

# **EALING TRAVEL SUPPORT STRATEGY**

**Draft for Discussion and Comments**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The ability to get out of the house, go to school, college, work; go shopping, visit family and friends, attend a GP or hospital appointment or go to sports and cultural events, is something which many of us take for granted. However for some people it is not quite so easy, and in fact is often a big challenge. People with mobility issues due to age or physical disability or sensory impairment; or people with learning disabilities or mental health conditions all may need some form of support to get out and about.
- 1.2** There are many different options to support people to travel – such as wheelchairs, and mobility scooters, and adapted buses, road crossings accessible for people with sensory impairment, accessible taxis, trains and stations towards making travel more accessible for all. There is also financial support - Mobility Allowance and Attendance Allowance; Blue Badges and Taxi cards; Freedom Passes, Dial a Ride etc. and there is more personalised support such as Travel Assistants and Travel Buddies; as well as hospital transport and the more traditional community transport.
- 1.3** The Equality Act 2010 has resulted in improvements in accessibility of public transport, and attitudes for people with mobility difficulties have improved; and with the London 2012 Paralympic Games there have been improvements to public transport in London.
- 1.4** The Council has a duty to facilitate access to travel for people with mobility issues, not necessarily fund all travel support; and a duty to ensure that children with special needs are supported to travel to and from school without any additional cost to the family.
- 1.5** The current financial situation means it is more important than ever before that we strive to provide the best travel support service possible within the money available.
- 1.6** We aim to develop a strategy that meets the needs of Ealing's communities, and support their independence and wellbeing by providing a range of transport support solutions. The service will be flexible enough to meet individual needs and expectations; and also take advantage of new innovations in technology.
- 1.7** We will work with partners such as Transport for London, London Councils, and the NHS, schools and colleges, children, families and young people's services and local voluntary sector organisations to ensure that we provide a comprehensive travel support service which complements support provided by regional and national government.
- 1.8** We will work in partnership with users and stakeholders to ensure best practice in line with the Care Act guidance and the SEN&D code of practice. We want to hear the views of everyone who has an interest in travel support – people who may need it themselves, families and carers, children and young people, schools and colleges, the health and social

care sector, the transport and travel business, and community and voluntary sector organisations.

## **2 THE NATIONAL PICTURE**

- 2.1** Legislation: The Equality Act 2010 protects disabled people in all areas including transport. Improvements continue to be made to transport infrastructure such as the use of tactile paving and information and advice services.
- 2.2** Benefits: There is a mobility component of Personal Independence Payment available for people aged 16 to 64 who meet the disability criteria. There is a mobility component in the Disability Living Allowance for children under 16 years, and for people 65 years and older. (Legislation is currently being revised).
- 2.3** Statistics: There were 2.38 million Blue Badge holders in England in 2016. The number of Blue Badges has declined annually since 2011 when the application process was changed. 885,000 badges were issued in 2016, a 0.6% increase when compared with the previous year (Blue Badge Improvement Service online database).
- 2.4** Challenge: Disability organisations and the Equality and Human Rights Commission continue to press for improvements to secure disabled people's access to bus and rail services, and taxis, including supporting accessibility of buses to wheelchair users in light of the Paulley vs First Bus case in the Supreme Court.

## **3 THE LONDON PICTURE**

- 3.1** Every day in London 1.3 million journeys are made by people with disabilities, and 700,000 trips are taken by people aged over 75.
- 3.2** Transport for London (TfL) aims to improve the travel experience for people with disabilities to ensure that transport is accessible throughout the journey. There is still work to be done, however improvements are being made. The Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) and in particular the Accessibility Implementation Plan includes major schemes such as Crossrail, the Tube upgrades and Access for All step-free station projects. People with disabilities view the time it takes to make a journey as an important accessibility issue, so TfL is working to reduce the journey time difference between step-free and non-step-free journeys which people with disabilities make. Currently more than 25% of stations are step free and by 2018 the target is for over half of TfL's stations to have step-free access <sup>1</sup>
- 3.3** TfL is working more closely with disability groups to deliver staff training and monitor its services to ensure that people with disabilities receive the help they need when travelling.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.tfl.gov.uk/travelinlondon](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/travelinlondon)

