges, sure start centres, train/bus stations, special social care events; it can also involve educational visits to museums, youth groups, cadets, hospital appointments.
7. Occasionally taxi may need to be met by police at an address - for example removing children from a reluctant parent.
8. Highly confidential nature, often 'protected placements' where a parent may not even be allowed to know where their child is living.
9. Strict guidelines need to be adhered to with regards answering phone calls about a given child and any disclosures made to contract personnel by children in the vehicle need to be followed up using the correct reporting procedures to County Hall.
10. Transport arrangements often need to be terminated at short notice.

Transport for children excluded from mainstream education, the main features of which are:

1. Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) transport is arranged for children of statutory school age who are about to be excluded from school or have been subjected to either temporary or permanent exclusion.
2. It can be organised so they can access short-term educational programmes which are often organised to help re-integrate them back into mainstream education.
3. Transport is organised for children from 5yrs to 16 years of age,
4. Requests for transport are often made with very short notice, i.e. the next working day.
5. Journeys can be made to allow children to access an alternative timetable for part of their school week.
6. Children are often from difficult backgrounds and as such they can display challenging behaviours.

7. Some children are vulnerable, they have medical needs or mental health difficulties and may disclose information in the vehicle which must be reported in a confidential manner to County Hall.
8. Journeys are often required outside regular school hours, may only operate as little as one day a week and are often required to be cancelled at short notice.
9. Transport arrangements will often involve a mix of students in vehicles, however care is taken to control loadings (often maximum of 6 students together) due to the behavioural issues that can occur.

Lot 2 Transport for Children attending Mainstream Schools/Further Education Colleges

There are 2 elements to this lot:

Transport for children attending mainstream schools, the main features of which are:

1. Transport is provided for children from 4 to 16 years of age
2. Arrival times at mainstream schools are usually around 0900hrs and departure times around 1530hrs.
3. The vast majority of journeys are within Northumberland though there are exceptions whereby journeys are arranged for schools beyond its borders.
4. Vehicles required will range from 4 seater saloon cars to full size coaches
5. Sometimes journeys required will be in the form of “feeder transport” whereby a smaller vehicle will be arranged to transport children living in outer-lying areas into a central hub whereby they transfer onto a bigger vehicle.
6. Transport arrangements that are put in place are generally of a long-term nature – up to 5 years.
7. Journeys are sometimes required for children on medical grounds for a temporary period of time e.g. for a child who breaks a leg
8. Usually children are issued with travel passes and the driver must check travel passes of children to ensure they are all boarding the correct vehicle
9. Typically, the transport arrangements that are put in place operate as closed call-off contracts.

Transport for students accessing Post-16 Education at sixth form or further education college, the main features of which are:

1. Transport is arranged for students in years 12 & 13 only i.e. for students between the ages of 16-19 years of age.
2. Journeys are arranged for students who attend high school sixth forms and a number of further education colleges
3. Journeys are mainly within Northumberland but a significant number involve cross-border transport to out of county establishments
4. A variety of vehicles are required ranging from 4 seater saloons to full size buses
5. Sometimes journeys required will be in the form of “feeder transport” whereby a smaller vehicle will be arranged to transport children living in outer-lying areas into a central hub whereby they transfer onto a bigger vehicle.
6. Journey times are typically at the start and end of the school/college day i.e. arrival times of approximately 9am and departure times approximately 1530hrs – variations do occur depending on the establishment.
7. Travel passes are issued to students and they should be checked by drivers to ensure they are boarding the correct vehicles.
8. Transport is arranged for students with special educational needs and disabilities – please refer to Lot 3 below for specific features
9. Typically, the transport arrangements that are put in place operate as closed call-off contracts.

Lot 3 Transport for Children attending Special Schools/Colleges, the main features of which are:

1. Transport is arranged for children who range in age from 4 years to 18yrs.
2. Transport is organised for children who have a range of special needs ranging from moderate to severe learning difficulties, behavioural & emotional difficulties.
3. Deployment of a passenger transport assistant is required for the vast majority of children
4. Depending on the particular needs of the child, attendance on various training courses as specified by the Council will be required for all passenger assistants and drivers deployed on such routes. Such training will be either funded by the Council or the operator.

5. A good proportion of the children are on the autistic spectrum disorder and as such respond poorly to change, therefore a consistent deployment of the same contract personnel is essential.
6. Journeys are required to get children to school for approximately 0900hrs and from school to home at approximately 1530hrs.
7. Journeys are typically to schools within Northumberland, however a significant number of journeys are organised for children so they can attend schools beyond Northumberland – this is dependent upon the needs of the child.
8. Journeys are usually Monday to Friday only but there are exceptions which arise from a child's needs e.g. some children are provided with a residential placement and therefore only require transport at the start and end of a week or even school term.
9. Occasionally wheelchair accessible vehicles are required for children in wheelchairs
10. Occasionally specialist training for passenger transport assistants is required such as anaphylactic training (for children with allergies) or seizure management training (for children with epilepsy).

Lot 4 Provision of Local Bus Services, the main of which are:

1. The Council has the power to review changes to local bus services and to consider whether gaps in services should be met by subsidising additional services beyond what the commercial network provides.
2. Such supported services may range from diverting or extending individual journeys to supporting a full route and timetable.
3. Vehicles must meet all accessibility legislation.
4. Vehicles must also meet requirements to display destination information and be fitted with an electronic ticket machine where appropriate.
5. Minimum seating capacity will usually range from 16 seats to 45 seats.
6. Operators will be required to participate in marketing and ticketing promotions and also participate in the English National Concession Travel Scheme (ENCTS) and other concession travel passes as required for the service.
7. Data for reimbursement will be supplied electronically via HOPS unless the claim value is under £400.

8. Operators are required to pay any bus station departure costs arising from the service.
9. In certain circumstances, the Council is prepared to accept tenders from community transport operators proposing to run services under Section 19 or Section 22 permits.

Lot 5 Provision of Demand Responsive Services, the main features of which are:

1. Where demand for a conventional bus service is limited the Council may consider it justifiable to fund what it considers socially necessary services through a Dial a Ride service, Taxibus/Taxishare service or other community transport type solution - the specific characteristics of each are outlined further below
2. Community transport operators will operate with either S19 or S22 licensed minibus permit vehicles and comply with the appropriate permit and accessibility legislation
3. In Northumberland a S19 minibus (up to 16 passenger seats) permit is used by community transport operators to provide.
 - a) Section 19 permit vehicles cannot be used to carry any member of the general public and must operate a booking system for registered users.
 - b) Vehicles operating under a Section 22 permit are issued to organisations concerned for the social and welfare needs of one or more communities who operate vehicles without a view to profit to provide a community bus service.
 - c) Unlike section 19 permit vehicles, community bus services are 'local bus services' and can carry the general public. Vehicles adapted to carry nine or more passengers (excluding the driver) may be used under a community bus permit.
4. Dial a Ride services are operated by community transport operators for the benefit of passengers, all of whom register as members with the transport provider by payment of an annual fee. The passenger then books their journey with the community transport operator confirming when they intend to travel. Dial a Ride journeys will typically serve a pre-defined geographical area (e.g. a rural area ill-served by local bus services) to a specific destination.
5. In some cases the journeys made may be on an ad-hoc basis (e.g. elderly registered passengers travelling to a luncheon club organised by Age UK) or it

may be a regular timetabled service to enable members who have mobility problems to go shopping by accessing a community bus which picks-up at boarding points located away from conventional bus stops to avoid any perceived competition with commercial bus services.

6. A Taxibus service is a regular bus service (it runs along a fixed route to a timetable, with passengers boarding/alighting at designated stopping places & paying separate fares) but operated by a licenced Hackney Carriage or Private Hire operator using a taxi or private hire vehicle. The taxi/Private Hire Operator will need to apply for a Restricted PCV licence, which is required to operate the service. The service must always run as advertised regardless of whether anyone wishes to travel, as it is registered with the Traffic Commissioner.
7. A Taxishare service also runs to a timetable like a bus but not necessarily a specified route and is operated using a taxi. Passengers must first register to use the service. Once they have done that they must then book a seat for a specific journey time when they want to travel on the taxishare. Passengers pay a fixed fare. On those occasions when no-one has booked to travel, the service does not operate.
8. For Community transport operators the Council will reimburse S 22 licensed vehicles for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).
9. Concessionary passes are accepted subject to evidence of passes accepted
10. Taxi / private hire or hackney carriage licenced vehicles operating vehicles less than 16 seats or smaller vehicles up to 8 seats and meet appropriate accessibility legislation and the requirements of electronic ticket machine where appropriate.
11. Taxi/private hire demand responsive services claiming ENCTS concessionary passes operators will be required to provide evidence of passes accepted.

Lot 6 Provision of NHS Transport Northumbria and North Tyneside, the main features of which are:

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (the 'Trust') is geographically one of the largest Trusts in the country and one of the largest healthcare employers in the

North East, with over 8,000 staff working in 11 hospitals throughout Northumberland and North Tyneside.

The Trust serves a population of half a million people. The Trust manages three general hospitals in North Tyneside, Wansbeck and Hexham, one Emergency Care Hospital at Cramlington and seven community hospitals situated in Berwick, Alnwick, Haltwhistle, Rothbury, Blyth, Morpeth and Wallsend. The Trust also runs community based services across North Tyneside and Northumberland.

The vast majority of journeys are within Northumberland and North Tyneside, though there are exceptions whereby journeys are arranged beyond its borders which will be required on an ad-hoc basis; requests for transport are often made with very short notice.

1. The Trust requires a call-off contract for the provision of taxi, private hire services and occasionally mini buses.
2. The Trust requires a taxi service for the conveyance of all levels of staff as and when required to or from either their place of residence to the Trusts' premises or from one Hospital site to another as well as journeys to or from non-health authority/trust premises which will be required on an ad-hoc basis; requests for transport are often made with very short notice as well as those planned in advance.
3. The Trust requires a taxi service for the conveyance of patients to or from the Trusts' premises to their place of residence, or from one hospital site to another as and when required which will be required on an ad-hoc basis; requests for transport are often made with very short notice as well as those planned in advance.
4. The Trust requires a taxi service for the conveyance of some light goods to and from one Hospital site to another both on a routine basis and as and when required. Light goods will include documents and medical/pathological specimens, which have a limited life and must be conveyed in special containers provided by the Trust as well as small pieces of equipment, packages and parcels which will be required on an ad-hoc basis as well as those planned in advance.
5. The taxi requirement will be provided on a 24 hour service daily, including Saturday, Sundays and Bank Holidays, the service provided must be promptly executed. Taxis must be available day and night.
6. Taxis are booked for essential Trust business only, and some bookings will involve work which is essential to the well-being and lives of patients.

Consequently, taxis must not be redirected by the operator for any reason whatsoever, unless agreed in advance with the Trusts' Authorised Officers.

