

Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

1. Route Risk Assessments
2. Passenger Profiles
3. Child Seats
4. Seatbelts, Bucklesafe® and Harnesses
5. Passenger Assistants
6. CRB
7. Route Operation
8. Concerns for an adult or child?

Route Risk Assessments	Top of Page
<p>Why are operators now doing risk assessments?</p>	<p><i>It is a fact that risk assessments are best completed by those who regularly work in the environment to be assessed. Whilst we have tried to provide operators with suitable risk assessments the pace of change often meant that the assessment was in need of review shortly after completion. Operators are best placed to quickly respond to changes and it is our aim to support them to do this.</i></p>
<p>How do I complete a risk assessment?</p>	<p><i>There are links to guidance notes on the completion of risk assessments on the Etopia Risk Assessment page. If you are still having difficulty then please contact the Route Assessment Officer (RAO) on 01743 255044 or refer to the Health & Safety Executive website at http://www.hse.gov.uk</i></p>
<p>How often do I need to do a risk assessment?</p>	<p><i>Risk assessments, once completed should be reviewed annually. However, if there have been any significant changes which might affect the existing assessment then a review should be carried out. A change might be a new passenger, collection point, changes in behaviours or needs of individuals.</i></p>
<p>Can I use one risk assessment to cover all my routes?</p>	<p><i>No. Each route will be different, due to vehicle types, use of escorts, the passengers etc. Each route you operate must have its own risk assessment.</i></p>
<p>When I click “submit” who does the risk assessment go to?</p>	<p><i>Each risk assessment is received in the Integrated Passenger Transport Services office and is read and evaluated by the RAO. If there are any discrepancies or concerns regarding the accuracy of the assessment, the RAO will contact you to discuss the assessment.</i></p>
<p>Where do I store the RA?</p>	<p><i>Every person who works in the environment that is being assessed must be given access to the risk assessment. Risk assessments should be with those who may need to use them. The operations manager should keep office copies to hand (but securely) and the driver and passenger assistants (if applicable) should have access to them in the vehicle. Any risk assessment that contains personal information must be treated in accordance with the Data</i></p>

	Protection Act https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act
I have concerns regarding my route, who can help me?	<i>If the concern is regarding the safety and wellbeing of individuals on the route then the RAO, who works within Integrated Passengers Transport Services based in Shirehall, should be your first point of contact. If the concern is regarding the operation of the route then operators should speak to their normal point of contact within IPTS.</i>
Passenger Profiles	Top of Page
Who supplies me with passenger profiles for my route?	<i>All passenger profiles will come from IPTS.</i>
Who creates the passenger needs assessment (PNA)?	<i>For home to school transport the RAO will compile the PNA which will be based on any information shared by parents / guardians. Adult transport risk assessments will normally be from Social Services via IPTS. It is accepted that the RAO may need to be involved if there has been any reported concerns.</i>
When will the passenger needs assessment (PNA) be reviewed?	<i>PNA's are similar to risk assessments in that a review should occur if there have been changes, i.e. too big for child seat, using a wheelchair, etc. It would be good practice to do this at least every 24 months.</i>
Child Seats	Top of Page
Does my passenger need a child seat?	<i>If they are under 135 cm tall or less than 12 years of age, yes, that is the Law. Follow link to https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/overview</i>
What's the difference between child seat, booster seat, booster cushion and a special needs seat?	<i>Child seats and Special Needs seats are fitted with an integral harnesses and it is the seat base that is held by the vehicles seatbelt. Both offer a high degree of lateral support and tend to be large and cumbersome. These need to be fitted correctly. A Booster Seat has a seat base and back to maintain lateral support, however it does not have a harness, and the occupant uses the vehicle seatbelt. Most booster seats will have a shoulder clip to keep the seatbelt in the correct position. Booster cushion is just a seat base used to elevate the individual so that the seatbelt fits correctly.</i>
Can a child ride in the front seat?	<i>Yes, provided that the seatbelt fits or is</i>

	<i>adjusted to fit correctly. You need to be satisfied that the passenger will not interfere with the vehicle controls or become a distraction to the driver. It may be necessary to use seating aids. Seating passengers in the rear of the vehicle is always preferable.</i>
How do I fit the child seat?	<i>All child seating aids are obtained from the Transport Operations Group based at Longden Road, Shrewsbury, and there are trained child seat fitters based there. The seat issued should have fitting instructions or alternatively manufacturers fitting instructions should be available from their website.</i>
Seatbelts, Bucklesafe® and Harnesses	Top of Page
My passenger keeps taking off their seatbelt when I'm driving. How can I stop this?	<i>We generally try and encourage operators to work with parents to discuss the problem. It may be that we need to use mechanical aids and these tend to be a Bucklesafe which is a simple device that covers the seatbelt release button but can be simply removed by depressing two buttons. In more challenging cases a passenger assistant may be required. In all cases the RAO must be informed prior to any action being taken.</i>
My passenger keeps getting out of their seat while I'm driving. How do I stop this?	<i>In all cases the RAO must be informed. Normally a harness would be used however as this is a restraint, parental consent must be given prior to use. It is important that the correct size and type of harness is used so that it will fit the vehicle and individual correctly.</i>
How do I fit a harness?	<i>You should only use a harness that has been issued to you from Shropshire Council. In order to receive one you will have discussed the issue with IPTS and therefore the correct harness will have been issued to you. Harnesses are in the main designed to provide postural support and some restriction of movement. It is imperative for a harness to be effective it must fit the seat and child properly. Manufacturer's instructions are available from IPTS and should come with the harness. Alternatively the manufacturer's website will have a copy that can be downloaded. The RAO is able to offer additional support if necessary.</i>

