

Rural Dial-a-Lift Service

Passenger Charter

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#

# Our Commitment to You

This charter is a statement of our commitment to provide a high quality affordable and accessible Dial-a-Lift service to all our passengers. We value the importance of our passengers and want to provide a service which meets their transport needs.

We pride ourselves on the quality of staff and volunteers working within the Community Transport sector who are committed to ensuring our passengers journey is a safe and enjoyable experience.

We recognise our responsibilities to our passengers and therefore have outlined our commitment to you within this document. We welcome your comments and feedback to continually improve and ensure we provide a fair and equitable service for all.

If you have any further questions about Dial-a-Lift or any of the other services that we provide, please do not hesitate to contact us on our passenger helpline on 028 66 324260 to speak to an administrator who will be happy to provide you with further information. Alternatively, please email us at info@fermanaghcommunitytransport.com

# Service Specification

## What is Dial-a-Lift?

Dial-a-Lift is a transport **option** for individuals living in rural areas that are unable to or have difficulty accessing local basic services due to a lack of transport (e.g., access to a car or public transport).

Dial-a-Lift can be used for a variety of purposes including:

* Local shopping
* Some local health services (e.g., doctor, dentist, chiropodist, optician, health centre)
* Local pharmacy
* Post Office or banking
* Training and/or local employment
* Visiting friends and family
* Linking to the public transport network

## Dial-a-Lift cannot be used for the following purposes

DAL cannot be used for home to / from school transport nor hospital admissions, transfers or discharges, or to replace statutory education, health or social service transport.

Trips for healthcare outpatient appointments / treatment will be restricted to the **nearest local hospital** or treatment centre that is within Fermanagh. Health and Social Care Trust do provide their own free transport to those that are eligible, as well as providing a refund of necessary travel costs to those that qualify under the Hospital Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS).

The Dial-a-Lift service is for access to l**ocal** services only.

**Members must be fit to travel independently (or with a carer/ companion as necessary). We will provide as much support and assistance as we can, but the driver cannot be expected to carry out any manual handling task that may have a risk attached to it, or to give attention to the passenger whilst driving. Where a passenger requires the assistance of a carer/ companion, this individual must be present for the passenger to travel.**

### Type of Service

Dial-a-Lift is a demand responsive service, tailored to meet the needs of our individual members. It is ideally suited for specific journeys where the passenger selects their pick-up and drop-off times. **We will endeavour to meet their needs, but this will be dependent on the resources available.**

Members should be aware that in order to make the most effective use of the available resources they may be asked to share transport when possible and where it is deemed appropriate to do so.

## Service Availability

The Dial-a-Lift service is currently available Monday to Friday from 8.00am – 5.00pm. ***Due to budgetary restrictions within the Rural Transport Fund the resources available may be subject to limitations in some areas.***

## Service Amendments on Public Holidays

Dial-a-Lift operates a restricted service during the following public holidays: (This may entail a limited number of vehicles being available and/or reduced operating hours).

* 17th March
* Easter Monday, Tuesday and Good Friday
* May Bank Holiday’s
* 12th July
* August Bank Holiday

There will be no Dial-a-Lift services available during the following Public Holidays:

* Christmas Day
* Boxing Day
* New Year’s Day

During the Christmas period 24th – 31st December, restricted services will be available, with prior notification given to all members.

## Service Restrictions

* Children under 5 travel free on Dial-a-Lift
* Children under 16 cannot book or travel unaccompanied
* Under 16’s must get their membership form signed by parent or guardian
* Vulnerable adults can travel unaccompanied if permission is given on the membership form
* Essential Escorts as identified on membership form travel for half fare
* Family Travel: when two or more members of the same family, living at the same address are travelling collectively: fares are as follows

🢝 First two family members travelling pay the full fare appropriate for each single or return journey.

🢝 Any additional family members pay £1.00 for each single journey.

# Membership

## Criteria

To qualify for Dial-a-Lift you must become a member of Fermanagh Community Transport Ltd and agree to abide by our terms and conditions. Membership is renewable on a six-year basis.