7. The Trust operates a "No Smoking" Policy. Drivers must not smoke or will have smoked whilst on Trust business. For removal of doubt this covers both the driver and passenger.
8. The operator must ensure that at all times the drivers are of clean and tidy appearance and that a dress code will be adhered to at all times. It is the operator's responsibility to advise and inform the drivers of the dress code required at all times when undertaking the Contractual activities.
9. The Trust requires that no animals are transported in any of the vehicles required for use on Trust business.
10. Drivers must not eat, drink alcohol or smell of alcohol or be under the influence of drugs whilst on Trust business.
11. Wherever possible, the operator shall ensure that journeys from the same site are combined so that the Trust shall be liable for one journey only. Invoices to detail both job reference numbers.
12. If a person or items are being transported, the journey must be direct and only diverted if agreed with the Trusts Authorised Officers.
13. When picking up goods or specimens, on arrival at the pickup/drop off point, the operator is expected where necessary to leave the vehicle to collect/deliver specified items or personnel.
 - a) Any item required to be delivered to a named individual or delivery point must be left with the individual or at the delivery point. If, for any reason, a delivery cannot be affected, all the associated paperwork or goods must be returned to the originator on the same day or as soon as practically possible.
 - b) When the operator is delivering packages containing patient identifiable information they will be requested to sign a log on receipt of the package and will be required to ensure a signature of a person receiving the package, the signature will be provided to the member of staff sending the package, this can be hand delivered or faxed.
 - c) No package must be left in vehicles without the driver being present. If the driver has a need to leave the vehicle whilst transporting a package, the package must be placed into the boot and the vehicle locked.

- d) If a package is not delivered it must be returned to the sender, if they are not available then it must be returned to the main reception.
 - e) No package should be left in a vehicle overnight. It must be returned to the Trust.
 - f) If an alleged incident occurs regarding the secure transportation of a package the operator will co-operate in any subsequent investigation and will take the necessary disciplinary action as guided by the Trust
14. When a vehicle is requested to collect a passenger or light goods from an unfamiliar area, it is the operator's responsibility to ensure that the driver has adequate information regarding the location before the journey takes place. Any additional costs for this journey will not be met by the Trust.
15. The operator must have vehicles available to transport wheelchair users. If the wheelchair user is able to transfer to the vehicle seat their chair must be stored securely along with any accessories. For users who are unable to transfer out of their chair, the vehicle must have suitable access, i.e. ramps and appropriate door size. The vehicle must also be fitted with appropriate wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint systems (WTORS) as well as passenger safety belts. Manufacturers of WTORS give written instructions on how to use their equipment. This advice must be followed at all times.
16. Drivers employed to carry out the call-off contract shall have due regard to the safety of their passengers and at all times shall moderate their driving so as not to cause passengers unnecessary distress by travelling at excessive speeds or taking undue risks.
17. Drivers of vehicles undertaking journeys in connection with the call-off contract must not pick up or put down passengers, including patients, at other than the collection and destination points specified by the Authorised Officer.
18. Operators are reminded of the absolute necessity for maintaining in strict confidence any information or knowledge which may come into their possession relating to the NHS, any of its staff and/or patients under this call-off contract. It is the operator's responsibility to ensure that their employees who may be engaged on any part of the call-off contract are fully informed and aware of this.

Lot 7 Provision of NHS Transport North Cumbria, the main features of which are:

The Trust provides acute hospital services across North Cumbria. The main hospitals are the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle and West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven. All the main specialties are available on both sites. The Trust also offers outpatient and maternity services at other community locations, including Brampton, Haltwhistle, Alston, Penrith, Kirkby Stephen, Wigton, Keswick, Cockermouth, Maryport, Workington and Millom. The Trust serves a population of 340,000 and employs approximately 4000 staff.

1. The vast majority of journeys are within North and West Cumbria, though there are exceptions whereby journeys are arranged beyond its borders which will be required on an ad-hoc basis; requests for transport are often made with very short notice.
2. The Trust requires a call-off contract for the provision of taxi, private hire services and occasionally mini buses.
3. The Trust requires a taxi service for the conveyance of all levels of staff as and when required to or from either their place of residence to the Trusts' premises or from one Hospital site to another as well as journeys to or from non-health authority/trust premises which will be required on an ad- hoc basis; requests for transport are often made with very short notice as well as those planned in advance.
4. The Trust requires a taxi service for the conveyance of patients to or from the Trusts' premises to their place of residence, or from one hospital site to another as and when required which will be required on an ad- hoc basis; requests for transport are often made with very short notice as well as those planned in advance.
5. The Trust requires a taxi service for the conveyance of some light goods to and from one Hospital site to another both on a routine basis and as and when required. Light goods will include documents and medical/pathological specimens, which have a limited life and must be conveyed in special containers provided by the Trust as well as small pieces of equipment, packages and parcels which will be required on an ad-hoc basis as well as those planned in advance.
6. The taxi requirement will be provided on a 24 hour service daily, including Saturday, Sundays and Bank Holidays, the service provided must be promptly executed. Taxis must be available day and night.
7. Taxis are booked for essential Trust business only, and some bookings will involve work which is essential to the well-being and lives of patients.

Consequently, taxis must not be redirected by the operator for any reason whatsoever, unless agreed in advance with the Trusts' Authorised Officers.

8. The Trust operates a "No Smoking" Policy. Drivers must not smoke or will have smoked whilst on Trust business. For removal of doubt this covers both the driver and passenger.
9. The operator must ensure that at all times the drivers are of clean and tidy appearance and that a dress code will be adhered to at all times. It is the operator's responsibility to advise and inform the drivers of the dress code required at all times when undertaking their contractual activities.
10. The Trust requires that no animals are transported in any of the vehicles required for use on Trust business.
11. Drivers must not eat, drink alcohol or smell of alcohol or be under the influence of drugs whilst on Trust business.
12. Wherever possible, the operator shall ensure that journeys from the same site are combined so that the Trust shall be liable for one journey only. Invoices to detail both job reference numbers.
13. If a person or items are being transported, the journey must be direct and only diverted if agreed with the Trusts Authorised Officers.
14. When picking up goods or specimens, on arrival at the pickup/drop off point, the operator is expected where necessary to leave the vehicle to collect/deliver specified items or personnel.
 - a) Any item required to be delivered to a named individual or delivery point must be left with the individual or at the delivery point. If, for any reason, a delivery cannot be affected, all the associated paperwork or goods must be returned to the originator on the same day or as soon as practically possible.
 - b) When the operator is delivering packages containing patient identifiable information they will be requested to sign a log on receipt of the package and will be required to ensure a signature of a person receiving the package, the signature will be provided to the member of staff sending the package, this can be hand delivered or faxed.
 - c) No package must be left in vehicles without the driver being present. If the driver has a need to leave the vehicle whilst transporting a package, the package must be placed into the boot and the vehicle locked.

- d) If a package is not delivered it must be returned to the sender, if they are not available then it must be returned to the main reception.
 - e) No package should be left in a vehicle overnight. It must be returned to the Trust.
 - f) If an alleged incident occurs regarding the secure transporting of a package the Contactor will co-operate in any subsequent investigation and will take the necessary disciplinary action if a case is proved, as guided by the Trust
15. When a vehicle is requested to collect a passenger or light goods from an unfamiliar area, it is the operator's responsibility to ensure that the driver has adequate information regarding the location before the journey takes place. Any additional costs for this journey will not be met by the Trust.
16. The operator must have vehicles available to transport wheelchair users. If the wheelchair user is able to transfer to the vehicle seat their chair must be stored securely along with any accessories. For users who are unable to transfer out of their chair, the vehicle must have suitable access, i.e. ramps and appropriate door size. The vehicle must also be fitted with appropriate wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint systems (WTORS) as well as passenger safety belts. Manufacturers of WTORS give written instructions on how to use their equipment. This advice must be followed at all times.
17. Drivers employed to carry out the call-off contract shall have due regard to the safety of their passengers and at all times shall moderate their driving so as not to cause passengers unnecessary distress by travelling at excessive speeds or taking undue risks.
18. Drivers of vehicles undertaking journeys in connection with the call-off contract must not pick up or put down passengers, including patients, at other than the collection and destination points specified by the Authorised Officer.
19. Operators are reminded of the absolute necessity for maintaining in strict confidence any information or knowledge which may come into their possession relating to the NHS, any of its staff and/or patients under this call-off contract. It is the operator's responsibility to ensure that their employees who may be engaged on any part of the call-off contract are fully informed and aware of this.

1. Health and Safety

Risk Assessments shall be completed and reviewed by the operator on a regular basis. The operator shall, on request, provide the Council with a copy of his written Health and Safety Policy as well as such risk assessments the operator has completed with regards to their provision of passenger transport services.

2. Compliance Information

It is the responsibility of the operator to ensure that all compliance information is up to date and provided to the Council as and when required - please see Section 5 of Schedule F "Working for Northumberland County Council" for further details of the Council's requirements. **Later in 2020, the Council will be introducing a new call-off contract compliance system which will take the form of an online web portal whereby operators will be required to upload and maintain up to date documentation relating to operator's licence details, driver & vehicle licence information, fleet insurance details, vehicle service history & MOTs as well as drivers' DBS status and any other compliance information the Council requires from time to time.**

All Passenger Carrying Vehicle, Hackney Carriage, Private Hire or equivalent Operator's Licences and Permits shall be held in the same name as the operator or a relevant subcontractor.

The Council shall be given prior written notice of any proposed change in the legal identity of the licence holder.

3. Accidents, Breakdowns and Delays

The operator's duty shall be to operate the call-off contract without failure and to this end the operator shall be obliged to cover all foreseeable staff or vehicle deficiencies.

If the operator is unable to operate all or any part of this call-off contract, whatever the circumstances the operator must notify the Council's Passenger Transport Team, parents/carers of the passengers and the establishment served by phone or email immediately and the actions being taken to address the issue.

Accidents:

On request, the Operator must supply to the Council's Passenger Transport Team a copy of procedures to be followed by drivers and passenger assistants in the event of an accident or incident. This document must include 24-hour contact details.

Where the accident has resulted in death, injury or damage to vehicles or property during the operation of the Service, the Operator must inform the Council's Passenger Transport Team immediately by telephone or email, and a full written report must be submitted by the operator to the Passenger Transport Team the same day. All such

accidents must also be reported to the Police and, in the case of education or social care transport, the relevant Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher or Care Manager or Assistant Care Manager must be informed. All other accidents/incidents must be notified in writing by the Operator to the Council's Passenger Transport Team the same working day of it occurring.

Where there is potential for injury resulting from an accident or other incident, the driver must check if any passengers are injured before continuing the journey. If there is any doubt, the vehicle must wait for passengers to receive medical assistance before continuing. If the driver is suffering any effects due to the accident, they must not continue the journey and arrangements must be made for a replacement driver.

In addition to notifying the Council immediately of any road traffic accident involving the vehicle while operating the call-off contract, the operator must also make the Council aware of any action taken by the Police, Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), Traffic Commissioner or Licensing Authority or any other regulatory authority against vehicles or drivers operating the call-off contract.

The driver or passenger assistant must remain with the passengers in a place of safety unless unable to do so due to injury to either themselves or a passenger, or to comply with instructions of the Police.