- 3.4** Improvements are being made in services for people with hidden disabilities, as well as training in accessibility awareness for bus drivers. The Alzheimer's Society is helping develop dementia-friendly guidance. There is training planned for dial –a –ride staff and work to ensure that information and advice is clear, simple and accessible.
- 3.5** All of London's buses are fitted with automatic wheelchair ramps as well as the iBus audio-visual system to help those with impaired vision or hearing travel more easily, and 88% of London bus stops are accessible. All London's Black Cabs are wheelchair accessible, and many taxis have various adjustments such as colour contrast patches on seats, coloured grab handles, swivel seats, an intermediate step, an intercom and induction loop.

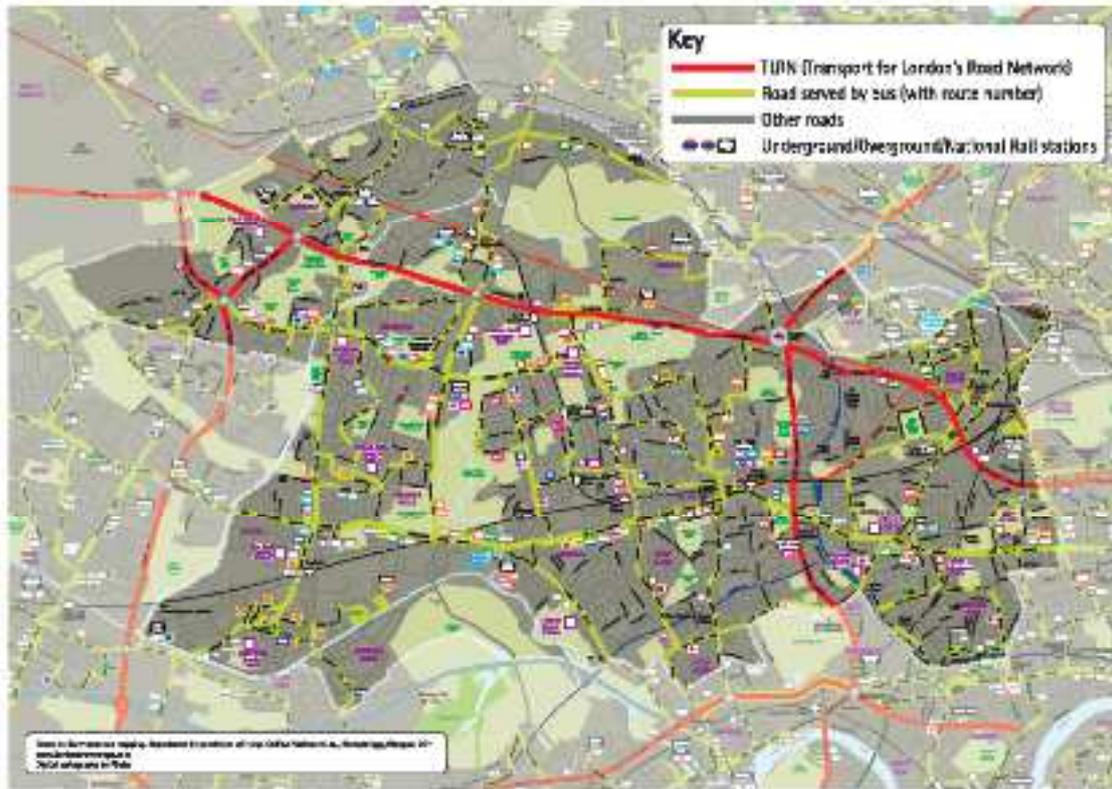
## **4 THE EALING PICTURE**

- 4.1** One of Ealing's corporate priorities is Health, Wellbeing and Independence which includes enabling healthy lifestyles, independent living and access to good quality healthcare. The new Future Ealing programme includes two priorities which are relevant to travel support:
- Residents are physically and mentally healthy, active and independent
  - The borough has the smallest environmental footprint possible
- 4.2** Ealing Council has identified a number of outcomes which are the things that will have the greatest impact in helping us to improve life in the borough. Focusing on these things will allow us to improve the lives and opportunities of our residents and make the best use of our resources, as demand on our services grows and funding reduces. We will work as One Council and one public service, to focus on prevention, encourage collaboration and reduce duplication.
- 4.3** Ealing Council is improving its social care services by developing an All Age Disability Service which will deliver services to people with disabilities across all ages, from birth onwards; and will involve a range of officers working together to provide a more cohesive service.
- 4.4** Ealing's transport and policy officers work closely with Transport for London and London Councils on the various schemes such as Blue Badge, freedom pass and taxi-card, towards the Mayor's Transport Strategy.
- 4.5** Crossrail, Network Rail and Ealing Council are working together on improvements to Ealing Broadway station. Accessibility improvements have been made to Greenford Station and it is the first station in the UK to have an incline lift. Travelling on a gradient alongside the escalator and the stairs, it provides step-free options at the station.
- 4.6** Ealing Council has signed up to the Loneliness Charter, and one of the key elements to combatting loneliness and social isolation is accessible transport and travel support. For people to participate fully in their

communities and access services they need to be able to travel independently and safely.

- 4.7 The borough of Ealing has a comprehensive range of public transport, including:

Map 1 TfL Road Network, Public Transport Routes and Stations



- 4.8 The Ealing Local Implementation Plan<sup>2</sup> sets out the Council's strategy for transport and travel in the borough and includes the following objectives:

