

Transport in minibuses, coaches and cars

Transport arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of parents, carers or individual adults if they make arrangements among themselves. They are the responsibility of the PCC if the PCC organises them. Transport or travel between church activities will usually be the responsibility of the PCC. Transporting children and vulnerable adults on behalf of the church is a regulated activity.

This procedure applies to PCC approved drivers for PCC organised transport for children, young people, or wholly or mainly for adults who are vulnerable.

Responsibility of organisers

Those organising outings requiring the use of private cars or minibuses are responsible for ensuring that drivers are aware of this procedure.

Approved drivers must make a satisfactory disclosure with the Disclosure and Barring Service. You are advised to obtain from those people who are recruited to transport children or adults who may be vulnerable in their cars or drive minibuses:

- a signed undertaking, covering the issues below
- sight of their driving licence and their insurance certificate.

All transport

Consent

Children and young people should not be taken out in transport without the prior consent of their parents or carers

Adults who may be vulnerable should give permission to being transported themselves, and discretion used in consulting first with their carers (see consent forms)

Care should be taken when assisting children or adults who may be vulnerable to board and alight vehicles, both to ensure the road is safe to do so, and in respect of physical contact.

The driver

All those who drive children or adults who may be vulnerable should be over 25 and should have held a full current driving licence for over two years

Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Any driver who has an unspent conviction for a drink driving offence or for Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport children or adults who may be vulnerable.

Transport in private cars

Seat belts in cars:

Only cars fitted with seat belts (both front and rear) may be used, and the numbers of people transported should not exceed the number of seat belts available

All car passengers are required to wear safety belts in the front and rear seats

All children up to 3 years old must be carried in a child restraint

Rear-facing baby seats must not be used in a seat protected by a front air-bag unless the air-bag has been deactivated manually or automatically

Children from aged 3 up to 135cm in height (approx 45) or their 12th birthday (whichever they reach first) must use baby/child seats, or booster cushions for older children

All passengers aged 13 years or older must wear an adult seat belt if available.

The vehicle/insurance:

All cars that carry children or adults who may be vulnerable should be comprehensively insured. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts during church activities. It is the responsibility of car owners to check that their vehicle is insured for the transportation of children or adults who may be vulnerable. While the transportation of passengers without reward (i.e. for petrol money only) would normally be covered under social/domestic use, vehicle owners MUST check with their insurers. Additional cover can very often be included for a small extra charge

All cars that carry children or adults who may be vulnerable should be clean and in a road worthy condition. At no time should the number of people in a car exceed the number of seatbelts in the car.

Escorts:

Another responsible adult should accompany the driver, to assist with any emergencies

If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child or vulnerable adult on his or her own, the child or vulnerable adult must sit in the back of the car.

Minibuses, buses and coaches

Seat belts in minibuses, buses and coaches:

It is compulsory for passengers aged over 13 years to wear a safety belt if provided when travelling in a minibus, bus or coach

The legislation that requires baby/child seats and booster cushions to be used in cars does not apply to minibuses, buses and coaches i.e. commercial companies do not have to provide this equipment

However, a school or local authority (and therefore assume a church) contracting vehicles to carry children in their care should ensure that the children are provided with a safe journey

It is therefore recommended that only mini-buses with fitted seat belts (both front and rear) may be used, and all children and adults should use the seat belts.

Permit to drive:

AS REGULATIONS MAY CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME, PLEASE CONSULT GOVERNMENT WEBSITES FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION!

When using a minibus, whether owned, hired or borrowed, all drivers must hold the correct permit on their driving licence or take the appropriate driving test

Drivers with entitlement to drive cars prior to 1 January 1997 (shown as group

A, B for automatics on an old style licence or as category B and D1 not for hire or reward on a new style licence) can drive a minibus provided they are over 21 and under 70, the minibus has a maximum of 17 seats including the driver's, and is not being used for hire or reward

This minibus entitlement remains valid in the UK and on temporary visits abroad until the licence is next renewed. When this happens, the minibus

entitlement can only be issued by making a special application which involves

meeting higher medical standards. Minibus entitlement is normally renewed for 3 years

If minibus entitlement is not renewed, or the car licence was obtained after 1

January 1997, the driver may drive a minibus with a maximum of 16 passenger seats provided:

- it is driven on behalf of a non commercial body for social purposes but not for hire or reward;
- the driver is aged over 21 and under 70 years;
- the driver has held a car licence (category B) for at least 2 years;
- the driver is providing his/her service on a voluntary basis; and
- the minibus maximum weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers

When driving a minibus under these conditions, no payment must be received other than out of pocket expenses; no trailer can be towed; and minibuses may only be driven in the UK
Drivers aged 70 or over will need to make a special application which involves meeting higher medical standards

Regular drivers of minibuses should be encouraged to take a MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) test, organised by the Community Transport Association U.K. (CTA) which promotes a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers. It is a membership based scheme that has been designed to enhance minibus driving standards and promote the safer operation of minibuses. Further information is obtainable from www.ukroadsafety.co.uk/midas.

Escorts:

There must be another responsible adult travelling as escort in the rear of the vehicle, in most cases sitting next to the door

The adult should be responsible for ensuring a reasonable standard of behaviour, and particularly that children's or vulnerable adults' seat belts remain fastened

The adult should also supervise boarding and alighting.

March 2024

Date of next review: March 2025