To be eligible for individual membership, you must meet the following criteria:

* Live in a rural area i.e., an area not covered by the Urban Door-2-Door Scheme
* Have difficulty accessing everyday services due to lack of transport

## Priority Groupings

In the event that the demand for Dial-a-Lift service exceeds the amount of resources available, trips will be prioritised based on the following categories of members:

* Older people (60+)
* People with disabilities
* People with no access to suitable public transport – this is considered as

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| - | More than 1 mile from the nearest bus stop |
| - | A route that provides less than two return journeys per week between the hours of 10am and 4pm; on |
| - | Being on a route that only provides services outside of the hours of 10am to 4pm |

* People with dependants – dependants include children under 18, older people and persons with disabilities.
* Others

**If services are still over-subscribed, then other restrictions may apply.**

## Membership Charges

Membership to the Dial-a-Lift **service** is **free.**

## Individual Membership Forms

Membership forms are available on request by ringing our passenger helpline on 028 66 324260 or, by emailing us at info@fermanaghcommunitytransport.com and or by visiting out website and downloading the application from www.fermanaghcommunitytransport.com.

# Fares

Dial-a-Lift fares are charged based on the distance travelled. These fares are subsidised through the Rural Transport Fund on the Dial-a-Lift service. A copy of the Dial-a-Lift fare costs structure is shown below. (Please note these fares may be subject to change; however, members will be notified in advance of any fare revisions).

**Dial-a-Lift Fare Structure**

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| **Passenger Miles** | **Single Fare** |
| 0 < 5 miles | £2.50 |
| 5 < 10 | £3.50 |
| 10 < 15 | £4.50 |
| 15 < 20 | £6.00 |
| 20 < 25 | £7.00 |
| 25 < 30 | £8.00 |
| 30+ miles | £8.00 plus 30p per additional mile |

## Assisted Rural Travel Scheme (ARTS)

The Assisted Rural Travel Scheme (ARTS) allows any passenger with a valid SmartPass to travel for free or half fare on the Dial-a-Lift service operated by Fermanagh Community Transport Ltd. The fare concession element of ARTS is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Free travel within NI is offered to people holding the following types of SmartPass:

* **65+ Senior SmartPass**
* **60+ SmartPass**
* **Blind SmartPass**
* **War Disablement SmartPass**

Half fare concession is offered to people holding the following SmartPass:

* **Half Fare SmartPass**

## Smart Pass Application Process

A SmartPass application form is available:

* in person from any manned Translink bus or rail station
* by phoning 028 9066 6630 (deaf and hard-of-hearing applicants can use the textphone number 18001 9066 6630)
* by emailing: smartpass@translink.co.uk to ask for a form to be posted to you

All SmartPass applications must be verified by the Rural Transport Fund administration team within the Department for Infrastructure. Your local Community Transport organisation will complete this verification process on your behalf; this must be completed before Smart Passes can be used on the Dial-a-Lift service. Therefore, there may be a short period of time after registration but prior to verification when a fare will be charged for journeys travelled.

## Presentation of Smart Pass on Journeys

**A passenger’s SmartPass must be presented each time they travel on a Dial-a-Lift journey in order to benefit from the fare concession under the Assisted Rural Travel Scheme. If the SmartPass is not presented, then the regular fare will be charged to the passenger for that journey.**

# Requesting a Journey

## 2 Working Days’ Notice

Requests can be made by contacting the Fermanagh Community Transport office on 028 66 324260. All requests for transport should be made as soon as possible but requests can be taken up to 4pm **at least 2 working days** before the day of travel. We will only contact you if we are unable to provide transport, or your requested times have changed. We will attempt to contact you the day prior to your travel request.

## Exception to 2 Working Days’ Notice

If a member receives a medical or health related appointment or requires attending a GP or other health related service within the standard two working days (at short notice), Fermanagh Community Transport **will endeavour to provide transport were possible**. We fully appreciate that members can take sick at a moment’s notice or require to see their GP at short notice. It is important that requests for journeys on this basis must be genuine. Where it is found that requests for such journeys are not genuine, this will result in the immediate permanent expulsion of a member from the service.

If the demand for services exceeds the amount of resources available then we may need to prioritise bookings or limit the number of times each member can travel per week or month. ***To avoid disappointment individuals are advised to give as much notice as possible to allow our trip schedulers the opportunity to facilitate as many trips as possible.***

Members should not over run the agreed time of the booking, as this may have a knock-on effect for later bookings. Except in the cases of genuinely unforeseen circumstances, a passenger may be charged if their booking overruns and subsequent bookings must be cancelled to accommodate this.

There is no restriction on the number of bookings an individual may request. There is no quota, entitlement or right to travel, nor guarantee that we can provide transport, although we will do our best.