- Smooth the flow of traffic and improve journey time reliability for all road-uses, particularly bus passengers, cyclists and pedestrians
- Improve quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors to the borough, protecting and enhancing the urban and natural environment
- Promote healthy travel behaviour through a shift to more walking and cycling
- Improve the quality of and access to Ealing's main town centres, neighbourhood centres and regeneration areas for all, including those with reduced mobility.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ealing.gov.uk/downloads/download/711/local\\_implementation\\_plan](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/downloads/download/711/local_implementation_plan)

## **5 CHANGING NEEDS**

- 5.1** Over the next 10 years the older population of Ealing is predicted to increase, especially among the 90+ years age group but also in the younger older age groups. As would be expected, the number of older people who have difficulty in managing at least one mobility activity (such as getting up and down stairs and going out doors and walking down the road) is also predicted to increase. It is anticipated that the population of those aged 18-64 with a physical disability / long-term condition will rise. A quarter of the population are children of which a percentage may need travel support due to SEN. The complexity in need of people who are using accessible and community transport services is increasing due to a number of factors including the criteria to receive a service being pushed to a higher level. Young people in transition aged 16-25 years are now presenting with very complex needs both physically and mentally and older people are living much longer, however often with frailty, impairment and other issues such as dementia so that they need support to assist them to live in the community.
- 5.2** Re-ablement, recovery and getting a life (volunteering or work) agenda are also contributing to the need for more flexible transport options.
- 5.3** With people living longer and a trend in children with more complex health and social care needs moving into adult social care services, there will still be a need for specialist transport and support, however as people get used to arranging their own care, support and activities a more flexible approach to the types of transport available and times people want to travel will be required.
- 5.4** Whilst personalisation is the way forward, there is a current generation of people who like what they have and don't want to change, so a traditional mini- bus taking them door to door is what they want. However, the new generation of younger old, the new generation of people with disabilities and children with special needs have different expectations and want more control of their support options.
- 5.5** With the level of need increasing, realistically some more formal and traditional transport may still be needed for those with very complex needs, who cannot use other transport options. There needs to be flexibility with a range of transport options available for people to use as more people take up personal budgets.

