



TRANSPORT

PUBLIC BUSES

Two main public bus services operate in Belfast - Easibus service and the Metro service (Translink pink buses).

Easibus

Easibus is a bus service for all the community that provides localised routes to services such as health centres and clinics; local shops; housing for elderly people; and shopping centres such as Connswater, Forestside and the Abbeycentre. Easibus services only operate on particular days of the week depending on the route. They usually run every couple of hours. There are 10 Easibus services in Belfast. They have a number of set pick up points but there are also a number of bus stops along the route through residential areas that you can hail the bus to stop. On some roads you may not even need to be at the bus stop to hail the bus to stop. If you live on one of the Easibus routes you can ring Easibus and request a stop at or near to your home within the scheduled timetable.

Easibus services have a ramp to make boarding easy for older people. There are 2 spaces inside the bus for passengers in wheelchairs. Drivers have been trained to enable them to meet the needs of disabled passengers.

Standard Ulsterbus or Metro fares apply on Easibus services and concessionary fares are available for those who qualify (see section on concessionary fares).



For information on routes and timetables telephone Easibus Belfast: **028 9073 1117**

Timetables can also be viewed on the following website:
www.translink.co.uk/metroeasibustimetables.asp

Metro (Belfast bus service)

The Metro service operated by Translink provides buses every 5-10 minutes during the day (Mon-Fri) along main roads (also referred to as corridors) in Belfast. All **the main Metro Corridors** are operated by low floor vehicles and 70% of other Metro buses allow wheelchair access (space for one wheelchair).

Call **028 9066 6630** for information on timetables (Monday – Sunday 7am to 8pm) or textphone 028 9038 7505.

Timetables are also available on Translink website: www.Translink.co.uk/MetroCorridorTimetables.asp

Some Ulsterbus services operating in the Greater Belfast area set down and pick up on Metro corridors. These services are numbered 500-599 and generally serve the Metro network after 6.30 pm and all day Saturday and Sunday.

Accessible Facilities at Bus Stations

The two main Ulsterbus stations in Belfast – Laganside and the Europa Bus Centre are wheelchair accessible and both stations have adjacent multi-storey car parks with 9 designated parking bays for Blue Badge holders. Most



wheelchair users should be able to travel on low floor buses and trains. However some types of mobility vehicles cannot. As guidance, manual and powered wheelchairs up to a maximum width of 70cm and length of 120cm can usually be carried.

For information on the accessibility of bus stations outside of Belfast, go to the “Out and About” website (www.ni-transportguide.info). Alternatively a hard copy of the “integrated access guide to bus and rail passenger facilities” can be obtained from the Marketing department of Translink (Telephone: **028 9089 9400**).

Bus Services Outside of Belfast/Accessibility

Ulsterbus and the Goldline express coaches serves other towns and villages across Northern Ireland. Not all of these vehicles as yet meet accessibility standards. Translink have an ‘accessible’ timetable for Goldline Express services across NI outlining bus services/routes that are accessible to wheelchairs. This timetable is available at bus stations or alternatively can be obtained by ringing **028 9066 6630**

If you are making a specific journey and require a bus with wheelchair access contact your local Ulsterbus depot where, if possible, staff will ensure that the bus you require is wheelchair accessible. A wheelchair space can be reserved by giving Translink a minimum of twenty four hours notice by contacting the Translink Call Centre on **028 9066 6630**



Concessionary Fare Scheme/SmartPass

The concessionary fare scheme (**SmartPass**) provides free public transport on scheduled bus and rail services throughout Northern Ireland to men and women aged 60 and over; those registered blind and war disablement pensioners. Application forms can be picked up at any bus or rail station, or by telephoning **028 9066 6630**

Passenger Charter/Policy

Translink updated their 'Passenger Charter' in September 2008, outlining their commitment to providing a high quality service. The charter outlines performance standards in relation to reliability; targets in terms of buses and trains; what to expect from their staff; facilities to deal with passengers with particular needs; refunds; complaints and comments; and what is expected from passengers. Translink also have an 'Access Policy' which contains information and advice on how to use their services, information for customers with disabilities or mobility problems, and contact number to help you plan your journey.

Copies of the Passenger Charter and Access Policy are available in bus/railway stations. Copies can also be obtained by ringing Translink on **028 9066 6630**

If you have a problem or concern regarding the accessibility of buses contact the Access Manager within Translink on **028 7963 2218**



Comments or Complaints

If you have any comments, suggestions or complaints on any aspect of Translink services, or on ways to improve their service contact:

Metro

Your local District Manager or contact Customer Services Co-ordinator, Milewater Road, Belfast.

Telephone: **028 9035 4035**

NI Railways

Your Route Line Manager or contact Customer Services Manager, Central Station, Belfast.

Telephone: **028 9089 9400**

Ulsterbus

Your local District Manager or contact Call Centre Complaints, Customer Services Co-ordinator.