Breakdowns & Delays:

In the event of a breakdown, the establishment served (e.g. school or day centre) as well as the Council's Passenger Transport Team must be informed immediately in respect of journeys towards school or day centre. On the homeward journey, the Operator must inform the Council's Passenger Transport Team immediately as well as parents/carers of the passengers by email or telephone.

The driver or passenger assistant must remain with the passengers in the vehicle unless circumstances require evacuation of the vehicle in which case either the driver or passenger assistant must accompany the passengers to a place of safety.

In the event of a vehicle breakdown, driver illness or any other event that leads to a delay in operating the service, the operator may make alternative arrangements to ensure the passengers complete their journey, in accordance with the terms of the call-off contract. In all such cases, the operator shall ensure that the alternative vehicle and driver are suitably licensed and that where the passengers are accompanied by a passenger assistant then that passenger assistant shall remain with the passengers for the remainder of the journey. The operator shall also, as soon as it is practicable, inform the Establishment, the Council's Passenger Transport Team as well as parents/carers of the passengers of the cause of the delay and the action taken to address it.

Where for reason of road works or traffic accident the operator is obliged to alter the route of an education or social care call-off contract, the relevant establishment (e.g. school or day centre) must be notified if 10 or more minutes delay is anticipated. No claim shall be made against the Council for any change in the Charges where any

such changes of route may be accommodated within the resources normally allocated to the call-off contract.

The Driver shall notify the Council immediately where breakdown or defect renders the vehicle unusable. The operator must provide or pay for a replacement vehicle or arrange carriage of passengers on an alternative service to complete their journey. The Council shall not be responsible for payment of any additional charges for the replacement of the vehicle.

Should the operator be unable to perform the call-off contract due to vehicle breakdown, absence of driver or other emergency, the operator may, with the prior consent of the Council, use the services of another operator provided:

- (i) The operator is appropriately licensed;
- (ii) Their transport personnel (driver and, where applicable, passenger transport assistant are appropriately licenced and vetted;
- (iii) The vehicle is MOT'd and suitably maintained as well as insured & taxed;
- (iv) The vehicle conforms to minimum seating requirements and any particular features that are required by the contract, e.g. wheelchair accessible.
- (v) It is at no extra cost to the Council.

4. VEHICLES - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Licence

The operation of non-taxi licensed vehicles with eight or less seats as a PSV licensed vehicle (even where accepted by the Traffic Commissioner under the "10% rule") is not permitted on any call-off contract. In the case of community transport operators, in addition to being appropriately licenced, they must be in receipt of or working towards the Community Transport Association "Quality Mark".

Engine Emission Standards

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, vehicles are subject to a minimum vehicle emission standard of Euro 5.

Whilst the Council is not specifying that vehicles deployed on it's contracts must comply with maximum vehicle age limits it will take steps to satisfy itself that any contracted vehicle meets the following criteria:

- A. The vehicle service record showing that the vehicle has been correctly and regularly serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' service specification;**
- B. The exterior of the vehicle to be of good appearance with no signs of damage or corrosion. The paintwork and the interior of the vehicle are to be in good condition.**

- C. The upholstery, linings, seats and floor coverings to be clean with no excessive signs of wear.**
- D. County Council Officers will inspect the vehicle in line with the criteria, and it will be their decision to agree if the vehicle meets the criteria.**
- E. The vehicle (where it is required) is fitted with CCTV and maintained in full working order.**

Vehicles will:

Maintenance:

Be serviced and maintained in a fit and roadworthy condition and be subject to a written vehicle and equipment maintenance and inspection regime that meets the standards set down in the latest edition of the "Guide to maintaining roadworthiness" published by the Vehicle & Driver Standards Agency (VDSA).

When requested to do so by the Council, the operator at its own cost, will submit any vehicles used in the provision of the Service for examination by an authorised officer or agent of the Council either on site, at his own premises or at a place nominated by the authorised officer or agent of the Council.

Members of the Council's Passenger Transport Team may instruct the operator not to use any vehicle which is found to have any defect which could affect the safety of passengers. In such circumstances, the operator shall provide at his own expense an alternative suitable vehicle.

Temperature:

Be equipped with a heating system which can achieve a temperature of 10°C within 15 minutes of starting up the vehicle and 15°C after 30 minutes of starting up the vehicle, and with an air circulation system which can maintain the temperature at a comfortable level in warm conditions.

Cleanliness:

Be kept in a clean and well maintained condition free inside of fumes and excess of noise. Internally the vehicle should be swept and tidied after every operating day and subjected to a comprehensive cleaning regime at least once every six weeks. Externally vehicles should be regularly washed taking into account prevailing weather conditions. The operator should keep records in respect of cleaning as the Council reserves the right to inspect these records upon request.

Signage:

Be adapted to display the operator's name prominently at all times even in exceptional circumstances. Vehicles in 'dealer white' or a former operators livery must prominently display the the operators name on all sides so that the name is clearly seen and legible from at least 75 metres away. Vehicle branding and livery will be in the name of the operator or (in the case of licenced taxis) not be misleading in any way.

Emergency Equipment:

Be provided with an approved and fully serviced fire extinguisher appropriate to the vehicle type, and a fully equipped First Aid Kit conforming to the standards required by the Public Service Vehicle and Minibus Regulations 1980 or any subsequent amendments. It is additionally recommended that disposable gloves be contained in the First Aid Kit. Both extinguisher and First Aid Kit must be securely stowed to prevent movement in transit, but must be appropriately marked and accessible to both driver and passengers.

Seating Capacity:

The vehicle(s) provided will accord with the Service Specification as regards any particular features, e.g. stated capacity or wheelchair transportation.

The vehicles used for the Contract shall meet the stated minimum seating capacity to carry the number of passengers wishing to be carried under normal circumstances, including any school children or college students for whom the Council is responsible for providing transport as detailed in the Service Specification.

Contracted vehicles shall not, under any circumstances be equipped with, or convey passengers inside facing seats. In cases where school children or college students are assigned to a local bus service bus, then they must not be allowed to occupy side facing seats.

Winter Tyres:

It is mandatory to use winter tyres when driving in winter conditions. Winter conditions are defined as: ice, slippery conditions in snow, slush and slippery conditions caused by ice or frost.

5. Drivers and other Contract Personnel - General Requirements:

Operators' staff (whether office based or drivers or passenger assistants) shall at all times maintain acceptable standards of courtesy and respect in all dealings with other persons, whether passengers, other road users, residents, parents, Council staff, school, day centre or hospital staff.

Drivers must not cause annoyance or inconvenience to other road users or residents when driving or parking vehicles. For example, engines should not be left idling for more than 5 minutes on school/day centre premises or outside such establishments,

The operator shall provide drivers (and passenger assistants where applicable) who are appropriately and smartly attired (the escort should wear a high visibility jacket when on duty). Drivers/passenger assistants must be able to communicate effectively with the passengers in their care including answering basic queries, and dealing with emergencies

While operating a contracted school transport or social services transport contract the driver shall be provided with a mobile phone or equivalent radio system to maintain contact with their operating base in the event of a vehicle breakdown or another

emergency situation causing significant delay to operating the service.

Mobile phones or equivalent equipment must not be used whilst the vehicle is in motion, and the engine must be switched off.

Members of the Council's Passenger Transport Team may instruct the operator not to use any member of contract personnel which could affect the safety of passengers. In such circumstances, the operator shall provide at his own expense another member of staff.

6. Complaint Handling:

The operator shall operate a system for recording passenger complaints and display appropriate notices to make passengers aware of the complaints procedure. Requests for information from the Council in relation to complaints it has received concerning the operation of a contract must be responded within the timescales stated by the Council, this will normally be 5 working days but may be earlier depending on the urgency of the request.

Schedule A

Conditions Relating Specifically to Call-Off Contracts Operating Registered Local Bus Services

This section draws together all the specific requirements of Contracts put in place for the provision of Local Bus Services. They should therefore be read in conjunction with and where appropriate, in addition to, the general requirements set out elsewhere in this Specification or in the Conditions of Contract.

SA1 Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG):

No claims for Bus Service Operator's Grant will be met for a contract which was advertised after 1st January 2014.

SA2 Registration of the Service:

It is the responsibility of the operator to register the service with the Traffic Commissioner if it is to be operated as a local bus service including section 22 minibuses permits and licensed taxi-bus operations.

Where the Council has requested a variation to the bus service which necessitates a change of registration form to be submitted to the Traffic Commissioner (e.g. a change to the route schedule and/or timetable), it will pay for the Traffic Commissioner's registration fees arising from such variations. The operator must ensure that registration of the service with the Traffic Commissioner is undertaken immediately following the award of the Contract and is effective from the first date on which operation of the service is required, and must ensure the punctual cancellation or variation of that registration at the termination or variation of this Contract.

Failure to operate according to the timetable or route is reportable to the Traffic Commissioner.

SA3 Vehicle Standards:

Where a vehicle is operated mainly on a specified route or corridor, the Council may require the operator to apply a rear end wrap advertising the service. The cost will be by negotiation with the operator.

Except where otherwise stated all vehicles operating under this contract must comply with all of the following minimum requirements:

Where the vehicle is fitted with more than 16 seats it must be fitted with power operated passenger doors which are activated by the driver without the driver having to leave his seat;

Be equipped to display the service number and destination display as required and in

accordance with any additional specifications which are set out in the Service Specification. When operated by a licensed taxi, it must also display a sign that it is operating a bus service.

Unless exempted for a specific service, be equipped with a County Council approved Smartcard enabled electronic ticket machine suitable for providing the required information on fares, revenue, tickets sold and passes accepted. This must be capable of producing a ticket displaying the operator's name, date and time of issue, boarding point, fare type and value which can be downloaded to software and provided to the Council in an agreed format and at agreed, regular intervals for analysis and retention.

Where individual fares are charged, the operator shall be responsible for providing all necessary ticketing equipment. Drivers must be provided with the facility to issue an emergency ticket and keep a record of this transaction in the event of a ticket machine malfunction whilst operating the Contract. A current fare table and timetable for the service must be made available to the driver while operating the Contract.

SA4 Nexus Livetime

Operators are required to participate in Nexus Livetime which makes real time bus information available to the public. Operators will need to make arrangements for a compliant feed for their real time data generated from electronic ticket machines to be made available to Nexus.

There is an annual cost to participate which needs to be included in the tender price submitted by the operator

SA5 Conveyance of Passengers:

Passengers shall be picked up and set down at such places and times as specified in the schedule or any alternative timetable accepted by the Council as part of the Tender. Unless otherwise specified by Hail and Ride the service will recognise all bus stops along its route as directed by sign and/or shelter (or as recognised by custom and practice) except in bus stations and at busy town centre sites where the County Council may designate the stops to be used. The operator is responsible for meeting any charges incurred for the use of facilities, such as bus station departure charges.

SA6 Days of Operation: Holiday Periods

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council, the operator will operate registered local bus services on the days mentioned below in column A, and the level of service, if any, that is specified in column B.