## **6 VISION**

- 6.1** We are aiming to move from a reliance on the more traditional community transport services to a greater emphasis on Travel Support and Travel Assistance.
- Community transport services relate to transport (and often passenger assistants) specifically commissioned to take people to identified destinations.
  - Travel support includes training, buddying and financial support to enable people to use mainstream public transport including taxis and private hire vehicles. Travel support is person centred and focuses on what people want to do and what they need to get there.
  - Travel Assistance is the arrangements made by the Council for eligible children to help them to attend school or for eligible adults to attend college. Travel assistance is normally utilised when a child has a significant medical or physical need preventing them from walking to school or using public transport. it promotes independence and aims to help people become more confident and participate more in society.
  - Travel training is important for equality of access and independence, and promotes greater health and wellbeing. It gives people greater access to jobs, services and social networks. People are empowered to take greater control in their lives, learn new skills and take advantage of opportunities in their local communities. Travel training also enables people to travel in a more sustainable way (i.e. by public transport, on foot or by bicycle).
- 6.2** We want to enable people to travel as independently as possible and to have choices in how and when they wish to travel. The focus is on having the right support to travel when people need it, which means that people access a range of transport options available, which can vary even within the same day. There should be a range of vehicles and support that can cater for different needs and which are available not just Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm but support that is available during the day and evening, and weekends. Travel support will enable the council to provide personalised, efficient and cost effective support; and contribute towards the council's commitment to social inclusion for all.
- 6.3** We want to support people with mobility issues to travel independently and develop increased self-confidence, resilience, and self-esteem. Supporting children and young people to travel independently at an early age between home and school is investing in their futures; providing them with a valuable life skill, an essential employability skill, and will ensure equality of

access and opportunities; and support their future development. Independence is important, especially to young people with special needs, who do not want to be reliant on others to get out and about, whether it is for school, college, work or social activities.

- 6.4 We want to ensure people have clear accessible information and advice on the range of services available to help people manage their travel arrangements. Information should include up-to –date details of allowances and travel cards as well as transport options available to give people choice and control.

## 7 WHAT WE NEED TO DO

### Accessible Information

- 7.1 Have good quality information on the Council’s website, and on relevant voluntary sector partners’ websites (eg ECIL, ESAS); via the Local Offer for children with special needs [www.ealing.gov.uk/send](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/send) and Ealing Mencap’s HELP website; as well as in various formats disseminated across the borough through the Information and Advice Network, to maximise the use of mobility and travel support.
- 7.2 We will make sure links to other travel support sources such as mobility allowances, Freedom Passes and Blue Badges, and NHS transport support, are easy to find and use. We will connect people to the TfL information on accessible transport and route finder services and other advice lines such as Transport for All ([www.transportforall.org.uk](http://www.transportforall.org.uk)).

### Commission personalised travel planning

- 7.3 All relevant people will be assessed as needing travel support and travel assistance identifying their needs. We aim to ensure people have access to all available assistance, and identify the best and most cost effective way to support them to travel. For children and young people this assessment will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 7.4 We will ensure that options such as powered wheelchairs or motorised scooters or travel training are included in travel planning along with factors such as storage and maintenance.
- 7.5 We will work with partners to ensure that people need to go through the assessment eligibility process for mobility support once only (eg for blue badge and taxicard).