Telephone: **028 9038 7503**

Textphone: 028 9038 7505

Email: feedback@translink.co.uk

Translink will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and will respond to all complaints within 15 working days of receiving them.

If you have a specific complaint about a bus driver or an unsatisfactory journey, all of the information you need to make a complaint will be on the bus ticket you received for example, the route number, driver number, bus number, date and time.



You can also complain to the Consumer Council about buses (telephone: **0845 601 6022**).

BUS SERVICE TO ROSELAWN CEMETERY

Belfast City Council are currently running a free bus service for older people who live in the Council's electoral area travelling to and from (and around) Roselawn Cemetery and City of Belfast Crematorium. It is available on Tuesdays and Fridays from various locations around Belfast.

For more information on timetables or to book a place, call Belfast City Council on **028 9027 0296**. You can view the timetables on the following website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/roselawn/

TRAINS

There are 12 train stations/stops in Belfast. Train fares are free to older people who have a senior SmartPass.

Call **028 9066 6630** (Monday – Sunday 7am to 8pm) for information on timetables and accessible facilities or textphone 028 9038 7505.

Timetables are also available on Translink website: www.Translink.co.uk

SHOPMOBILITY AND WHEELCHAIR HIRE

Shopmobility Belfast provides free daily loan and long-term loan (at a small cost) of electric scooters; powered wheelchairs and manual wheelchairs. They can also provide



information on blue badges, door to door service, Motability Radar key etc. Anyone who finds access to the city centre difficult including older people and people with disabilities can use the service. You need to apply for membership to use the service. The service can be booked by contacting **Shopmobility Belfast** on **028 9080 8090**

Location of Shopmobility Branches in Belfast

Westgate House	028 9080 8090
Gresham Street	028 9031 9191
Forestside Shopping Centre	028 9064 0994
Connswater Shopping Centre	028 9045 5133
Europa Buscentre/Great Victoria	
Street Railway Centre	028 9080 8090
Royal Group of Hospitals	028 9031 0923
Victoria Square Shopping Centre	028 9032 4466

Additional Sources of Wheelchair Hire

Red Cross	07872 843 840
John Preston	028 9267 7077

DOOR TO DOOR TRANSPORT

If you have a disability, cannot use public transport, and do not have access to a car, there are a number of door-to-door transport schemes in Belfast you may be able to use.

Door to Door Scheme: Disability Action

Disability Action Transport operate a door to door scheme throughout Belfast on behalf of the Department for



Regional Development (DRD). You can use this scheme if you receive one of the following benefits: higher rate mobility component or care component of Disability Living Allowance; higher rate care component of Attendance Allowance; or people registered blind; or people over the age of 80. If none of these apply you can also apply for membership through your doctor.

To become a member contact the Department for Regional Development on **028 9054 0609**, Textphone 028 9054 0642 for an application form or apply on-line at www.door2door-ni.info

To book a journey call: 028 9029 7870 (if you live in Belfast) or Textphone 028 90297882.

You will need to book at least 24 hours in advance. Membership is free, fares are £1.50 (one way) £3 (return journey) within the Belfast area. 50p per mile for travel outside of Belfast (subject to availability).

Red Cross Transport and Escort Service

Red Cross volunteers provide a transport service to anyone with limited mobility or no access to transport. The service is available on weekdays until 5.00pm and costs 48p per mile. Wheelchair users can usually be accommodated providing prior arrangements are made.

For more details contact Transport and Escort Service on **028 9073 5350**



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Community transport provides affordable accessible transport for individuals, groups and associations where there is limited public transport or where conventional transport is not appropriate for the passengers needs. There are three community transport providers in the Belfast area: **Disability Action; Direct Links;** and **Ardoyne Community Transport.** Journeys need to be booked in advance, preferably with one day's notice. Ask for costs on booking.

To apply for membership call:

Disability Action on **028 9029 7880;**

Direct Links on **028 9024 3459**

Ardoyne Community Transport on **028 9074 1479**

Group Hire: Community transport vehicles can also be hired out by community/ voluntary groups.

Contact Community Transport Association for a full list of low cost vehicles for hire on **028 9094 1661**

TRANSPORT TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FACILITIES

Non-Emergency transport

As a general rule patients are expected to make their own way to hospital appointments. However in some cases transport may be provided by the Health and Social Care Trust if a GP or Hospital consultant assesses there is a medical problem that prevents the use of other forms of transport.



Social Care Transport

The Health and Social Care Trust can also provide transport to social care services such as to and from day care facilities. The same criteria that are used for assessing non-emergency transport are used to assess the need for provision of transport to social care services. The social worker is the main person responsible for making decisions on eligibility for transport to social care services.