Column A	Column B
Good Friday	Sunday Service
Easter Monday	Sunday Service

May Day Bank Holiday	Sunday Service
Late Spring Bank Holiday	Sunday Service
Late Summer Bank Holiday	Sunday Service
Christmas Eve	Normal Services -Early finish
Christmas Day	No Service
26th December	No Service
New Year's Eve	Normal Services - Early finish
New Year's Day	No Service

SA7 Revenue & Passenger Data

When requested, the operator will provide data showing the total passenger journeys as well as on bus and season ticket revenue for the stated period, broken down by individual service number, for all bus service journeys which are operated under the Contract. The number of passenger journeys must be separated for morning and afternoon trips on contracts provided primarily for scholars where the Council retains the revenue.

The details of the reporting periods and the form of reporting will be advised to the operator at the time of the mini competition

SA8 Minimum Subsidy Contracts:

All revenue from ticket sales and reimbursement due for participation in concessionary travel schemes shall be retained by the operator. As such all of the revenue risk will lie with the operator, who will be required to estimate anticipated revenue when bidding at the mini competition stage. As such the Charges will not be varied to reflect the actual level of fares revenue collected by the operator.

The operator is required to publish an up-to-date timetable leaflet which includes origin and terminal information for the service, the route, contact details for the operator, a reference to Traveline, and internet journey planner. The operator must distribute leaflets to passengers and supply sufficient updates to the Council so that their Information Centres, libraries, and tourist information centres can make them available. The operator is required to supply information on current fares to North East Transport Information Services Ltd (NETIS) or such successor body in a timely fashion. The Operator must also ensure faretable information for each bus services is published on their website so it can be readily accessible to the general public.

SA9 Minimum Cost Contracts:

Where a Minimum Cost Contract is awarded the Charges shall be for a fixed daily sum representing the gross cost of operating the Service. As such any revenue collected will be deducted from the Charges meaning the revenue risk lies with the Council.

All revenue from ticket sales and from reimbursement due for participation in concessionary travel schemes shall therefore belong to the Council. In practice revenue from ticket sales shall be retained by the operator and payments by the Council to the operator shall be for the remaining balance when revenue from ticket sales is subtracted from the Charges.

The operator shall keep records of revenue collected, tickets sold, and details of trips made with Concessionary Travel and other passes on a journey by journey basis. This data shall be submitted to the Council in an agreed digital format on a monthly basis.

The Council reserves the right to check waybill information and carry out on bus surveys at any time without prior notice to verify the accuracy of the statements of revenue collected.

For all services operated as part of a Minimum Cost Contract the Council will be responsible for setting fare levels and for producing a timetable leaflet. The operator will be obliged to assist in its distribution. The Council will be responsible for supplying NETIS with information on fares.

SA10 Fares, Tickets and Concessionary Travel:

Where individual fares are charged all passengers including those with a concessionary travel pass must be issued with a ticket on boarding or possess some other valid pass, network ticket, or return ticket.

Fares:

Fares may be varied as follows:

Fares shall be charged according to the fare table and conditions described in the Service Specification which may be varied by the Council at any time during the period of the contract.

Children between the ages of 5 and under 16 years travel at half fare. Youths aged 16 to 18 years inclusive must be provided with Youth fares - offers and values to be approved by Northumberland County Council, reflecting any offer on commercial services operating over common parts of the route.

The operator may apply in writing at any time to the Council for permission to vary fares. Permission to vary fares shall not be unreasonably withheld.

For audit purposes, the retention of fare collection records by the operator shall be for the current year and the previous full year. Where a contract operates over part of a route which has commercial services already running, then the fares on the contracted service should not undercut those of the commercial service. This is done to avoid any abstraction of passengers which may have a negative effect on the revenue of the commercial service. The Council's Passenger Transport Team will assist with any requests for information on current fares on these common corridors. They will also

notify the operator when these commercial services are subject to a fares review.

Other Operators Tickets:

Where a contract operates over part of a route which has commercial services already running, there needs to be a mutual agreement between all parties that each other's return tickets will be accepted for travel at no further charge. This does not apply to multi journey tickets or zonal and season tickets which are marketed by an operator and allow travel out with the common corridor.

All revenue from the sale on the bus of these or any other period or area wide tickets shall, if the Contract is operated on a minimum cost basis, be credited to the Council together with other fare revenues.

Within Tyne and Wear, the operator will be required to issue and/or accept *Network Travel tickets* on cross boundary services.

The operator will be required to issue and/or accept any other through and return tickets, passes or discounts which the Council may negotiate with other transport operators. The operator may also be required to sign up to and participate in any legally binding multi operator ticketing scheme that applies over all or part of the route.

North East Explorer tickets:

Operators are required to accept passengers presenting these tickets at no further charge. Operators can consider whether to join the scheme which is administered by Network One Travel Tickets. Members can then issue tickets and be reimbursed for travel made. The ticket is valid for travel between Scarborough and Berwick upon Tweed.

Discover North Northumberland tickets:

Operators with contracts on any of the services listed below are required to accept and issue Discover tickets as part of a Multi Operator Travelcard Scheme:

- Arriva* X18 between Amble (Fourways) and Berwick
 - Arriva* X15 between Shilbottle and Berwick
 - Arriva* X20 between Amble (Fourways) and Alnwick
 - Borders Buses* 267 and 464 between Berwick and Wooler
 - Glen Valley* 470 and 473 between Alnwick and Wooler
 - Travelsure* 418 between Alnwick and Belford or Berwick
 - Travelsure* T01 between Alnwick and Amble
- (* Operators as at March 2019)

Tickets are priced individually by each operator. Suggested selling prices at March 2019 are:

One Day	3-Days	Weekly
£6.70	£15.00	£23.00

Discover tickets are valid all day every day on Arriva, Glen Valley (470 & 473 only), Travelsure and Borders Buses (267 & 464 only) for unlimited travel by the passenger. They are not valid on any other services run by Borders Buses, including the 477 between Berwick and Holy Island, Berwick town services nor on cross border services terminating in Scotland.



Specimen Arriva Discover tickets.

Other operators' tickets will display similar information.

Plus Bus Tickets

Certain rail stations have travel arrangements in place for train passengers with pre-purchased tickets to start or finish their journey on a local bus service. There are strict boundaries within which the journey can be made and these must also start or finish at the designated stop nearest to the station. The onus is with drivers to check the validity of the date and journey being made. These schemes are normally administered by the main bus operator in the area who will reimburse all participants to the notified value.

ENCTS Concessionary and Discount Travel

ENCTS Concessionary travel passes shall be accepted for free travel within their areas and terms of validity. Concessionary Travel passes issued in Scotland and Wales are not accepted for journeys wholly within England. Passengers under 18 years of age who hold a valid *Arriva Card* or a *Connexions* card or any other discount card shall be allowed to travel at the prevailing fare within the terms of validity.

Schedule B

Call-Off Contracts for the Transport of School Children or Social Services Passengers:

SB1 Transport of Passengers

This section draws together all the specific requirements of contracts put in place for the provision of transport for school children and social services passengers. They should therefore be read in conjunction with and where appropriate, in addition to, the Conditions of Contract.

Unless otherwise specified in the Contract, the Service shall be restricted to conveying passengers to and from their establishment which may include but not be limited to a school, college, day centre or horticultural service unit and shall not, without the prior written consent of the Council, carry any other passengers. No School Transport Contract or Social Services Transport Contract must be registered as a local bus service without the prior permission in writing from the Council. In other words they must be operated as Closed Contracts.

The names of the passengers for whom transport is required shall be supplied to the operator by the Council together with details of picking up and setting down points as well as the times the passengers are to be picked-up and dropped-off.

The driver must have a copy of the current loading list with them whilst operating the Contract. No alternative point of collection or alternative destination shall be used without the prior agreement of the Council's Passenger Transport Team. The timetable should be adhered to - no variations to pick-up times and drop-off times are to be made unless authorised by the Passenger Transport Team

If a parent or carer is not available to receive their child of first school age (4-9 years old) or a child with special educational needs or disabilities, at the agreed alighting point, the operator shall keep the child on board the vehicle and continue the run and return later to the child's address. If the situation is unchanged, the child should initially be returned to their establishment and placed in the care of the relevant Head Teacher. Failing this, contact shall be made with the Police. Such circumstances must be reported to the Passenger Transport Team at the earliest opportunity.

Hazard lights must be used when the vehicle is stopped for the purpose of picking up or setting down school children.

The operator shall cooperate in the provision of interchange arrangements that are in place (for school children or college students only) who will be brought to and collected from stops on the route as and where this is required. Under no circumstances should passengers be left unattended. Nor should they be allowed to enter or to leave the vehicle whilst it is in motion.

SB2 Supervision of Passengers

The operator shall provide drivers (and passenger assistants where applicable) who are capable of exercising an appropriate standard of supervision over and care of passengers conveyed on the Service.

The operator will ensure that a passenger assistant (when required by the schedule) is present with the passengers on all journeys for the entire length of the journey. They should be seated in the vehicle in such a way as to ensure they can effectively supervise and care for all passengers, i.e. they should not be sitting in the front of the vehicle alongside the driver.

In the event that a journey cannot precede any further due to adverse weather conditions or for some other valid reason, under no circumstances will any children be left or abandoned. Instructions must be sought from the Council's Passenger Transport Team as to how the situation should be resolved and dealt with.

All passengers must be seated and appropriately secured prior to the vehicle moving.

Where they are issued (school transport contracts undertaken by larger vehicles only) drivers must check passes each day (morning and afternoon runs) as school children and students board. If any such passenger is unable or unwilling to show a valid pass their name should be taken and reported to the Council's Passenger Transport Team as soon as possible, and no later than the next working day, so that action can be taken. If after two weeks any such passenger is still unable or unwilling to show a pass the operator must agree action with the Council's Passenger Transport Team. The Driver must not take any unilateral action.

Problems of challenging behaviour are best dealt with in a calm, non-confrontational way and the operator's staff shall be made aware by the Council of any specific instructions regarding the management of individual passengers. Any instances of disorderly or unruly conduct shall be reported by the operator to the relevant Head Teacher or Day Centre Manager at the earliest opportunity. In extreme cases, the Driver may drive to a Police Station or involve the Police, but under no circumstances shall any passenger be ejected from the vehicle. Details of any serious incident must be reported to the Council's Passenger Transport Team no later than the next working day.

SB3 School and Day Centre Closures and Adverse Weather

In the event of an emergency closure affecting establishments served by the Call Off Contract, the operator must notify the Council of any changes made to the specified transport arrangements, including non-operation, on the same day.

Where 12 hours' notice or more is given by the Council or the establishment that the establishment served is closed on a day it would normally be expected to be open no

payment for that day will be made.

Operators are required to regularly check the Northumberland County Council website for notification of school closures:-

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=438>

In the case of severe weather the operator will make the decision as to whether it is safe to provide the Service. In all cases the Council's guidance on operating in hazardous driving conditions due to severe weather, which is contained at Schedule F to these Conditions of Contract ("Undertaking Work for Northumberland County Council") should be followed in full.

