

WEALDLINK COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

(NORTH WEALDEN COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP LTD)

MINIBUS GROUP TRAVEL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the procedures and terms and conditions for minibuses operated by North Wealden Community Transport Partnership Ltd (NWCTP) for group travel

Our minibus group travel service is only available to non-profit making community and voluntary groups as well as individual users who are unable to access public transport due to infirmity or disability

All minibuses are operated under the Small Bus Permit legislation. NWCTP is the registered holder of a Small Bus Permit for each minibus, and every use is carried out under the terms of the Permit.

This means that:

- A minibus can only be used by group members of NWCTP. A minibus cannot be used by an individual or a member of the general public.
- A minibus cannot be used for activities (or as part of activities) which are profit making. This means that a minibus cannot be used by a private residential home, a private nursing home or a private nursery; however it can be used by a Residents Association or similar non profit making group within such an establishment
- Whilst being used, a minibus can only be driven by someone who is on the NWCTP Register

It is important to realise that demand for group travel use of the minibuses in our fleet often exceeds the available supply and therefore, we cannot guarantee that a member will be able to make at the bookings they would like.

MINIBUSES

- All vehicles currently in the NWCTP fleet are fully accessible and have the means of transporting clients in their wheelchairs.
- The saloon seats in each minibus are fitted with inertia reel restraint systems. Passengers are expected to use the available restraint systems at all times, unless they hold a medical exemption certificate.

PASSENGER SAFETY

- It is the user's responsibility to assess each passenger's ability to use the steps or passenger lift when boarding or alighting from a NWCTP minibus. Similarly, it is the user's responsibility (where applicable) to assess each passenger's ability to transfer safely from a wheelchair to a seat in a NWCTP minibus, and from such a seat to a wheelchair.
- It is a requirement that all children (up to 16 years) sit on forward-facing seats and wear seatbelts
- Remember that young children are required to use appropriate seating, and that NWCTP does not provide baby carriers, child seats or booster cushions.
- If your group is a voluntary childcare organisation and NWCTP's driver (either paid or unpaid) is likely to have substantial unsupervised access to children whilst driving a NWCTP vehicle, you are recommended to consider requesting the Criminal Record Office to provide you with information about that person under the Criminal Conviction Information Scheme. It is not expected that NWCTP will be asked to transport unaccompanied children.

MAKING A BOOKING

- Bookings are subject to vehicle and driver availability. Bookings must be confirmed in writing. Requests for regular bookings should be made in writing. All bookings should state dates, times, vehicle required, seating capacity, etc.
- Bookings are accepted at the discretion of NWCTP
- It is important that careful consideration is given to the times for which you wish to use the vehicle, especially its return time.
- Keeping a vehicle longer than the pre-booked return time could render the user liable to financial (or other) penalties. In the event of an accident, breakdown or unavoidable circumstances this does not apply.

ESCORTS

NWCTP is unable to offer an escort service for group travel bookings. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the user to provide a reliable and competent escort. An escort is desirable if children or other vulnerable passengers are to be carried. NWCTP reserves the right to refuse a with driver booking if a suitable escort cannot be provided.

The escort's responsibilities include:

Dealing with the needs of passengers. Escorting passengers to and from the vehicle.

Assisting the driver in planning the route if the job involves multiple pick-ups. Assisting the driver in the event of an accident, breakdown or emergency by looking after the passengers.

PASSENGER SAFETY

It is the user's responsibility to assess each passenger's ability to use the steps or passenger lift when boarding or alighting from a NWCTP vehicle. Similarly, it is the user's responsibility (where applicable) to assess each passenger's ability to transfer safely from a wheelchair to a seat in a NWCTP vehicle, and from such a seat to a wheelchair. NWCTP reserves the right to make its own determination about the use of steps or a passenger lift, and similarly about a transfer to and from a minibus seat, if the driver believes that safety has been compromised by the user's assessment.

BOOKING REQUIREMENTS

- A group should give careful consideration to route planning when requesting a booking especially if it involves multiple pick-ups.
- It is also important to be accurate about the number of passengers travelling in wheelchairs.
- It is the user's responsibility to provide NWCTP with accurate information about the destination and/or venue for a journey. This includes details about the precise address, identification of any hazards, and the provision (where necessary) of directions.

EMERGENCIES

You **MUST** be able to provide a contact telephone number that will be staffed during the time of the booking. This is especially important for travel outside normal office hours. If you do not provide such a telephone number, NWCTP cannot be held responsible for any failure to inform you about any emergency or other problem associated with the booking: e.g. a breakdown on the way to the first pick-up.

CHARGES

NWCTP charges take into account the time the vehicle and driver are away from base and will also include time allowed for setting up the vehicle for a particular journey, e.g. the removal of seats for wheelchair clients. Please contact the office for a quotation in respect of any journeys you may wish to undertake.

CANCELLATIONS:

Journeys cancelled with less than 24 hours notice are subject to the full cost; cancellation less than five days notice carry 50% of the cost; cancellation notice up to 10 days carry 10% of cost. All of cancellations are subject to an administration cost of £5.

GENERAL

1. Bookings for group travel are only accepted from members of NWCTP. It is the responsibility of the member, not NWCTP to ensure that bookings made in the name of the member are made by authorised personnel. A member is responsible for the payment of any reservation, accepted in good faith by NWCTP booked in its name.
2. The invoice for any particular group travel will be the responsibility of the member organisation.
3. Drivers and passengers are not allowed to smoke in any NWCTP vehicle. NWCTP reserves the right to refuse requests from groups who ignore this regulation, and reserves the right to levy a charge of £15 for cleaning up debris caused by smoking.
4. NWCTP reserves the right to reject, cancel or vary any booking if the purpose for which the vehicle is to be used is inconsistent with the aims, objectives or rules of NWCTP
5. In the event of cancellation or change to a booking by NWCTP no liability can be accepted for any loss, financial or otherwise, arising from our failure to provide a vehicle, and NWCTP cannot be held responsible for breach of contract in such circumstances.