## **Commission a range of flexible and cost effective transport providers**

- 7.6** We will commission transport providers who are flexible, have accessible easy to use systems, and which are value for money. Whether we commission transport providers, or support people to make their own arrangements through personal budgets or self-funding, we will be looking for providers who can achieve quality standards to meet people's travel needs.
- 7.7** We will aim to provide a range of support solutions. There will still be some direct council funded provision of travel support and transport for people whose needs are best met through a contracted service rather than a personal budget. This may include those attending regular day care or school/college. We expect to see a reduction in this sort of transport contract with an increasing emphasis on individual travel solutions. We will consider the most effective way of commissioning a range of travel options including: minibuses, taxis (and assistants if required), volunteer car schemes, scooters (purchased and hired), travel training, mentors and buddies, and volunteer assistants.
- 7.8** Childrens' Services currently has a framework contract for transport providers. This includes a range of vehicles and drivers and can include transport assistants. We will consider whether there is scope to jointly commission travel support with Ealing CCG. We will explore opportunities for joint commissioning with neighbouring Local Authorities where we have joint commissioning framework arrangements (West London Alliance)
- 7.9** We aim to provide a better quality and range of travel support while also delivering savings by ensuring that we are commissioning services which meet individual and community needs and making full use of vehicles and assistants. We want to ensure there is an extended range of traveling options and choice available to support individual young people to travel to school or college. Travel solutions such as travel training can produce savings for the local authority for many years in the future as these travel trained young people will not need the extra support and associated costs in their adult life as they will have learned to travel independently as a young person.

## **Collaborate with the NHS**

**7.10** A major use of transport is travel for healthcare. Transport to health care comprises of Patient Transport Services (PTS - funded and commissioned by the NHS) and a mix of other community transport services as well as use of Taxicard. We will work with the local NHS with the aim of developing a more flexible and cost effective system for local residents to attend health appointments. Ealing CCG commissions a transport service for people with mobility issues to attend GP and other health related appointments

## **8 USING TECHNOLOGY**

- 8.1** Technological advances offer opportunities for better journey planning, navigation and communication, with the potential for further improvements in areas such as reliability and targeted travel information. For example, vehicles can be tracked and texts sent to users to inform them their car has arrived with specific software. As a result people with disabilities now have more choice in how they get around London and can do so with greater independence.
- 8.2** TfL gives free advice on journey planning and can provide a mentor to accompany people on their first few journeys. Tube Exits is a smartphone app that tells you which carriage to board in order to be nearest station exits, and on which side the doors open.
- 8.3** Wayfindr uses smartphone technology to help visually impaired people to navigate around stations independently without physical assistance. Bluetooth beacons installed at the station transmit a signal to the smartphone which the app translates into an audio instruction that guides customers on their journey.
- 8.4** London Taxicard mobile app and online booking website are both free and easy to use with a range of features including information on number of trips left to use, ability to save favourite address and journeys, fare and journey distance estimates, to estimate cost of trip, and to share location whilst in the vehicle with someone else.

## **9 STRATEGIES**

- 9.1** Ealing Council has signed up to The Loneliness charter which commits it to supporting the development of local accessible community transport options.
- 9.2** The Council is committed to making this borough a safer, greener and healthier place to live and work. There is an emphasis on enabling more walking and cycling, not just for their own sake but also because of what they can do to improve public health, tackle congestion, reduce carbon emissions and improve the local environment
- 9.3** Ealing's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments chapters refer to the obstacles people may face accessing transport and how this impacts on their everyday lives and ability to live independently.
- 9.4** The priorities for the NHS are set out in the Out of Hospital Strategy of Ealing Clinical Commissioning Group which aims to meet health and social care needs of residents closer to home, keeping them out of hospital and residential care and enabling them to maintain their independence and wellbeing in the community. It is important that travel support needs are taken into account as part of any new commissioning of services in

secondary prevention and re-ablement, as well as being incorporated in the preventative elements of the Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

## **10 CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT**

- 10.1** Over the next few months we will be working with a range of different groups who seeking their views on this draft strategy:- community organisations, councillors and health and social care staff, as well as statutory partners and transport providers, to ensure that we have incorporated what people need in terms of travel support and transport and to involve people in implementing the proposed changes.
- 10.2** There are many people with many years of valuable experience of using or providing travel services who we hope will participate in the development of a more responsive and flexible, safe and convenient set of travel support services for the people of Ealing.