The operator should also provide details of service disruption it is experiencing to the Council's Customer Service Centre on 0345 600 6400 who will in turn publish the details via the Council's "Alert" system on its own website as well as its social media outlets. Guidance on the Council's "Alert" system are contained at Schedule F to these Conditions of Contract ("Undertaking Work for Northumberland County Council") and should be followed in full.

SB4 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

In the event that the contracted journey specifically includes the conveyance of school children or vulnerable adults, which is a Regulated Activity as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, drivers (and passenger assistants where applicable) will be required to undergo an enhanced level DBS & Barred List Check at their own expense through Northumberland County Council.

The operator will ensure that all contract personnel (drivers and, where applicable, passenger assistants) that are deployed on school transport or social services contracts are in receipt of a satisfactory enhanced DBS check through Northumberland County Council.

The operator will ensure that Enhanced DBS & Barred List Checks are carried out at least once every three years in relation to each employee. Guidance on the application process for DBS checks will be issued to the operator by the Council.

The operator shall ensure that any person who discloses to the operator any convictions, or is found to have any convictions following the results of a DBS & Barred List check or a submission, is not employed by the operator on Northumberland County Council contracts without the Council's prior written consent.

In the event that the Council informs the operator that an individual named driver or passenger assistant is unacceptable to the Council, the operator shall not cause or permit that individual to drive or to travel in vehicles whilst these are being operated on contract to the Council.

The Council is not under any obligation to disclose the results of any DBS & Barred

List Check.

Guidance on ensuring DBS Checks are undertaken is provided in Schedule F to these Conditions of Contract (“Undertaking Work for Northumberland County Council”). This guidance must be followed in full at all times.

SB5 Vehicle Requirements

In the case of transport provided for children with special educational needs or vulnerable adults attending day centres or horticultural service units, the operator must ensure a consistent deployment of the same fully compliant vehicle on each individual route. Any failure to fulfil this requirement must be immediately reported to the Council’s Passenger Transport Team. The vehicle must contain the following features:

School Bus Signs:

Clearly display the transport route number as detailed in the Service Specification. Be provided with reflective school bus signs (Geneva sign) for display at the front and rear of the vehicle whilst operating school journeys as specified in the Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 1994 - Statutory Instruments 1994 No 2280 (Public Service Vehicles only when operating school journeys).

Restraints and Seat Belts:

Be fitted with seat belts, as per the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 No 1078 & the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1996, No 163. In addition the type of seatbelt used must comply with EU or BS standards; the type and fitting of the seatbelt anchorage points complies with Construction and Use Regulations; and that any seatbelts fitted as a consequence of the 1996 regulations comply with MOT standard effective from August 1998.

For the avoidance of doubt seatbelts must also be fitted to those contracted school bus services which are also registered with the traffic commissioner to carry fare paying passengers.

Any special child seats or booster seats/cushions specified or supplied by the Council shall be fitted to any vehicle used in the performance of the Contract, and any such installations shall be up to a standard designated and approved by the Council. The operator will be responsible for safekeeping and for correct fitting to existing seats. All special seats and cushions must be cleaned and tested at the beginning of every week.

Contract vehicles shall not when transporting children with special needs, or vulnerable adults, be equipped with grab handles on any passenger seat.

CCTV:

The installation of CCTV on all vehicles of 22 seats or more will be mandatory on all contracts let from Easter 2020. Its primary purpose will be to monitor passenger behaviour. The operator will be responsible for ensuring CCTV is equipped to all such vehicles deployed on Contracts with Northumberland

County Council. The operator will be responsible for the costs of installing and maintaining the CCTV equipment and such costs should be taken account of when submitting tenders as part of the call-of contract. The Council will be provided with access to CCTV records on request. This will usually be where the Council has been informed of an alleged incident which requires investigation. The operator is responsible for ensuring that all legislation covering the use of CCTV is fully complied with, including:

- **The Data Protection Legislation as defined in the call off terms and conditions**
- **FOIA 2000**
- **POFA - surveillance camera code of practice**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**

SB6 DRIVERS & PASSENGER ASSISTANTS:

The operator shall ensure that each driver complies fully with the Council's 'Guidelines' for Drivers working on "Home to School Transport", which can be found at Schedule D and each passenger assistant complies fully with the Council's "Guidelines' for Passenger Transport Assistants on Home to School Transport", which are located at Schedule E, including any revisions or amendments. That it has been read and understood by each driver/escort, and that each driver/escort has a copy with them whilst undertaking any contracted school journey.

The operator shall ensure any other best practice guidelines that may be agreed following consultation are made available to and put into practice by drivers, passenger assistants, and other relevant staff.

Briefing of Drivers/Passenger Assistants

The Council will, during the life of contracts involving the conveyance of children or vulnerable adults, arrange for drivers and passenger assistants to be briefed on;

- **the role of the driver/passenger assistant including safeguarding awareness**
- details of the children/vulnerable adults they are transporting, including locations and timing of pick-ups drop-offs, days of travel etc.
- the needs of the children and the vulnerable adults they are transporting, including strategies that are required to manage passenger behaviour and ensure their well-being whilst accessing the service (delivered by Council Officers, and, where appropriate by teaching/day centre staff)

Training of Drivers/Passenger Assistants

The following training will be arranged & paid for by the Council

The Council will arrange the following training for drivers/passenger assistants;

- a rolling programme of emergency CPR and anaphylaxis awareness training for drivers and passenger assistants deployed on contracts involving the transport of children and vulnerable adults with less complex health needs

- More child-specific training (which can involve the administration of rescue medication) where children with a diagnosis of epilepsy and/or diabetes are on transport.
- Other more bespoke training is provided as and when required, e.g. Managing Challenging Behaviour.

Training of Drivers/Passenger Assistants

The following training must be arranged & paid for by the operator

It is the responsibility of the operator to arrange and pay for their drivers and passenger assistants to be provided with the following training;

- **attendance on a one day emergency first aid course (required where drivers & passenger assistants are deployed on contracts involving the transport of children and vulnerable adults with the most complex health needs (as identified and communicated to the operator by the Council following a risk assessment process)**
- **training on how to correctly load/unload and secure a wheelchair and apply a passenger restraint including moving and handling training (required where drivers & passenger assistants are to be deployed on contracts involving the transport of wheelchair passengers.**
- **disability/autism/dementia awareness training required where drivers & passenger assistants are required to transport children or vulnerable adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.**

In all the above, where training of drivers/passenger assistants is arranged and paid for by the operator, the Council will assist in providing information to the operator with regard to appropriate training providers. Once the training has been undertaken the operator must provide proof of attendance and satisfactory completion of the course by his/her staff to the Council. This may be in the form of a certificate of satisfactory completion as provided by the training provider.

In all cases of training provided above, refresher training will be required every three years.

In the case of transport provided for children with special educational needs or vulnerable adults the operator will ensure that a “Meet & Greet” is undertaken whereby the dedicated driver and passenger assistant, along with the designated vehicle are introduced to every passenger and their family prior to the contract commencing. A “Meet & Greet” must also be undertaken for any additional passenger that is subsequently added to the route.

There must also be a consistent deployment of the same dedicated driver and the same dedicated passenger assistant for each individual route. Any failure to meet this requirement must be reported to the Council’s Passenger Transport Team immediately.

SB7 CARRIAGE OF WHEELCHAIRS:

General Health & Safety of Passengers:

The Council is concerned to ensure the Health & Safety of passengers who are transported in wheelchairs. The driver and passenger assistant should use reasonable discretion to ensure the condition of the wheelchair does not place the passenger at risk. The wheelchair should be in good condition, the brakes in good working order, the tyres correctly inflated, and not worn and the footrests in place. If these standards are not maintained the driver and/or passenger assistant may refuse to transport the passenger due to health and safety guidelines. Any concerns must be reported to the Council as soon as possible.

The Council will periodically monitor the appropriate application of Wheelchair Tie-downs & Occupant Restraint System (WTORS), where poor practices are identified this may result in a requirement for additional training or ultimately the removal of the specific driver or drivers as approved transport staff. Where constant risks are identified, this may result in the contract being terminated for material breach of contract in accordance with clause 7.1.2.

The operator and its employees shall comply with all legislative requirements regarding the safe operation of all the equipment provided for the comfort and safety of the passenger's requirements. The appropriate user guides for equipment in use should be displayed within the vehicle. Clamps are not permitted.

The operator must inform the Council if moulded wheelchair seats do not allow a lap belt to be positioned on the pelvis or any other risk which they may identify.

Lift & Ramp Facilities:

The contract vehicle shall, if constructed or adapted to convey passengers in wheelchairs or buggies, ensure that the vehicle is equipped with either a passenger-lift or ramp facilities that comply with British Safety Standards such as British Standard 6109 Part 2. Such passenger-lifts must be installed in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions. An alternative means of operating the lift (e.g. ramps or manual operation) must be available in the event of the power failing.

operators or contract personnel will be responsible for ensuring that the combined weight of those utilising the passenger lift or ramp does not exceed the maximum load capacity. Side steps should be of a height appropriate to the users and not pose a risk.

All wheelchair lifting equipment must conform to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 "LOLER". The Council will, on request, be given copies of the 'six monthly certification' signed by a competent person as defined within the Act. Where maintenance is carried out in-house by appropriately qualified staff valid certification is to be provided to the Council.

Tracking:

The contract vehicle shall, if constructed or adapted to convey passengers in wheelchairs or buggies, be equipped with suitable tracking to secure the wheelchair or buggy. Such vehicle floor tracking will be laid longitudinally and be fully compliant

with all current legislation. The operator or contract personnel will be responsible for ensuring that this tracking is kept clean and secured at all times. A selection of tracking should be available to secure differing lengths and widths of wheelchairs. Any tracking shall be of a proprietary make and installed in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The operator or contract personnel will be responsible for ensuring that all forward facing wheelchairs must be secured firmly to the vehicle floor. Suitable fixing points within the tracking on the floor and on the wheelchair must be clearly established utilising the manufacturer designated wheelchair securing points.

Restraints & Tie-Downs:

Contract vehicles shall if constructed or adapted to convey passengers in wheelchairs or buggies provide sufficient wheelchair and passenger restraints to transport all wheelchair passengers identified in the Route Schedule and comply with their wheelchair passports where these are issued.

The operator will be made aware of the type of wheelchair or buggy to be transported and is responsible for providing the correct type of wheelchair and passenger restraint which is either identified in the manufacturer's specification or specified in the wheelchair passport provided by the Council.

Wheelchairs and occupants must be restrained with a Wheelchair Tie-downs and Occupant Restraint System (WTORS) suitable for the individual wheelchair and passenger. It must comply with ISO10542 (Part 1), to the appropriate load capacity and used according to manufacturer instructions.

Where the Council has affixed a "Wheelchair Passport" to all authorised wheeled mobility devices, which will clearly define the Wheelchair Tie Down and Occupant Restraint System (WTORS) to be used; the directions shown on the "Passport" must be strictly adhered to.

