

POLICY AND PROCEDURE



SoLO
Life
Opportunities

38 Walnut Close
Chelmsley Wood
Birmingham
B37 7PU

Charity No. 1102297
England Company No.
5025939

Transport and Travel

Category: service users

Introduction

Transportation is a discretionary service offered by SoLO.

SoLO strives to be fair to all of its stakeholders. This document sets out its policy and guidelines for the provision of transport.

Policy Statement

SoLO recognises that for some of its service users there is a need to provide transport. This is to ensure equality of provision and access. Those service users who have no other means of accessing the service will be given transport where funding allows, in compliance with our transport criteria.

Wherever possible SoLO will take into account the needs of the children, young people and adults by ensuring that the provision of transport is:

- Fair to all – giving equal access
- Safe

Transportation is a very costly service and there is no general obligation upon SoLO to provide transport. However, SoLO recognises that, for some service users, volunteers and staff transportation is essential to enable them to access our services. SoLO will do everything possible to provide transport for those who need it within the limitations of the funding available.

Volunteers are entitled to and will be encouraged to claim for 'out of pocket' transport expenses to a maximum amount of the equivalent of a day saver.

All of SoLO's services are tailored to meet the needs of the service users who attend them, and the needs for transportation are taken into account when setting up projects and budgeting. When transport is provided it should be taken from the appropriate budget.

SoLO is able to provide transport for a wider range of service users by:

- Obtaining additional external funding for specific services
- Obtaining additional external funding for specific groups of service users (e.g. those living in particular wards)
- Volunteers or staff providing transport for individuals.
- Parents and Carers paying for the transportation

Every attempt will be made to ensure that members with a learning disability who are able to travel safely independently will be encouraged to do so.

Occasionally, when additional transport is provided, a nominal sum representing part of the cost of the transport will be requested from the service user or their parents and carers. In these cases, they will be notified beforehand.

SoLO will do everything possible to ensure that transport is provided for the service users who meet the criteria. Staff will assist anyone who requests help in filling out of forms and appeals in respect of transport provided by SoLO.

Staff

SoLO staff may be provided transport in exceptional circumstances, e.g. when asked to cover for another member of staff working on a project that they cannot get to or arrive on time for without being provided with a taxi; or to enable a disabled employee to fulfill certain duties.

Occasionally, staff may provide transport for service users within their own vehicle (this needs to be properly risk assessed and authorised beforehand). Staff can do this only if they have provided proof of personal and business use insurance to do so (they will be required to confirm this on an annual basis). On these occasions, SoLO staff will be reimbursed for 'out of pocket' transport expenses. This allowance for this will be in line with our current mileage rate which is set at a fixed rate each year.

Volunteers

Some volunteers may provide transport as part of their voluntary work – particularly in the case of schemes such as Icebreakers, Leisure Links and on special events like discos. They can only do this, if they have provided proof of insurance to do so. This must include personal and business use (they will be required to confirm this on an annual basis).

SoLO volunteers will be reimbursed for 'out of pocket' transport expenses. For car owners who incur costs in the course of their voluntary work a mileage allowance is available. This allowance is set at a fixed rate each year.

If exceptional circumstances require a volunteer to travel by taxi the cost will be reimbursed provided that prior agreement has been awarded by an appropriate project manager.

Criteria

SoLO has a transport criteria which applies to the provision of transport and this is provided to every member or, in the case of children, to their parents and carers, prior to the scheme and the allocation of transport will be agreed on this basis.

There is an appeal process, if the member or their parent or carer is not happy with the way in which the criteria has been applied to them, and this is contained within the criteria documentation.

Change of Address

If a service user moves address, following transport being allocated, this may affect the provision of transport. Whilst we will make every effort possible to accommodate the service user on a new transport route, it will be subject to availability.

Change of Venue

If we have to change a service venue we will review individual eligibility for transport.

Travelling Time

SoLO will endeavour to restrict travel time to less than one hour for each journey, particularly for passengers with special needs. This may mean mini-buses, coaches, taxis are not full.

SAFETY

Drivers

Minibus drivers provided by SoLO or other voluntary organisations will have been trained to a MIDAS standard (or equivalent) and travelling under their organisations permit (under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985).

Anyone driving a minibus for SoLO must be over 21, hold a clean, full driving licence for 2 years and undertake a MIDAS (or equivalent) minibus driving test.

All drivers employed by SoLO will be DBS checked and reference checked. Where ever possible drivers hired from other organisations will have been similarly checked by their organisation.

Drivers, when driving for SoLO, must not consume any alcohol 12 hours before or during their driving duties.

Escorts

All escorts (paid or voluntary) travelling with our service users will be DBS checked and reference checked.

Children and vulnerable young people will be accompanied by a SoLO support worker who will act as an escort for the journey.

Vulnerable adults will be assessed and provided with an escort if appropriate.

Vehicles

SoLO owns one minibus and also contracts external companies and charities to provide transport. They will be a reputable provider and references will be sought.

If any of the drivers responsible for driving during the projects are in any way unhappy about the safety or suitability of the vehicles they have been asked to drive they must report their concerns to the appropriate project leader or manager at SoLO immediately. If the person cannot be contacted the driver should not risk either himself or others and drive the bus before it has passed as fit for purpose by an approved mechanic.