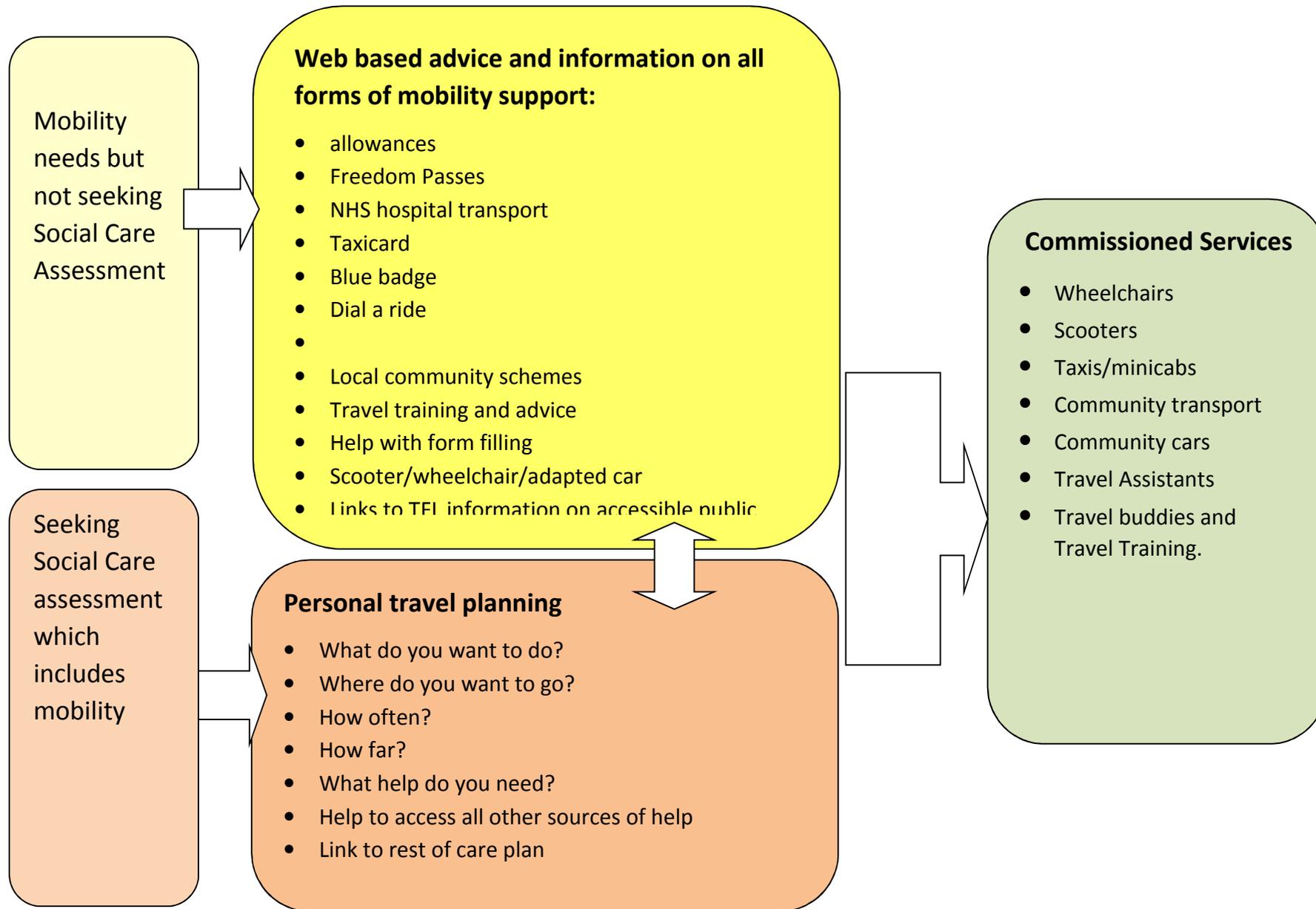
## **11 IMPLEMENTATION**

- 11.1** We are looking to take forward a number of key strands of work to implement the strategy and will involve stakeholders in these over the next few months. These link with other work already being undertaken within Adult and Children's Services.
- Advice and information on mobility support – within the wider Information and Advice Strategy and Network, which is bringing together a wealth of information and signposting across the borough with regard to health and wellbeing and social care services and provision.
  - Personal travel planning
  - Commissioning of community transport services – within the wider context of out of hospital strategies and integration of health and social care
  - Set up an Access Group to look at transport accessibility issues as well as more generic access to public buildings – shops, restaurants, pubs, leisure and social facilities.
- 11.2** The commissioning programme will be partly dependent on a range of current contracts, both transport specific and transport related. We will be working to ensure that new services are commissioned in such a way as to meet changing needs of Ealing clients during the strategy period.

## 12 COMMENTS FROM INITIAL CONSULTATION WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN EALING.

- Don't use taxi-card unless really have to as unreliable – can be very late – this can have implications on health, if you are somewhere without any food and water, or medication.
- Some drivers are not properly trained in how to help me with my wheelchair
- Some drivers clearly don't want to bother with people in wheelchairs and can be rude – is not worth it for them if it is a short journey.
- Would like to use taxi-card with the taxi company of my choice, I like to know who is going to pick me up.
- Would be good to be able to tell taxi in advance that am using taxi-card.
- Motability car is perfect – needed to find a personal assistant who could drive.
- Don't use buses – too crowded and people don't move for you.
- Underground – most stations aren't accessible and too crowded.
- Community transport – very good
- People don't want to go out just Monday to Friday during the day, but in evening and at weekends, we are adults not children.
- People with learning disabilities face bullying by other passengers, school children can be difficult and noisy, and can push you off the bus.
- Would like travel training. At the moment need to go by taxi when going to a new place as don't know how to get there.
- Can feel frightened and under confident traveling alone in the evening – use a panic alarm and a torch to feel more confident