My passenger wears a harness. Do they need to use a seatbelt as well?	Yes definitely. The harness is not a replacement for a seatbelt under any circumstances.
Passenger Assistants (escorts)	Top of Page
What justifies the necessity for a Passenger Assistant?	<i>Generally, a passenger assistant will be allocated to a route in response to supporting the driver deal with passenger needs. These needs tend to be medical or behavioural; however it may also be as a result of the number and ages of passengers. The passengers assistant will be in place as long as there is a need and they can be removed when the situation changes.</i>
Who can be a passenger assistant?	<i>Anyone. As long as a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check has been completed. Choosing the right person is the key part. Special school routes can be difficult and may not suit everyone. Also consideration should be given to the fitness of the passenger assistant where a route involves manoeuvring wheelchairs, which can be heavy.</i>
CRB	Top of Page
Does a passenger assistant need a DBS check?	<i>Yes. Drivers and passengers assistants require a valid DBS check has been completed before employment. Once issued it becomes the responsibility of the holder to ensure that it is renewed BEFORE its 3 year expiry.</i>
How do I renew my DBS?	<i>Contact the Shropshire Council DBS team who operate out of Shrewsbury Guildhall. They can be contacted on 0870 9090811.</i>
How long will it take to get a DBS?	<i>Normally, if the form has been completed correctly, a DBS certificate can be issued within a few weeks.</i>
Route Operation	Top of Page
When do I need to inform Integrated Passenger Transport Services of any service users that have not travelled?	<i>IPTS must be notified of a vain journey within 24 hours of the vain journey occurring. We record all vain journeys and this helps to ensure accurate invoicing. All drivers and passengers assistants should have a copy of the Code of Conduct and within the Code is a detailed list of actions.</i>
In the incident of a vehicle breakdown/ traffic accident with service users on board what action do I need to take?	<i>All drivers and passengers assistants should have a copy of the Code of Conduct and within the Code is a detailed list of actions.</i>

<p>If a service user requires support to and from the vehicle, what does the term 'support' entail?</p>	<p><i>Every individual has differing needs however, any support given should be non-weight bearing and more thought of as a steadying hand or guidance. If greater assistance is required this should be brought to the attention of the RAO immediately.</i></p>
<p>What is the emergency number for bad weather?</p>	<p><i>(01743) 253049</i></p>
<p>Can I go off the framework for emergency cover?</p>	<p><i>No, all operators must be on the Shropshire Council Framework. If you need contact numbers of operators within a specific area to cover your transport, you can contact IPTS to obtain these. IPTS must be informed of any cover that you have obtained.</i></p>
<p>Why can't the driver take information from the student re cancellations and amendments?</p>	<p><i>Transport contracts are held between IPTS and the operator so all cancellations and amendments must be communicated through the Transport Department and no instruction can be solely taken from student/adult or parents. This has in the past resulted in confusion and missed journeys.</i></p>
<p>How long do we wait for each child at a pick up point?</p>	<p><i>The rule in the Code of Conduct is 5 minutes per service user. This is provided that you are at the collection point at the allotted time.</i></p>
<p>Whose responsibility is it to take a passenger from the car to the front door?</p>	<p><i>The role of transport is to convey individuals to and from addresses. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to escort or the individual themselves to get to and from the vehicle. It is recognised that some individuals, particularly elderly may need some assistance and it is important that operators do not become drawn into the provision of "care related" tasks. There is a difference between opening the gate and opening the curtains!</i></p>
<p>What are the vehicle requirements to be able to carry passengers with oxygen?</p>	<p><i>Passengers may have need of oxygen therapy during a journey. It is mandatory that the appropriate hazard warning sign is correctly displayed on the vehicle so that the emergency services will know what they are dealing within the event of a fire or accident. Additionally, the cylinder needs to be secure and most are carried in a case which might be secured to a wheelchair. Provided the cylinder cannot move about the vehicle or become a missile in the event of the vehicle</i></p>

	<i>suddenly coming to a halt, then there are no other restrictions. Transport staff will need to be trained to administer oxygen.</i>
Who do I call regarding urgent situations out of office hours?	<i>Customer Service Centre on 0345 678 9004</i>
Concerns for an adult or child?	Top of Page
I have concerns regarding the welfare of a child, who do I talk to?	<p><i>You can report your concerns online by following the link on the NSPCC website' or phone on 0345 678 9021.</i></p> <p><i>You can also speak to:</i></p> <p><i>Public Protection Unit (West Mercia Police):</i> 0300 333 3000</p> <p><i>NSPCC: 0800 800 5000</i></p> <p><i>Childline: 0800 1111</i></p> <p><i>If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the emergency services on 999.</i></p>
I am worried about an adult passenger, who can I talk to?	<p><i>If you have concerns about a vulnerable adult you think may be being abused, you can phone 0345 678 9021 Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4pm.</i></p> <p><i>Outside of these hours please phone the Emergency Social Work Duty Team on 0345 678 9040.</i></p>