Hospital Travel Cost Scheme

The hospital travel cost scheme is provided by hospitals to help with the cost of travel to hospital. Patients who are automatically entitled to the scheme include those who are under the care of a hospital consultant and are in receipt of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-based), Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit), Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit. Eligible patients may also claim travelling expenses for an escort if medically necessary.

The cost refunded to the patient is calculated on the basis of the cheapest form of public transport available. Patients travelling by private car may claim the lesser of the estimated cost of fuel actually used, or the equivalent cost of public transport. Parking charges will also be refunded. Patients may claim help with travel costs up to three months after the date of travel.



Claim forms and leaflets can be obtained from Hospitals, Social Security Office or Jobs and Benefit offices, Benefit Shop, Castle Court, Royal Avenue, Belfast, Telephone: **028 9033 6958**
or from the Pension Service if you are aged over 60 Telephone: **0808 100 2658** or text phone: 0808 100 1165
Leaflets are also available on the following website:
www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2003/hc11_booklet.pdf

Hire of Health Service Vehicles

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust may hire out their vehicles in the evenings and weekends to groups with members who are elderly or have a sensory physical or learning disability or those with mental illness. The cost is £15 per hour.

For more information telephone: **028 9004 0802** or email: transport.services@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Access to Health Services - Transport to Hospitals in Belfast

Hospital Details	Travel by bus
Royal Hospitals 028 9024 0503	A special Royal Hospitals bus (route 95) leaves from Donegall Square East at the side of the City Hall at 7.10am, 7.30am and every half hour after that, stopping at Howard Street and the Europa Bus centre and railway stop in Great Victoria Street



Belfast City Hospital 028 9032 9241	Metro Bus routes 9A and 9B pass the Lisburn Road while route 92A bus goes to the Donegall Road entrance Flexibus Translink FREE bus between Belfast City Hospital and the Royal Hospitals - runs every 20 minutes between 9-5pm and picks up outside the Royal/ Maternity Hospital and Belfast City Hospital Tower block
Mater Hospital 028 9074 1211	Metro Bus route 12B bus which leaves from Donegal Square North stops near the main entrance
Musgrave Park Hospital 028 9090 2000	Metro Bus Services 90, 92, 92A and 92B all operate along Stockmans Lane past the hospital
Forster Green Hospital 028 9094 4444	Metro Service 6a which operates along the Cregagh Road passes the Forster Green Hospital
Ulster Hospital 028 9048 4511	Metro Services 4A and 19 operate past the Ulster Hospital at Dundonald as well as Ulsterbus Service 5 which operates from Laganside Buscentre to Newtownards
Shaftsbury Square Hospital 028 9032 9808	Metro Services 90, 91, 92 and 92a serve Shaftsbury Square



Knockbracken
Healthcare Park
028 9056 5656

Metro Corridor 7 and Ulsterbus
Services to Ballynahinch, Newcastle
and Downpatrick operate along the
Saintfield Road

Transport to Health and Wellbeing Centres

Health and Wellbeing Centres

Travel By Bus

Arches Health and Care
Centre 1 Westminster
Avenue North, Belfast,
BT4 1NS
028 9056 3200

Metro Corridor 3 and 4 from the
City Centre

Carlisle Health and
Wellbeing Centre
38-56 Antrim Rd, Belfast,
BT11 9EA
0845 300 6650

Metro Corridor 1 from the City
Centre and Ulsterbus Service
573

Bradbury Health and Care
Centre 1-17 Lisburn Rd,
Belfast, BT9 7AA
028 9091 2100

Metro Corridor 9 from the City
Centre and Ulsterbus Service
523, 525 and 526

Grove Wellbeing Centre
120 York Road, Belfast,
BT15 3HF
028 9063 6800

Metro Corridor 2
(2A/2B/2D/2E/2F) from
Donegall Square West to
Monkstown or Carnmoney



The Knockbreda Centre, Forster Green Hospital site 110 Saintfield Road Belfast BT8 6GR 028 9063 1200	Metro Corridor 7 from the City Centre
Beech Hall Centre Wellbeing and Treatment Centre 21 Andersonstown Road Belfast BT11 9AF 028 9504 0044	Metro Bus Number 10A, 10D, 10C, 10H from Belfast City Hall
Shankill Wellbeing and Treatment Centre 83 Shankill Road Belfast BT13 1PD 028 9504 0043	Metro Bus number 11A, 11B or 11C from Belfast City Hall

Door to Door/Community Transport

Door to Door services in Belfast can be used for transport to hospital appointments. Community transport cannot be used for hospital appointments but can be used for GP appointments.

DRIVING

Driving Licenses

There is no upper age limit on driving a car however all drivers have to renew their license on reaching the age of 70 and every three years from then on. The renewal form will be sent to you automatically by Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA).