Positioning of Wheelchairs:

Wheelchairs should be positioned within the vehicle to allow clear access to emergency exits for all the vehicle occupants. Wheelchairs with low backs such as "sports style" chairs should, wherever possible, be attached to headrests to reduce the risk of whiplash injury upon impact. Where the attachment of a wheelchair headrest is not suitable such low back wheelchairs should always be positioned against a bulkhead, vehicle headrest or suitable back support to enhance back and head protection during impact.

Unoccupied wheelchairs and unused equipment must be safely stored or secured whilst the vehicle is moving to prevent them from becoming projectiles in the event of an accident. They must not be placed in areas that obstruct gangways or exits.

Space Requirements:

Minimum space requirements between wheelchairs must be adhered to. In the case of Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCVs) the following space recommendations should

be complied with; 1300 mm measured along the length of the vehicle; 750 mm measured along the width of the vehicle; 1500 mm measured vertically from any part of the floor in the wheelchair space. It is recognised that a taxi/private hire vehicle may not have as much clear floor space but the following general guidance must be adhered to: There must be sufficient floor space within the vehicle to allow the wheelchair(s) and the occupant(s) to be adequately restrained. In addition there must also be clear space in front of the wheelchair(s) to allow for limb extension of the occupant(s) in the event of an accident. There must be sufficient clear space around the wheelchair(s) to allow able bodied passengers to leave the vehicle from at least two exits. For this purpose it is recommended that a gangway of at least 230mm be maintained to allow passengers to pass the wheelchair(s). There should be sufficient space in the vehicle to prevent occupant contact with the interior unless appropriate protection is provided.

Maintenance:

WTORS must be checked before use for signs of damage and wear. Damaged equipment must not be used; worn equipment must be replaced in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. The operator will provide evidence that the "non-automotive" parts of their vehicles e.g. tracking, restraint equipment etc. are being adequately maintained. The operator shall carry out daily inspections of all equipment, including seat belts and passenger lifts and ramps, wheelchair tie-down and restraints, tracking and other securing points to ensure that it is fit for purpose. All removable equipment should be marked with a current and next inspection date.

Schedule C

Contract Compliance Regime

The purpose of a contract compliance scheme and monitoring regime is to:

- Encourage operators to deliver a reliable and quality service to passengers and ensure service standards are consistently met.
- Define breaches of contractual conditions in terms of level of severity and to ensure proportionate action is taken in response
- Provide clarity as to when level of breaches determine contract termination
- Set out the context in which extenuating circumstances can be taken into account when a breach has taken place
- Encourage all our transport providers to inform Northumberland County Council (NCC) (in advance if possible & no later than same working day) of any breaches that may occur from time to time
- Give NCC the opportunity to challenge the operator over any failure to deliver to acceptable service standards and to ensure remedial action is taken

Operator performance is measured in a number of different ways:

- Monitoring of Services & Spot Checks
- Assurance Audits
- Submission of Compliance Information
- Customer Feedback

Monitoring of Services & Spot Checks:

Services will be monitored by NCC on a regular basis. Occasionally such monitoring activity will be undertaken in partnership with DVSA Officers and/or Taxi Licensing Officers.

Monitoring of passenger transport services is typically undertaken at school or college sites (for providers of home to school transport and local bus services serving such sites) and day centres, care homes or horticultural service units (for providers of adult care transport). Depending on the type of vehicle, this will include the following checks:

- Route Number displayed
- Geneva Sign displayed
- Operators Disk is displayed and the name matches the legal lettering (PSV Only)
- Registration Number
- Vehicle seating capacities
- Seatbelts fitted & working
- Legal Lettering displayed

- PSVAR Medium Term Exemption displayed (where appropriate).
- Operator Licence displayed (PCV/s19/s22 only)
- Local Authority Licence Plate (taxis only)
- Driver's License badge (taxis only)
- DBS Badge (PSV drivers and passenger assistants only)
- Name of Operator Displayed (in the case of PSV licensed vehicles. Not mandatory in the case of taxi operators). However, there should be no misleading branding on any vehicles deployed on NCC contracts.

If a vehicle involves the transportation of wheelchair users then checks will be made that the passenger is being secured correctly.

Other checks undertaken where applicable will include fire exit arrangements vehicles and the presence of a first aid box.

When monitoring activity is undertaken with DVSA Officers a suitable location will be found to allow more rigorous checks to take place – typically this will be a public car park.

Assurance Audits

Assurance audits are undertaken periodically and will typically involve a visit to an operator's depot to enable a thorough appraisal of an operator's systems and procedures to be undertaken. The audits will consist of walk around checks and interviews with key staff responsible for the company's operation such as the transport manager and company owner.

Checks undertaken will include vehicle maintenance systems including defect reporting procedures. Checks will be undertaken on vehicle standards to ensure they are in accordance with DVSA standards of roadworthiness as well as NCC's general specification. Evidence of forward planning will also be sought so we know, for example, that bookings for vehicle MOTs, DBS renewals etc are being proactively managed.

To reassure ourselves that safety, service and quality standards are being met we will also want to see evidence of accident records as well as customer complaint logs. We will also want to check that staff briefing sessions are undertaken regularly and that they receive appropriate training in the use of equipment etc.

Submission of Compliance Information

Compliance information is required to be submitted in excel format on a termly basis and will include but not limited to information relating to an operator's licence, fleet insurance as well as driver licences, the DBS status of all contract personnel, vehicle MOTs etc

Compliance sheets with up to date information on should be submitted prior to the start of each school term:

Autumn term: compliance sheets should be returned by 1 September

Spring term: compliance sheets should be returned by 1 January

Summer term: compliance sheets should be returned by the end of the Easter Holidays

The information provided on the compliance sheets are checked and cross referenced with other records we hold such as applications for DBS checks so every effort should be taken by the operator to ensure the information is maintained and kept up to date.

Customer Feedback:

From time to time NCC receives correspondence relating to the operation of its contracted passenger transport services. Such matters are investigated (which will involve requesting a report from the operator) before determining whether any further steps need to be taken including enforcement action.

Day Centre Managers and Head Teachers at all schools are encouraged to report any concerns they have with regard to the operation of NCC contracted transport services. All instances of where operator performance hasn't met NCC contractual conditions and/or legal requirements are logged by the Passenger Transport Team. NCC wants to encourage operators to report instances where there has been a failure to operate compliantly. Where an operator does give notice of such breaches NCC will take this into account when deciding what action, if any, to take in response.

Service Credits

NCC regards the quality of service as very important and the operator must take all reasonable steps to ensure that, as well as operating all the specified journeys, the service is provided to the required standards.

If, from any source, the Council has evidence that the operator has failed to meet the required standards, enforcement action may be taken by the imposition of what are known as "service credits". Service credits are a mechanism by which amounts are deducted from the contract payments normally due to an operator from NCC for delivery of the service. Service credits will be levied in situations where the operator's performance fails to meet the standards as outlined in NCC's call-off contract (i.e. the invite to tender) and the general specification. In other words, the daily contract rate normally paid to the operator will be adjusted downwards to take account of the shortfall in service delivery on the day(s) in question.

An email will be issued to the operator each time a breach of NCC's call-off contract or general specification is identified.

NCC recognises that contractual non-compliance can sometimes be caused by circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the operator. If an operator feels there are mitigating circumstances then they should explain what they are by responding within 24 hours to the email notifying them of the breach. NCC will take account of the operator's response before deciding what action, if any to take.

The table below show the Service Credits that may be imposed for various breaches of contract according to the type of contract being delivered.

Punctuality & Reliability of the Service

Breach	Percentage of Contract Daily Price Claimed as Service Credit
Failure to observe the route schedule	50%
Failure to observe the timetable	50%

Vehicles Standards

Breach	Percentage of Contract Daily Price Claimed as Service Credit
Failure to provide vehicles complying with acceptable standards of appearance and cleanliness internally and externally as specified	25%
Failure to provide vehicles in accordance with the specification relating to vehicle emission standards, CCTV or seating capacities	50%
Failure to display correct livery, signage, notices of anything similar	25%
Failure to provide equipment as prescribed in the specification	50%
Failure to provide adequately maintained equipment on board the vehicle in line with the specification	25%

Driver and/or Passenger Assistant Conduct & Behaviour

Breach	Percentage of Contract Daily Price Claimed as Service Credit
Deployment of personnel who are not in receipt of a current (in-date) enhanced DBS check	75%
Failure by personnel to display a valid photo ID badge	25%
Passenger Assistant not sitting in an appropriate position within the vehicle and are thereby unable to exercise effective supervision of children in their care	25%
Passenger Assistant not wearing high visibility jacket	25%
Driver failure to carry out boarding pass checks	50%
Failure to secure any wheelchair user in the required manner	75%
Any action or lack of action by personnel which constitutes a clear failure to follow instructions provided by NCC resulting in a breach of their	50%

duty of care towards passengers that are in their care	
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Operator Communication

Breach	Percentage of Contract Daily Price Claimed as Service Credit
Failure to notify NCC and (where relevant) the establishment served (e.g. school, day centre etc) of service disruption to journeys within prescribed timescales	25%
Failure to report any significant incident or accident to NCC within prescribed time limits as stated in the general specification	25%
Failure to inform NCC of a subcontracting arrangement where the operator is required to inform it or seek its consent under the call-off terms and conditions	25%

Approach to Contract Management & Enforcement Action

Persistent failure by operators to meet contractual obligations on any given route is likely to eventually result in the termination of the contract, even where service credits have been previously levied. The decision as to whether and when to terminate a contract will vary depending on the type of breach, the frequency of breaches and the circumstances surrounding it so it is not our intention to be overly prescriptive as to what the Council's response will be in every circumstance.

In contrast, instances where contracts are found to be operated in serious contravention of the law (e.g. the use of vehicles and/or personnel who are not appropriately licensed) will be terminated with immediate effect.

In other cases, breaches of contractual conditions and/or the general specification may not be specific to a particular call-off contract (route) but are more general in nature. Examples may include but not be confined to the following failures which are more administrative in nature:

- Failure of personnel to attend training courses as booked by NCC or as prescribed in the call-off contract or general specification.
- Failure to reply to complaints/requests for information from NCC within requested timescales or stated timescales in the general specification
- Persistent failure to invoice correctly
- Consistently failing to submit compliance information on time
- Failure to undertake follow-up action as identified following monitoring exercises/assurance audits

There are many other examples. In these circumstances, we will seek to meet with you to agree an improvement plan that will help address the issues highlighted.

As explained above, service credits are a mechanism by which amounts are deducted from payments due to be paid under the contract to an operator if actual performance by that operator fails to meet specified performance standards set out in the T&Cs as well as the general and call-off contract specifications.

The objective of service credits is threefold:

1. It is a mechanism for ensuring the actual payment made to an operator is reflective of the level of service provided by that operator on a particular contract (route) for a day(s) in question.
2. Encourage operators to be open and transparent and inform NCC in advance of issues they are encountering with complying with operational standards
3. It is also designed to act as an incentive for the operator to promptly address the service failures that have led to the service credit being levied in the first place.