Requested pick up times cannot always be guaranteed, and members are required to be flexible in order that the planners can make the best use of the resources we have. This may mean changing pick up and drop off times, and perhaps not going direct to or from the destinations.

It is **not** a first-come-first-served scheme. Transport is allocated only after all of the bookings are in, and are **subject to available resources**, and subject to us planning the trips in the most efficient and cost-effective way. This may result in some bookings being turned down or times required to be amended at the final planning stage (on the last working day beforehand).

## Cancellations

In the event of a change in booking, passengers must notify the office without delay. A cancellation fee will apply if the journey is cancelled on the day of travel.

Should a member fail to turn up for a booking, or give insufficient notice of cancelling, we reserve the right to levy the full charge for the booking. This charge will also apply to passengers who normally avail of free or half fare concessions under the Assisted Rural Travel Scheme by using their Smart Pass on community transport. FCT will charge the full fare for cancellations on the day.

Persistent cancellations may result in membership being suspended for a period or revoked permanently. This will be at the discretion of your local Community Transport organisation. It is therefore important that members familiarise themselves with FCT’s Policy. Were an individual cancels 3 times in one calendar month on the day by phone and or in person on the doorstep, this will result in that individual being suspended from the service for the following calendar month.

If a passenger cannot be provided with transport, we will not be liable for making alternative travel arrangements for members.

We reserve the right to reject or cancel any booking if the purpose for which the vehicle is to be used is inconsistent with the aims, objectives or terms and conditions of the Dial-a-Lift Scheme.

In the event of adverse weather conditions or an unexpected vehicle maintenance requirement, journeys may need to be rescheduled or cancelled at short notice. We will do our best to accommodate passengers and provide them with alternative arrangements, however safety is of paramount importance, and we will not take any risks which may result in injury or damage.

# Terms and Conditions

The Dial-a-Lift service is funded by the Department for Infrastructure through the Rural Transport Fund. To travel on the Dial-a-Lift service you must register and become an individual member of Fermanagh Community Transport Ltd, and as such, agree to abide by our terms and conditions. Members should be aware of all terms of membership which will include compliance with codes of conduct and behaviour.

The Dial-a-Lift terms and conditions may need to change to reflect both the demand for services and the amount of funding available. Members will be notified in advance of all changes.

Fermanagh Community Transport Ltd Dial-a-Lift is operated for the benefit of members of Fermanagh Community Transport Ltd on a not-for-profit basis.

## Our Commitment to Quality

Fermanagh Community Transport Ltd is committed to providing a quality affordable and professional service to all members through the Dial-a-Lift service.

## Performance

Reliability is a vital part of the Dial-a-Lift service, and we will endeavour to arrive for all our journeys on time as per the passenger booking. However, please allow a 15-minute window on either side of the booking for flexibility; this is to allow for traffic conditions beyond our control. Driving times quoted will take account of safe and legal driving speeds.

## Vehicles

There will be a range of vehicles used to provide the Dial-a-Lift services:

* Fully accessible minibuses with appropriate restraint systems
* Voluntary Car Schemes
* Local Private Transport Operators

All vehicles will meet minimum requirements and are serviced regularly by qualified engineers. All equipment is checked regularly and will be replaced immediately if faulty. All vehicles will be clean before entering service each day.

All external transport providers must agree to the Dial-a-Lift terms and conditions in advance of delivering services on behalf of Community Transport to ensure they also provide a quality service.

## Staff

Our staff and volunteers are committed to providing members with a friendly, professional and reliable service. All drivers complete an enhanced disclosure check carried out by Access NI under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

At all times they will:

* Be professional and courteous
* Wear their uniform (Staff ID will be presented to you)
* Consider your safety and comfort
* Notify you of any delays or alterations to the service (if possible)

### Minibus Drivers

All drivers are MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) trained. This includes 195 minutes of driver theory training, a theory test and an assessed drive by a qualified Driver Assessor Trainer. MiDAS training is refreshed every 4 years by all staff.

### Social Car Scheme and Volunteer Drivers

All volunteers involved with the Volunteer Car Scheme are provided with MiDAS Car and MPV training. This is also refreshed every 4 years by volunteers.

### Customer Training

Training in Passenger Assistance, Emergency Evacuation, Basic First Aid and Manual Handling is also available to all staff and volunteers involved in the delivery of the Dial-a-Lift service.