- Travel training can take a long time but it is worth it – gives people independence and confidence
- The time it takes to get around is a big issue
- Would not be able to go to work if accessible transport wasn't available.
- Drivers and other transport staff are mainly good.
- Being bused to school kills your social life, young people want to be able to socialise with friends after school.

# Areas of work to implement The Travel Support Strategy



## Appendix 1

### Range of Accessible Transport

**Blue Badge** - National scheme that allows people to park a car free anywhere for a short period. Assessed by occupational therapist.

**Taxi card** - Provides subsidised travel for London residents who have serious mobility or visual impairments. Eligibility varies depending on borough, with a maximum number of trips allocated per person.

**Older Persons Freedom pass/ Disabled Persons Freedom Pass** - Free off peak bus, tube and train pass for people on high rate DLA and over the age of 60.

**Dial a Ride** - Managed by TfL, a free pick up and drop –off bus service via membership. Eligibility based on permanent or long term disability. Advance booking system.

**Travel training and mentoring** - Trained volunteers work with people to train and support them to use public transport based on specific routes i.e., to an activity centre, college etc

**Shopmobility** - Provide a range of scooters and wheelchairs to enable people to go shopping independently in and around Ealing Broadway

**Individual taxis** for people with complex needs (and assistant) - on a spot purchase basis

**NHS commissioned Patient Transport Services (PTS)** - Free service for people who meet national eligibility criteria based on medical condition or disability which prevents use of public transport or requires an assistant

**NHS Wheelchairs & Mobility Scooters** - NHS free service or to purchase

# A Travel Strategy for Ealing



Why do we need a strategy?

- There are lots of ways children and adults with disabilities can travel in London. We need to know:



- **What is available** in Ealing:



- What is **working well**



- What **isn't working** well?



- What can we do to **make things better**



We need to know **what is important** to people with learning disabilities



What **support and transport is available now** for people with learning disabilities in Ealing?



What **works well** for people with learning disabilities?



What can make travelling **difficult** for people with learning disabilities?



What **information and support** would be useful?



Any other **suggestions**?