In other words, service credits are not a mechanism to generate income for NCC. Ideally, we don't want to be in a position where any service credits are levied as that will indicate a high level of contract compliance amongst our contracted operators.

As outlined in bullet point 2 above, we also want to encourage the proactive reporting of issues operators encounter in complying with NCC's service standards. By doing so, it is much more likely that enforcement action by NCC (including the levying of service credits) will be waived or at the very least the severity of such action taken reduced. In such an event we will of course require assurances and evidence from the operator that effective and urgent steps are being taken to address the shortfall in service delivery.

Schedule D

Code of Conduct & Guidance for Drivers

Contents

1. Breakdowns or Accidents
2. Safeguarding/ nobody at home
3. Severe Weather
4. Behaviour of passengers/ passenger illness
5. Wheelchairs and specialist transport
6. Checklist before you begin a journey
7. Advice during the journey

Northumberland County Council recognises the valuable part you play in transporting 10,000 passengers safely to and from school and centres daily.

How you behave will make a real difference to these people's day, Please take the time to read this to ensure that all our passengers get great service every day. This Code of Conduct provides a guide to the best professional practice to help you achieve that aim. How you do this will make a real difference to the passengers' day.

Emergency numbers

Key contacts are:

- County Council Passenger Transport Unit: 01670 624839 (office hours) or 0345 6006400 (outside of office hours)
- Police - General Issues: 101 Emergencies: 999
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 01670 536400 (this covers all safeguarding issues for children and adults)
- Please take note of your I.C.E (In case of emergency) contact number for the school/day centre you serve and record it on your phone.

The Basics

It is a legal requirement that you comply with these rules, failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

Do	Don't
Have a valid driving license	Smoke/ use e-cigarettes
Have a valid DBS check at least once every 3 years	Request or accept any Social Networking contact from passengers
Wear your Approved Driver Badge (DBS) and/or Taxi Licensing Badge where it can be seen	Take photographs of passengers
Be smart and tidy in appearance, and behave courteously and professionally to all passengers	Give/accept gifts, telephone numbers or email addresses from passengers
Drive in a consistent manner at all times, avoid sharp braking, fast cornering, harsh acceleration and speeding	Use any insensitive or offensive language, including swearing
Report any inappropriate behaviour to the Passenger Transport Team as soon as possible.	

Breakdowns or Accidents

Keep Calm

1. Keep all passengers inside the vehicle if it is safe to do so
2. Ensure that there are no injuries to any passengers: If a passenger is injured call the Emergency Services immediately
3. If you are injured, appoint someone else to contact the emergency services, and the Council's Passenger Transport Team.
4. Call the Council's Passenger Transport Team immediately and take advice whether to continue the journey
5. Do not allow a passenger to make their own way home or to school
6. Passengers may be upset and want to contact their Parent/Carer. Make a mobile phone available to passengers if possible, but remember your phone will need to be free for incoming calls from schools/day centres/emergency services, etc.
7. Make available the up-to-date loading list, this may need to be given to emergency services.
8. At the earliest opportunity, complete a written statement of the event as it unfolded while everything is fresh in your mind: dates, times, locations, persons involved.

9. When you get back to base complete all necessary paperwork.

Safeguarding

Everyone has a personal responsibility for ensuring the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Your employer will have a policy telling you how to act, and what the signs of harm and neglect are. It is important that you have read and understand what is expected of you, and to report anything you are suspicious of: no matter how small.

If you are worried about a passenger, you should tell your manager or a responsible adult at the establishment or the Passenger Transport Unit. If you are immediately concerned, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 01670 536400.

Nobody at Home Procedures

- If parents or carers are not at home, immediately contact the school transport team for further advice.
- Every effort will be made to contact the family, but if this fails then the child must be reassured and kept on board the vehicle.
- Continue with the school transport service of other children on board the vehicle.
- Once all other children are dropped off you should make another attempt to return the child home. If there is still not a responsible adult at home you must seek further advice from the school transport team or the child's school.
- As a last resort the social services duty officer may need to be contacted and the child may need to be taken to the nearest social services office that is open or police station.

Severe Weather

In the case of severe weather the Head Teacher must make the decision whether to close a school early due to adverse weather conditions.

What should you do?

- Contact the relevant school and the Passenger Transport Unit immediately if it is felt that the weather is deteriorating and the transport must operate earlier or will be unable to operate.
- Liaise with Feeder Transport Providers and all schools that share transport (ideally all schools will close at the same time) to reduce the impact on school transport. Contact the Passenger Transport Unit for further advice if necessary.
- Ensure you have an 'I.C.E.' (In Case of Emergency) contact number for schools, or an identified member of staff, in case students cannot be transported home due to adverse weather conditions.

- Passengers must not get off the provided transport at an alternative stop unless permission is given by their parent/guardian or their school.
- Liaise with the school to identify an alternative procedure for dropping students off if the transport is unable to carry out identified route. I.e. should students be returned to school, or other place of safety such as a Police Station or Social Services establishment.

Behaviour of passengers/ passenger illness

Challenging behaviour can be difficult to deal with, but it is important that you remain calm and professional at all times.

- However strongly provoked, do not allow yourself to be drawn into an argument with a passenger
- Report all misbehaviour (this can be verbal, physical, or vandalism) to the establishment the passenger attends (school, day centre etc), as well as your own operating centre and the Council's Passenger Transport Team
- You should not touch any passenger, even if they are out of control, unless there is a serious risk of harm to themselves or others
- If a passenger is causing disruption or posing a risk to other road users, pull the vehicle off the road until the situation is alleviated
- In extreme cases you may have to call the establishment they attend such as a school/day centre as well as the Council's Passenger Transport Team or Police. It may be necessary to drive directly to a Police Station.
- You must not eject a passenger from the vehicle: if they become unmanageable, park the vehicle and ring for assistance.
- Record the date, time, brief description, any witnesses, and name of a passenger misbehaving whenever possible. In the case of vandalism, take photos of the damaged area.
- On occasion you may be confronted by a confrontational parent/adult, do not get drawn into an argument. Refer them to the Council's Passenger Transport Team or your operating centre.

Northumberland County Council will not tolerate the misbehaviour of passengers. A procedure is in place to deal with problematic passengers depending upon the severity of the behaviour. This varies from a warning letter to their parents/carers to permanent exclusion from all NCC contracted transport.

If a passenger becomes ill:


- Gauge the severity of the illness and contact the parent/carer, or the school/day centre for advice and act accordingly.
- In more severe cases, contact the Emergency Services immediately

- On arrival, you must escort the passenger into the premises and report the matter to a responsible person

Wheelchairs and specialist transport

- You must ensure you know how to operate any specialist equipment required of you, including ramps and passenger lifts
- For any vehicle which is wheelchair accessible, you must ensure there are sufficient wheelchair restraints, and fully functional lap and diagonal or full harness wheelchair passenger restraints
- Wheelchairs must have their parking brakes applied, any power unit switched off, and be restrained before travel.
- Passengers must never be carried in wheelchairs facing sideways. Instructions on the correct use of wheelchair restraints etc should be available adjacent to the wheelchair spaces.
- Storage space should be available for items such as folded wheelchairs or walking frames, together with suitable restraint equipment. Please do not leave spare equipment loose or lying on the vehicle floor.
- Any specific equipment needed by a passenger will be supplied by the council. Do not use any seating or restraint system supplied by parents/guardians unless authorised by the Passenger Transport Unit.
- All equipment must be maintained in good condition, securely anchored, and be fitted and used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Checklist before you begin a journey

- Undertake a daily safety check around your vehicle to make sure it is fit for service and in a good clean condition. You must have working seat belts, a fire extinguisher, a First Aid kit and a functional emergency door.
- Sign the vehicle defect book or check sheet after each walk round check, identifying the date & time to confirm the check has been carried out satisfactorily
- Check that the Geneva Signs  and Route Number are displayed. Your Route Number must be clearly visible from outside the vehicle. Your company's fleet name should be prominently displayed.
- Ensure that you are familiar with the route and timetable. Problems maintaining a timetable should be reported immediately to your operating base and the Council's Passenger Transport Team.
- Always have a copy of the current loading list for the pupils or vulnerable adults travelling on the route.
- Make sure you have a working mobile phone, fully charged, with your key contact numbers in case of emergencies. Do not use a mobile phone when driving, whether hands free or not - either stop if it is urgent or wait until the end of the run to return a call.
- Do not leave the vehicle unattended with passengers boarding or already on board

- Always follow the route and timetable provided: No requests from parents/carers/passengers for changes to the route must be enacted without prior approval from the Passenger Transport Team

Advice during the journey

Check passes daily. Use your discretion if a pupil claims they have lost their bus pass. If they are on the loading list follow these guidelines:

- advise the student they must get a replacement within 2 weeks
- take their name and inform your operating centre the same day who will contact the Council's Passenger Transport Team. You will then be advised if the student is not allowed to travel
- allow up to 2 weeks for a replacement bus pass to come through

If a pupil is not on the loading list, follow these guidelines:

- take their name and inform your operating centre the same day who will contact the Council's Passenger Transport Team. You will then be advised if the student is not allowed to travel.

General information

- Do not stop on route or allow passengers to leave the vehicle until they reach the destination identified on the route plan, except in case of emergency.
- If you are providing feeder transport for school children do not leave pupils unaccompanied or at the roadside. If the connecting feeder transport does not arrive within 5 minutes of allocated time contact the Council's Passenger's Transport Team.
- Give instruction to passengers to fasten their seatbelts & walk up the vehicle (where appropriate), en route advise new pick-ups of this instruction
- Do not move until the doors are closed and all passengers are seated and are wearing seat belts.
- Never allow a vehicle to be overloaded with passengers.
- Do not park or stop your vehicle and leave the engine running if waiting for longer than 5 minutes at schools or in built up areas.

Schedule E

Code of Conduct & Guidance for Passenger Transport Assistants (PTAs)

Contents

1. Requirements of a PTA
2. Safeguarding
3. Emergencies
4. Newly Appointed PTA Duties
5. PTA Responsibilities
6. PTA Do's and Don'ts
7. Collection/Drop Off Procedures
8. Expected Behaviour of Parents and Passengers
9. Other Relevant Procedures
10. Contact Information

ROLE OF PTA

Northumberland County Council recognises the key role that you play as a Passenger Transport Assistants (PTA's) in ensuring the safety and welfare of all passengers whilst travelling on vehicles contracted by Northumberland County Council. These guidelines will help you establish good relationships with:

- Passengers, including children and vulnerable adults
- Their parents/carers
- The driver of the vehicle
- The establishments they serve which could include schools, day centres etc

You must:

- be DBS checked at least once every 3 years, or be a member of the DBS Update Service. If you are not a member of the DBS Update Service checks must be carried out by Northumberland County Council.
- wear your PTA Badge at all times while employed on the contract
- wear the High Visibility Jacket/Waistcoat provided at all times.
- undergo relevant training when necessary
- Identify yourself and provide your PTA Badge when challenged by parent/carer, school/day centre or NCC staff

SAFEGUARDING:

The protection and welfare of passengers is everyone's responsibility and we all have a part to play to make sure that passengers are safe. If you are worried or concerned about any passenger in your care then you must report your concerns direct to the Council's Passenger Transport Team in the first instance. The Council's Passenger Transport Team will then take full details and have the issues fully investigated,

involving other agencies where this is necessary. All information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. (insert contact details prominently)

PTAs/Drivers must not exchange contact details with passengers, or accept friend requests on any social media sites.

