

# 3 Eligibility

## 3.1 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

An eligible person must have an impairment that prevents them from undertaking any one or more of the following five components of a journey unaccompanied, on a bus, train or ferry in a safe and dignified manner:

- Getting to the place from where the transport departs.
- Getting onto the transport.
- Riding securely.
- Getting off the transport.
- Getting to the destination.

These journey components are consistent with the approach outlined by the Human Rights Commission, which describes an accessible journey as follows: 'for a person to get from their home to a destination and then home again requires a number of linked steps. All these steps are of equal importance. If one link is broken or inadequate, the whole journey becomes impractical' (Human Rights Commission, 2005).

An impairment may be psychological, psychiatric, physical, neurological, intellectual, sensory or other. It is not the impairment itself that determines eligibility for Total Mobility – rather, it is the effect that the impairment has on the individual's ability to undertake the components of the journey.

Total Mobility schemes may operate in areas that have taxis or other Total Mobility transport operators, but not buses, trains or ferries. In the case of such areas without a public passenger transport system, eligibility must be determined with reference to hypothetical rather than actual journeys. If hypothetical journeys are used, an uncomplicated commonsense approach should be able to ascertain eligibility.

People who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and have an impairment that has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more that prevents them from being able to undertake any one of the specified components of a journey, are eligible for the Total Mobility scheme.

## 3.2 ELIGIBILITY AND FLUCTUATING NEED

**People with impairments who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and are able to use bus, train or ferry services some of the time, but not all of the time, should be eligible for the scheme.**

This is intended to cover situations where an impairment is fluctuating (eg epilepsy), or the impairment is constant and non-fluctuating but is affected by environmental changes (eg people with a visual impairment that makes independent travel at night difficult). This may also include people with impairments (such as Alzheimer's) that restrict travel on buses, trains or ferries to very familiar routes.

The fact that a person may be able to undertake all five journey components some (but not all) of the time does not therefore affect their eligibility. However, this will affect their level of need for Total Mobility trips, which will logically be less than if they were unable to use bus, train or ferry services at any time.

Where practical, a scheme user should be encouraged to use public transport.

### 3.3 ELIGIBILITY AND DURATION OF IMPAIRMENT

**People who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and have an impairment that has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more should be eligible for the scheme.**

A person whose impairment is permanent and who meets the criteria is eligible for Total Mobility. A person who has an impairment that has already lasted for six months or more may be considered eligible (provided they meet the criteria). Whether the impairment is expected to last another six months is immaterial to the person's eligibility and does not imply a six-month stand-down period before a person can become eligible for Total Mobility.

### 3.4 ELIGIBILITY OF CHILDREN

**Children with impairments who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme should be eligible for the scheme.**

The scheme should be available to children to support their independent participation in the community, in ways that are similar to other children in their peer group who do not have impairments. This could include trips to visit friends or to see a movie. If the child's impairment prevents them from being able to use a bus, train or ferry and it is reasonable to expect that children in their peer group can independently use such transport, then the child should be eligible for the scheme.

It is not intended that the scheme should be a substitute for transport services that are the responsibility of other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education. However, for education related travel funded by students, the Total Mobility Scheme would apply for a student that was a member of the scheme.

### 3.5 ELIGIBILITY OF PEOPLE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

**People with impairments who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and live in residential care should be eligible for the scheme.**

The scheme is available to people who live in rest homes to support their independent participation in the community. This may be to visit friends or family, to go shopping.

The scheme should not be a substitute for transport services that are the responsibility of the rest home provider, or be used by the rest home to provide transport for organised activities. For example, rest home providers are responsible for meeting the cost of transporting residents for stipulated health and medical services, including needs assessment and service coordination services, laboratory services, radiological services, dental services, specialist medical services and podiatry services.

While rest home providers must ensure that residents also have access to services such as advocacy services, voluntary organisations (eg Stroke Foundation) and socialisation outside the residential facility, they are not responsible for meeting the costs of transport for these.

In the case of facilities that are privately funded, that is; not under contract to the government to provide care, residents of those facilities are eligible to use Total Mobility for medical trips.