# Accessible Information

All information on the Dial-a-Lift service is available in accessible formats on request. Please ring 028 66 324260 or, email us at info@fermanaghcommunitytransport.com.

### Website

Further information can be obtained on our website at [www.fermanaghcommunitytransport.com](http://www.fermanaghcommunitytransport.com).

# Key Policies

## Carriage of Animals Policy

Only Assistance Dogs will be allowed to travel on the Dial-a-Lift service.

## No Alcohol Policy

Members cannot consume or be under the influence of alcohol whilst travelling on the Dial-a-Lift service. This is for the safety and comfort of all our passengers.

## Seatbelt Policy

All passengers are required to wear a seatbelt when they travel, unless the member is medically exempt, and this has been notified on the membership form upon registration and a letter from their GP is included with their membership form.

## Charging Policy

As a charity we do not make a profit, but must cover our costs, therefore we do make a charge.

## Passenger Fitness to Travel

**Members must be fit and able to travel independently.**  We will provide as much support and assistance as we can, but the driver cannot be expected to carry out any manual handling task that may have a risk attached to it, or to give attention to the passenger whilst driving**. Where a member is unable to travel independently, they must be accompanied by a suitable escort/ carer.**

## Disability or Special Transport Needs

Members with a disability or special transport needs must advise us of relevant details when registering for membership, or as soon as the need becomes apparent, so that we can ensure the most appropriate form of transport is provided. We may also have to carry out an assessment for transport in some circumstances.

## Child Seats and Booster Seats

We do not provide child or booster seats / cushions – if a child requires one the parent / guardian or responsible person must make one available and fit it within our vehicle. It is also the responsibility of the parent/ guardian or responsible person to make sure the child seat or booster is age appropriate, legal and compliant.

## Driver and Passenger Conduct and Behaviour

We expect our staff to be courteous and considerate; and expect the same in return. We operate zero tolerance towards anyone that is rude or abusive. If you are less than satisfied with our staff or services, we would welcome your feedback. Details of our complaint’s procedure are available – or contact us and ask to speak with the manager.

## Driver Identification

All our drivers will be wearing appropriate FCT uniform and vehicles marked to identify that they are operating on FCT business.

## Driver and Passenger Hygiene and Appearance

We expect all our drivers and passengers to always have an acceptable standard of hygiene to ensure a comfortable journey for all our members. Passengers will not be permitted to travel if they (a) have unacceptable body odour and/or (b) a dishevelled appearance.

## Individual Membership Application Form & Data Protection

We take the protection and security of your personal and special category data extremely seriously. We always operate within the General Data Protection Regulation. We will only ever collect data that is necessary and legitimate to enable us to assess your application for membership and to deliver our transport service to you as a member. We are responsible for deciding how we hold and use personal information about you. If you fail to provide information when requested, which is necessary for us to consider your application, we will not be able to process your application successfully. A copy of our full Privacy Policy is available on our website at [www.fermanaghcommunitytransport.com](http://www.fermanaghcommunitytransport.com) or upon request, this can be posted out to you. This document makes you aware of how and why your personal data will be used, namely for the purposes of providing Community Transport services, and how long it will usually be retained for.

# Complaints Procedure

If a member would like to make a complaint about any part of the Dial-a-Lift service, please contact your local office on 028 66 324260.

Details of the complaint should be recorded as follows:

* Date and time of incident
* Name of the person involved
* Nature and details of the complaint.

We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and respond upon investigation within 30 days. If customers are not satisfied with the response or action taken, the matter will be referred to the Board of Directors for further investigation.

If you are not happy with the response you have received, how the complaint has been dealt with, or would like independent advice, you can contact the Consumer Council at any stage.

The Consumer Council

Elizabeth House

116 Holywood Road

Belfast

BT4 1NY

Freephone complaints line: 0800 121 6022

Telephone: 028 9067 3488

Fax: 028 9065 7701

Email: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

Website: [www.consumercouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)

# Feedback

We welcome and value customer feedback to continually improve the quality of the Dial-a-Lift service.

# Contact Us

Fermanagh Community Transport

42 Enniskillen Business Centre

Lackaghboy Industrial Estate,

Tempo Road,

Enniskillen

Co. Fermanagh

BT74 4RL

Telephone: 028 66 324260

Email: info@fermanaghcommunitytransport.com