The PTA/Driver must not take photographs of any pupil.

PTA's/Driver must not buy/receive gifts from/for the passengers on transport..

In order to safeguard the passengers' wellbeing and to protect PTAs it is important for all passengers to be handed over to a recognised responsible person at the end of the school day.

A pupil must not be left with any adult claiming to be a relative/friend etc. collecting the pupil on behalf of the parent/guardian without specific authorisation from the parent/guardian and/or the Council's Passenger Transport Team.

If a parent/carers is not at home to receive their passenger, you should contact the Council's Passenger Transport Team immediately for further advice. Every effort will be made to contact the family, but if this fails then the child must be reassured and kept on board the vehicle. Continue with the school transport service of other children on board the vehicle. Once all other children are dropped off you should make another attempt to return the child home. If there is still not a responsible adult at home you must seek further advice from the Passenger Transport Team or the child's school. Contact the (MASH) (01670 536400) for further advice and your "In Case of Emergency" I.C.E. at school/day centre. The child may need to be taken to the nearest social services office or police station.

EMERGENCIES:

If a vehicle breaks down en route, passengers should not be removed until a relief vehicle arrives. The driver should telephone the school/day centre and the Council's Passenger Transport Team so that parents/guardians can be advised about the situation.

If a passenger becomes aggressive whilst in the vehicle, placing others at risk, the PTA and driver will need to make an informed decision about the safest way of continuing with the journey. If the PTA/driver feels it is unsafe to continue they may return the passenger to their home address or to the school/day centre (whichever is appropriate) and the parent/carers will be notified accordingly.

If PTAs are transporting a passenger who suffers from seizures they need to be aware of the procedures to follow. It is important not to restrain the passenger. The most important thing is to prevent the passenger from hurting themselves and to provide reassurance. There is no need to open their mouth or to try to put something between their teeth. If the seizure lasts for more than a few minutes, or if one seizure leads straight into another, then urgent medical attention must be sought: ring 999, or

arrange for the driver of the vehicle to divert to the nearest hospital if it is no more than 10 minutes away.

If PTAs are in any doubt whatsoever about a passenger's medical condition then they must immediately call for the emergency services.

PTAs should have access to a mobile phone, radio or other two-way communication. Contact the emergency services, and the Passenger Transport Team. The Transport team will then notify the school/day centre and parents/guardian. It is important for the PTA to reassure the passengers as much as possible. Never leave the passengers unattended.

Newly Appointed PTA Duties

A newly appointed PTA should (along with the driver) make an appointment to meet the parents/carers of the passengers that require transport, prior to the commencement of the operation of the route. This is an opportunity for you to:

- Reassure parents/carers that you take the welfare of all passengers very seriously
- Understand the best means of communicating with the passengers
- Exchange telephone numbers so that any unforeseen events such as traffic delays can be reported immediately
- Establish an early rapport with the passengers you will be looking after
- Get briefed on the particular needs of the passengers and how to respond to such needs whilst in the vehicle

PTA Responsibilities

A PTA:

- Is responsible for the care and supervision of the passengers whilst they are travelling to and from school or day centre
- Must meet and board the vehicle before the first passenger is collected
- Must ensure that passengers are securely seated and seat belts are fastened before the vehicle proceeds
- Must see that the vehicle stops at each appointed stopping place and that the passengers board the vehicle safely
- Must see that the passengers leave the vehicle safely and are handed over to the staff of the school or day centre
- Must see that the passengers alight at their appointed stops.
- Must not allow a passenger to leave the vehicle except at the appointed stop unless a change has been confirmed by the Council's Passenger Transport Team

PTA Dos and Don'ts

Do:

- Sit among the passengers in order to exercise care and control, and to promote good behaviour
- Stay on the vehicle until all passengers have been taken to the appropriate stop
- Keep all information about passengers and/or issues confidential
- treat all passengers fairly and maintain a civil and polite attitude at all times.
- Keep physical contact to a minimum
- Keep a daily log of any issues witnessed on the transport
- familiarise yourself with the Passenger Transport Team's Severe Weather policy
- Allow only those passengers and personnel identified to travel in the vehicle

Don't:

- Leave a passenger unattended. Never delegate this to someone else.
- Smoke cigarettes or e-cigarettes anywhere within sight of passengers, parents/guardians, or schools/day centres. Never leave passengers alone for the purpose of smoking
- Allow any variation in route without authorisation from the Passenger Transport Team
- Administer any drugs/medicines unless authorised and trained to do so
- make personal remarks, swear, argue with or threaten passengers
- Allow any passenger to be discharged from the vehicle at an unauthorised stop, or to leave the transport to ie. go into a shop

Collection/Drop Off Procedures

It is the parents'/carer's responsibility to ensure that their passenger is taken to and from their home and the contracted vehicle. PTAs will not be expected to collect the passenger from the house. The Passenger Transport Team will inform the PTA when the parents/guardians are genuinely not able to do this. PTAs will, however, be expected to help passengers who have mobility problems in and out of the vehicle and provide assistance to those struggling with books and equipment.

When arriving at the school or day centre passengers who can walk should be escorted from the vehicle first, followed by passengers in wheelchairs. Under no circumstances should passengers in wheelchairs be taken from the vehicle and left unattended.

If a passenger is not at the pick-up point at the appointed time in the morning, the vehicle should wait for 5 minutes only and then proceed. It will then be the responsibility of the parent/carers to take the passenger to school. Notify the transport team of any persistent lateness.

If a passenger refuses to board/absconds from a vehicle, neither the PTA nor driver should give chase or attempt to restrain the passenger in any way. Instead, PTAs should verbally advise the passenger to return to the vehicle. If the passenger refuses, the PTA should attempt to track where the passenger is (if possible). The PTA should immediately inform the school/day centre and the Council's Passenger Transport Team, who in turn will notify the parents/carers and the Police (if appropriate). If there

are other passengers in the vehicle the PTA must remain with them.

Whilst drivers will typically take the lead in securing wheelchairs within the vehicle and operating tail-lifts, PTAs should know the correct procedures to follow to be able to assist.

Expected Behaviour of Parents and passengers

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that any child who requires an inhaler makes arrangements for this to accompany them at all times whilst on the vehicle. The inhaler should be placed in a bag clearly displaying the child's name. The PTA should ensure the bag is kept out of reach of children whilst on the vehicle and delivered to the appropriate member of staff. If the inhaler is required whilst the child is in transit it will be expected that older children can administer this themselves. In exceptional cases, ie. very young children, the PTA may help, provided the parent of the child has given their prior written consent and the PTA is clearly provided with instructions on how to administer this. This excludes those PTAs who have been specifically trained to administer suction, rectal diazepam or have been given permission by parents to help with asthma inhalers and have received the appropriate training.

Any passenger whose behaviour on the vehicle becomes unreasonable should be reported to the Council's Passenger Transport Team, Head Teacher/Care Manager and parent/carer as soon as possible.

passengers must not be offered food or drink as this might be contrary to their dietary requirements. passengers should not consume food or drink whilst in transit. The only exception may be diabetic passengers who may need to consume food or drink to raise unexpected low blood sugar levels. However, this should not normally occur in passengers with well-controlled diabetes.

Other Relevant Procedures:

All accidents/incidents involving PTAs/Drivers and passengers must be reported to the Council's Passenger Transport Team immediately or as soon as possible. The issues you raise may be of a highly sensitive nature and you are governed by confidentiality & child protection clauses. You must not discuss your concerns with friends, parents or other work colleagues.

PTAs will be required from time to time to attend relevant training courses and briefing sessions as specified by the Council's Passenger Transport Team.

The general policy of the Local Authority is to provide travel assistance between home and school/day centre only. However, there may be exceptional cases where passengers are transported to/from respite centres. These can be quite complex cases and will be the exception rather than the rule. In normal circumstances, no child should be transported to respite without the prior approval of the Council's Passenger Transport Team.

And Finally.....

You will be doing a valuable job supporting passengers. Always take your role seriously, you are a vital part of these people's day.

Key contact details are:

Northumberland County Council's Passenger Transport Team 01670 624839 (Office Hours) & 0345 6006400 (outside of office hours).

Police General Issues: 191

Police Emergencies: 999

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 01670 536400

(This covers all safeguarding issues for children & adults).

Please take note of your I.C.E (In case of emergency) contact number for the school/day centre you serve and record it on your phone.

Schedule G

Definitions & Interpretations

A “Closed Contract” means a Contract for a Service that is not open to the general public and is limited to those persons duly authorised to travel on the Service by the Council by means of a Travel Pass or other form of authority.

“Code of Conduct & General Guidance for Drivers & Passenger Assistants” as set out in Schedules D & E deployed on Contracts involving the conveyance of School Children or Social Services Passengers” means the guidance on best practice and the manner in which drivers and passenger assistants must conduct themselves, specifically in dealing with vulnerable children on school transport and vulnerable adults attending day centres and care homes etc. This guidance will also give advice on emergency and breakdown procedures.

“Driver” means the person employed by the operator to drive a Vehicle in the performance of the Services under the Contract.

“Enhanced DBS & Barred List Check” means an Enhanced DBS & Barred List Check (child) or Enhanced DBS & Barred List Check (adult) or Enhanced DBS & Barred List Check (child & adult) (as appropriate). It is a check of criminal activity by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

“Establishment” means schools, colleges, other learning providers, day centres, children’s centres, care homes, horticultural units etc

“Journey” means any single journey undertaken by the operator to transport a passenger from the address to the school (or other site as dictated by the schedule) or vice versa, or between any two points listed in the timetable (see Schedule 2 Document).

“Local Bus Services” means “local services” as defined by Section 2 of the Transport Act 1985, where passengers are carried at separate fares.

“Minimum Subsidy Contract” has the meaning set out in condition SA8

“Minimum Cost Contract” has the meaning set out in condition SA9.

“the “Operator” is the contractor or transport provider, i.e. the person or business appointed to provide the service on behalf of the Council.

“Passenger(s)” means the person(s) or service user(s) (child, vulnerable adult, fare paying passenger, concessionary pass holder, patient) in receipt of the service

“Passenger Carrying Vehicle” means a motor vehicle adapted to carry 9 or more passengers and used to convey passengers for hire or reward being used by the operator in the performance of the Contract.

“Passenger Transport Assistant” means the person employed by the operator to supervise and care for children with special needs or vulnerable adults in the Vehicle in the performance of the Services under the Contract.

“Regulated Activity” means work that a barred person must not do, normally in relation to children or vulnerable adults

“Travel Pass” means a pass issued by the Council in respect of school related travel which authorises travel on the route indicated on that pass.

“Vehicle” means any vehicle(s) used by the operator for the purpose of discharging his obligation under the Contract