## 3.6 APPLYING THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

When undertaking an assessment of a prospective client (or, in some instances, with the aid of an authorised representative) the following criteria need to be applied:

- An impairment may be physical, psychological, neurological, intellectual, sensory or other.
- It is not the impairment itself that determines eligibility for Total Mobility – rather, it is the effect that the impairment has on the individual’s ability to undertake the components of the journey.
- It must be the impairment that prevents the individual from undertaking the journey, not any other reason, for example:
  - › having too much shopping to take on the bus
  - › preferring taxis rather than buses
  - › not having a public transport route nearby.
- ‘Safe’ generally means ‘free from harm or danger’. In the Total Mobility context, examples of ‘unsafe’ might include:
  - › a component of the journey causing an increase in the risk of a significant deterioration in the person’s condition (eg epileptic seizure or breathing difficulties)
  - › a component of the journey exposing the person’s impairment-related vulnerabilities to possible exploitation (eg vulnerabilities related to an intellectual or psychiatric impairment)
  - › a component of the journey (eg getting on to or off the transport) being risky for the person to attempt, because of their impairment.
- ‘Dignified’ generally means in a manner that does not bring disrespect or humiliation. In the Total Mobility context, examples of ‘undignified’ might include:
  - › a person depending on help from a stranger (who may or may not agree to help)
  - › a person’s impairment-related vulnerabilities being unduly exposed
  - › a person being expected to get on to or off the transport in a way that compromises their dignity (eg crawling).

A medical certificate is not required to establish eligibility for Total Mobility, and should not be required as part of the eligibility assessment. It is not the impairment itself that determines eligibility, but whether the impairment prevents the prospective client from undertaking the journey. However, if the impairment is not clearly evident to the assessment facilitator, then a medical certificate may be requested.

## 3.7 ASCERTAINING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME

**A key role for the Total Mobility assessment facilitator is to work with the prospective Total Mobility client to determine whether that person meets the eligibility criteria for the Total Mobility scheme.**

If a prospective Total Mobility user meets the eligibility criteria, they must be recognised and accepted as eligible. Eligibility then entitles the client to receive subsidised transport assistance via the Total Mobility scheme.

It should be noted that Total Mobility assistance will not be provided for travel that is already funded. Scenarios involving part or full funding from other sources may be as follows (all examples are for people who meet the eligibility criteria for Total Mobility):

- **Person A** receives funding for 100 percent of their transport costs. They cannot also receive Total Mobility assistance.
- **Person B** receives 100 percent funding for specified travel from another source, but no funding for other discretionary travel. They can receive Total Mobility assistance for that travel that is not funded from another source.
- **Person C** receives funding for half the fare. They can receive Total Mobility assistance to cover the other half.
- **Person D** receives no other travel funding. They can receive Total Mobility assistance for half the

fare up to the regionally defined cap.

### 3.8 REASSESSMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

**People who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and have an impairment that has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more should be eligible for the scheme.**

People who are currently on the Total Mobility scheme do not need to have their eligibility reassessed, although local authorities may choose to reassess to ensure the effectiveness of the service being provided.

If a client has a permanent impairment, they should only be assessed once, unless there is a significant change in their condition that may affect their eligibility for Total Mobility.

A scheme user's eligibility only needs to be reassessed in the case of temporary/finite-term impairments (see section 3.3). In the case of temporary impairments, a timeframe for reassessment should be indicated, appropriate to the individual's circumstances. In some instances, the expected duration of the impairment may be difficult to predict, eg recovery from stroke or head injury. The due date for reassessment should be negotiated between the client and the assessment facilitator, with regard to what might reasonably be expected.

Reassessing a scheme user's eligibility is at the discretion of the local authority (regional councils and AT) particularly if significant changes to either the user's condition or where the region's transport services have made journeys more accessible.

### 3.9 TRAVEL ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

Where practical, a scheme user should be encouraged to use public transport as Total Mobility is a component of a local authority's public transport network.

Total Mobility should be aligned to the wider public transport approach. The promotion of accessible public transport (ie kneeling buses) as an alternative to using Total Mobility should be explored by local authorities.

### 3.10 CUSTOMER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Local authorities must ensure the expectations of Total Mobility scheme users are clearly defined by ensuring a cohesive set of terms and conditions of use are developed and circulated to users of the Total Mobility scheme. Consideration should be given to the following when developing these terms and conditions:

- Intent of the scheme.
- Eligibility and use of card/vouchers.
- General terms.
- Standard conditions of use.
- Circumstances of potential breach of use.