Staff and Volunteers using their own vehicles to transport service users must ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and checks have been made on oil, water, and fuel.

Safety during journeys

Service users will be transported in a safe manner:

- Wheelchairs will be clamped on and checked by drivers in line with their MIDAS training.
- All occupants will wear seatbelts and this will be checked by the escorts.
- Drivers must not carry more passengers than there are seat belts.
- Babies and very young children must be seated in an appropriate child seat. Parents of child under the height of 135 cms will be encouraged to provide an appropriate car seat/booster seat and this will be fitted to the vehicle for the journey if possible.
- Where possible, service users and escorts should sit in the rear of the vehicle.
- Escorts should have easy access to the vehicle door.

The driver will not depart until he or she is satisfied that the vehicle and its passengers are safe.

The escort will be provided with:

- The dates, times of the day and pick up/drop off points for the journeys.
- Contact numbers for the project leader and other emergency numbers.
- Needs assessment and emergency consent forms for each service user.
- A high visibility jacket to be worn when escorting a large number of people who need to be (i) physically escorted off the bus including wheelchair users; or (ii) who have challenging behaviour; or (iii) who have been risk assessed accordingly.

Drivers and escorts must not smoke whilst carrying service users for SoLO projects.

- When dropping a service user at their home, the support worker, escort or volunteer must ensure that they are safely in their home before leaving. In the case of a minor, they must not leave the child or young person until they are assured that an appropriate adult is at home. Escorts will accompany members to their front door, or knock on the front door and ask parents/carers

to collect the member from the bus, and follow any risk assessments as appropriate.

In the event of a fire, the Driver and Escort must follow the procedures in SoLO's Fire Safety Policy and are responsible for:

- the safe evacuation of members
- contacting parents and carers and informing SoLO's On-Call Staff Member
- arranging safe transportation home of members. In the first instance determining whether parents/carers are able to collect members and liaising with SoLO's On-Call to organise taxis for any remaining members
- completing an Incident Report or logging the incident in the Fire Log Book
- Fire fighting equipment will be checked on an annual basis. The equipment on SoLO's minibus will be checked on a regular basis

In the event of a seizure or emergency medical situation:-

- The Escort and Driver should follow procedures in SoLO's Emergency Treatment Policy. In the event of a seizure the driver should pull over somewhere safely and call Emergency Services and wait for them. The Escort should inform the parents/carers.

In the event of an accident, the Escort and Driver should follow the procedures outlined:

- Escort and driver must call 999
- Escort and driver must check on safety of members
- Evacuate where they can to a safe place
- Escort and driver must contact SoLO's on call person and then parents/carers at first available opportunity
- Escort and driver must make arrangements for safe transportation home of members

Staff or Volunteers Providing Transport for Service Users

Where transport is provided in volunteer or staff cars, drivers must provide SoLO with evidence of a good driving record and insurance for personal business use. SoLO will pay the cost of this insurance if it incurs an additional premium (where it is deemed to be cost effective). Where appropriate an escort will be provided. A full risk assessment will be carried out to ascertain if an escort is required. If an escort is required but not available, SoLO will provide a taxi so that the staff member or volunteer can then act as the escort. When staff or volunteers provide transport for a service user they will be reimbursed at the current mileage rate.

EFFICIENCY AND VALUE FOR MONEY

When using hiring vehicles, drivers and escorts, SoLO will consider the following when deciding on suppliers:

- Quality of vehicles
- Quality of staff
- Reliability
- Competitive prices

We will do this by:

- Taking advice and references from other organisations that regularly use transport providers for similar client groups, e.g. Solihull MBC transport officer, SoLO.
- Taking note of comments received through evaluation from service users, staff and volunteers.
- Comparing prices from different companies and charities
- Considering other costs e.g. length of time we would need to pay an escort

The final decision will be based on a balance of quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness.

EVALUATION

SoLO will evaluate the transportation during the standard evaluation of the overall project. If appropriate, amendments to provision will be made based on evaluation evidence.

TRAINING

Staff and volunteers will receive instruction on this policy at a level appropriate to their role.

Additional Information

Rules regarding child safety seats were checked on the internet. The RAC guide to child safety seats, when and how they should be used, is available to project managers (www.rac.co.uk/web/knowhow).

Linked with:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and criteria:

- Health and Safety
- Personal Safety
- Complaints
- Grievance
- Fire Safety
- Emergency Treatment
- Transport Criteria

TRANSPORT REQUEST FORM

Free transport can only be provided to those who meet the criteria outlined below.

Applicants will be required to explain precisely how they satisfy these requirements.

- Those with no family vehicle at all and not able to access the activity on foot or by public transport due to disability, and would suffer financial hardship if transport was not made available. A taxi or minibus will be arranged.

- Those with no family vehicle at all who can use public transport, but would suffer financial hardship if transport costs were not met.

Bus fares will be reimbursed

I, **request transport for my child..... on the following**

dates.....
.....

I feel that I meet the criteria for free transport because....

(Please state your reason(s) relating to one or more of the above criteria – provide as much information as possible)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

I do not meet the criteria for free transport, but cannot transport my child myself and will pay the £10 per day

.....

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO
Children’s Project Manager, SoLO Life Opportunities, 38 Walnut Close
Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham B37 7PU**