

TRANSPORT POLICY

Forest Pulse fully appreciates the difficulty some people face because of the lack of a regular accessible community public transport network and the rural geography of the Forest of Dean. To this end the Charity provides transport as far as reasonably possible to offer all children/young people with disabilities (and their family members) the opportunity to take part in the activities provided by the Charity. This includes providing the relevant level of volunteer support, which itself creates an additional transport need.

In providing transport Forest Pulse will conform to all current transport law and consider County Council guidelines.

1. Minibuses

Minibuses are used to provide transport for some Forest Pulse activities.

- 1.1 All vehicles owned by Forest Pulse will be regularly maintained and serviced (including tail-lift), taxed (unless exempt) and MOT'd, and adequately insured.
- 1.2 Any vehicle on hire/loan will be either from a reputable hire company or an established statutory/community/voluntary organisation having its own transport policy.
- 1.3 A staff/volunteer escort will be provided as necessary.
- 1.3.1 A mobile phone will always be available. It is appreciated that signal in some areas, including the Forest of Dean, is poor. It is our understanding however that emergency calls are transferred when other calls fail. If no call can be made the escort will remain with the passengers and the driver will go for help. The Charity Manager/Director, or another senior Forest Pulse staff member, will always be aware of any journeys, and arrival times and if they do not receive confirmation of safe arrival they will contact the Police if contact cannot be made with staff on the vehicle.
- 1.5 All use of minibuses will conform to current road traffic law.
- 1.6 All minibuses being used by Forest Pulse will hold Small Bus Permits in accordance with Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985.
- 1.7 Booster seats are not a legal requirement in minibuses but if a suitable child seat is provided for an individual child this should be used. (See Appendix 1 for current child car seat and booster seat regulations).

2. Minibus Drivers and Escorts

- 2.1 All drivers will be aged 21 or over and will hold a current MIDAS Minibus Driver Assessment (which includes a three yearly medical).
- 2.2 All escorts, and when possible drivers, will, if applicable, receive in-house training on use of the wheelchair lift.
- 2.3 Drivers and escorts will, whenever possible, have experience of working with people with disabilities. At least one volunteer on minibus transport will have such experience.
- 2.4 All drivers/escorts aged 18 and over will have an enhanced DBS.
- 2.5 Driving licences will be checked annually.
- 2.6 As per DVLA regulations, anyone passing their driving test on or after 1st January 1997 can only drive vehicles with over 8 (up to maximum 16) passenger seats on a **voluntary** basis and providing the gross vehicle weight does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes with specialist tail-lift equipment) – **and** they have held a full driving licence for at least 2 years. Staff passing their test on or after 1.1.97 have to take Department of Transport D2 test before they can drive in a paid capacity.
- 2.7 If any driver has more than 3 points on their licence a decision will be made by the Charity Manager in liaison with Trustees as to whether they will be accepted to drive, dependent on the reason points were awarded.

3. Staff/Volunteers providing transport in their own vehicles

Occasionally staff or volunteers provide transport in their own vehicle on behalf of Forest Pulse:

- 3.1 Drivers must be 18 years or over, have held a licence for a minimum of 12 months and should meet the requirements of point 2.7.
- 3.2 Anyone using their own vehicle will produce a current vehicle MOT and insurance certificate showing business use; alternatively written confirmation can be produced from the driver's insurance company to confirm business cover. Forest Pulse will reimburse for extra cost incurred for work cover.
- 3.3 Any driver who is to carry children/young people unaccompanied should undergo enhanced DBS disclosure.
- 3.4 Booster seats must be used for children either under twelve years of age or under the height of 135 cms, and they must be seated in the rear of the vehicle. All children under the age of three years must travel in a child car seat. **(Legal requirements)**. (See Appendix 1 for current child car seat and booster seat regulations). In this situation the child should ideally use their own personal seat.
- 3.5 An escort will be provided if this is felt to be necessary.

Note If parents, staff or volunteers organise lifts between themselves independently, Forest Pulse accepts no responsibility.

4. Contracted Coaches

- 4.1 A reputable coach company will always be used.
- 4.2 For trips and outings an escort will be provided by Forest Pulse, unless it is a family trip where all passengers are children and young people accompanied by their own parents/carers, or are independent adults. This will usually be a member of staff but may be an experienced volunteer.
- 4.3 For trips and outings, adequate staff/volunteer support will be provided for any unaccompanied children/young people.
- 4.4 A mobile phone will always be available.

5. Emergency Situations

- 5.1 All Forest Pulse vehicles will be covered by a recovery policy which includes transfer of all passengers if required.
- 5.2 Information relating to insurance and recovery will be found in the Minibus file (drivers door).
- 5.3 All minibuses and coaches will carry a first aid kit, and an additional portable first aid kit is available when needed for off site activities.. All First Aid accidents must be recorded recorded and reported to senior staff, whether occurring on minibus or in a staff/volunteer vehicle.
- 5.4 Forest Pulse will endeavour to ensure that at least one of the volunteers/staff on all vehicles is a qualified First Aider, or will be actively seeking to arrange this. Appropriate courses will be sought and offered to all drivers and escorts as available.
- 5.5 Copies of health/membership forms will be available for all children/young people. These will include personal and medical details and parental permission for medical treatment in an emergency. Details of name/address of all staff/volunteers should also be available.
- 5.6 In the event of breakdown, if the problem cannot easily be remedied (e.g. no fuel, flat battery etc) the emergency recovery service should be called. Alternatively, contact the Activity Manager or the Charity Manager for guidance.
- 5.7 In the event of an accident/breakdown, the driver is responsible for going for help if necessary (e.g. if mobile phone not operational), while it is the responsibility of the escort to stay with the vehicle and passengers This can only be altered by prior agreement with Activity Manager or Charity Manager/Director. If there is no escort, the driver must seek help while giving consideration to the safety of the children/young adults in his/her care.
- 5.8 In the event of accident/breakdown all passengers should remain in the vehicle with the escort unless it is considered unsafe to do so. Children/young adults should not be left unsupervised at any time.
- 5.9 If it is unsafe to remain on the vehicle e.g. if it is on fire or at risk of impact, passengers should be escorted in safe and orderly fashion to a place out of danger. Emergency manual over-ride systems are available on wheelchair vehicles in the event of the hoist not operating, e.g. electrical failure. In a life threatening situation non-mobile passengers may be lifted from the vehicle if this is possible without risking the lives of others. An evacuation blanket is available for such situations (stored in compartment over driver). Emergency services will be notified as soon as possible, and informed of

any mobility considerations for any passengers. Staff should only attempt to put out the fire using the extinguishers available if this can be done without putting any life in danger, directly or indirectly.

- 5.10 In the event of accident/breakdown the Charity Manager or Director should be notified immediately.
- 5.11 If, following an accident/breakdown, anyone involved with Forest Pulse requires any medical treatment, the Forest of Dean District Council Environmental Health Department should be notified.
- 5.12 Contact names/telephone numbers for the Charity in event of accident should be clearly displayed in the minibus file. This information should be kept with health forms when individual cars are being used.

Reviewed Trustees 14th July 2021

Signature on Behalf of Trustees

Role