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association for
spina bifida
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ability beyond disability



Travelling to Work

There is an irony in the fact that having found the job you are after - with ramped access, accessible toilet etc - that for wheelchair users, your biggest obstacle might be physically getting there.

You have the option of using public transport or getting there under your own steam so let's look at those options:

Public Transport Driving

Improvements to the public transport system have been slow and patchy. We are a long way from a fully inclusive transport system, (2020). As expected, cities tend to be better served than the rural areas so this will influence your choice. All public transport buses will have to be accessible by 2017. Most passenger transport authorities and local authorities publish guides with details of services applicable to the traveller with disabilities - routes, lifts etc.

Many buses now have wheelchair ramps and where they don't, 'low floors' but these can still present a problem if travelling alone. Many passengers report ramps that don't work or unhelpful staff but this is not as common as it was. You might encounter a problem if travelling at busy times and boarding mid-way on a route. Generally only one wheelchair space is available.

All areas of the country offer concessionary travel on public transport to those whose disabilities qualify them for DLA Middle/Higher Rate and this is worth investigating.

If you qualify for DLA Higher Mobility Rate you could consider driving. If you are driving yourself check out that there are adequate and suitable parking facilities available at, or near, your workplace. If a parking space is not available within the work grounds check out the restrictions on the roads round and about. Is a blue badge recognised or do you have to pay for parking? This could work out expensive.

Alternatively, if you can't drive but still qualify you could get a friend, relative or assistant to drive instead. In many ways, driving is the hassle free option and you don't have to worry about the inconsistency of a public service. However this may not be suitable for you and you may like to consider other options.

Access to Work

You can find out more about this scheme from a Disability Employment Adviser at your local Jobcentre Plus. You may be eligible if you have found a job, and have a disability. An Access to Work adviser will discuss with you and an employer what practical help can be offered in order that you can do your job. This may be purchasing special equipment or aids, adaptations within the workplace, a communicator at job interviews and financial help with the cost of travel if public transport isn't an option. Once the most effective way of helping you has been identified, it has to be approved by Jobcentre Plus and is granted for a maximum period of 3 years. Your employer will be responsible for seeing these things are in place and recovering the cost from the Access to Work Scheme.

A much smaller pot of money is available to assist with travel problems and is only available at the discretion of the adviser but it is worth mentioning.



One of a series of booklets on transition to adulthood and employment for those with spina bifida or hydrocephalus, funded by The City Bridge Trust



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