You must write and inform the DVA if you have a medical condition which has become worse since your driving license was issued or if you develop a new medical condition as it may affect your fitness to drive. Failure to do so is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to £1,000. It is also important that you inform your car insurance company as it may affect your insurance. If you have any doubts about your eligibility to drive, consult your GP.

For further information on driving licenses and medical conditions contact DVA on **0845 402 4000**.
Address: Driver Licensing Medical Section, DVLNI County Hall, Castlerock Road, Coleraine BT51 3TB

Road Safety Advice

If you are experiencing problems coping with driving, traffic or road conditions think carefully about whether you should continue driving. If you need to wear glasses you must wear them at all times whilst driving. The police have the power to require a driver at any time to undertake an eyesight test in good daylight. The Department for the Environment (DoE) have a Road Safety for Older Drivers leaflet which provides information on road safety tips.

To obtain a copy telephone: **028 9054 0094**

Driving Refresher Courses

Refresher courses are good for people who have not driven for a long time or are anxious and have lost confidence in driving.



The Institute of Advanced Motorists offer a “drive check” which will assess the drivers strengths and weaknesses and give advice (cost £25). People can proceed to doing an advanced driving course if they want at an additional charge.

For more information contact the Institute of Advanced Motorists on **0845 370 0144** or email: Belfast@amni.org.uk

Many professional driving instructors also offer refresher courses for people who have been driving for some time. Look out for driving schools that specifically offer refresher courses and discuss your requirements with the trainer before booking any lessons.

Motability

Motability is a charity which helps disabled people and their families to become more mobile by helping them to use the Higher Rate Mobility Component of their Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or their War Pensions Mobility Supplement (WPMS), to lease or buy a car, or to buy a powered wheelchair or scooter. You do not need to be a driver to qualify.

For more information contact Motability on **0845 456 4566** or visit their website: www.motability.co.uk

Road Tax Exemptions

You will not have to pay road tax if you are a disabled person who:

- is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance with the higher rate of the Mobility Component



- were in receipt of Attendance Allowance before 13 October 1993 and have a valid Exemption Certificate
- receive War Pensions Mobility Supplement.

For further information on road tax exemptions contact Disability and Carers Service on **028 9090 6182**

Blue Badge Scheme

The purpose of the Scheme is to give disabled people and older people the ability to park on-street, close to the facilities and services they need so as to improve their lifestyle, independence and freedom of choice. The scheme only applies to on-street car parking. For off-street car parking such as shopping centres and multi-storey car parks, badge holders must check the concessions offered as these can vary widely.

The cost of the blue badge is £2.

For an application form and more information on who qualifies for a badge and its use, contact:

Disabled Persons Badge Scheme Central Office, Castle Barracks Wellington Place, Enniskillen, BT74 7NH

Telephone: **028 6634 3700**, website: www.roadsni.gov.uk

Car Park Concessions

'City Car Parks' situated in Francis St./King St. (next door to the Castlecourt Shopping Centre) currently offer concessionary parking rates for pensioners. To avail of the concessionary fare you will need to bring with you proof that you are a pensioner and show this to the pay station on leaving the car park along with your ticket.



For more information contact City Car Parks on
028 9024 2220

TAXIS

Public hire

Public taxis (often known as black taxis) work from a designated stand and can be hailed in the street. In Belfast a public hire taxi will have yellow licence plates on the front and back of the vehicle. Public taxis outside Belfast will have white licence plates.

Taxi Buses

Taxi buses work like buses on routes picking up and leaving off passengers at bus stops on demand. Taxi buses will have a blue and white taxi licence plate. You will be charged a set fare and you may have to share the taxi with other people. Taxi buses in Belfast serve North and West Belfast and the Shankill. There is no taxi bus service available to people living in South and East Belfast.

Private Hire

Private taxis must be pre-booked. Most taxis are saloon cars however some of the larger Belfast companies have wheelchair accessible vehicles. It is advisable to check with the cab firm prior to booking of the availability of such cabs if needed. Private hire taxis will have a green licence plate (see yellow pages for full list of taxi firms available in Belfast). All licensed taxi drivers must have a green badge showing their photograph and licence number.



CYCLING

Sustrans, in partnership with others, has produced a “Belfast By Bike” route map which highlights the opportunities for both novice and experienced cyclists wishing to explore Belfast by bike.

To get a copy of the “Belfast By Bike” route map call in at Belfast Welcome Centre (Royal Avenue, Belfast) or telephone **028 9043 4569**. Alternatively you can download it from the following website: www.sustrans.org.uk/default.asp?sID=1090921062122

Translink have also produced in partnership with Sustrans a “Bikeit with Translink” guide on how to travel with your bike on public transport across Northern Ireland.

For more information telephone translink on **028 9066 6630**.

A copy of the “Bikeit with Translink” guide can be downloaded from the following website: www.translink.co.uk/bikeitwithtranslink.asp

FLYING

The Consumer Council recommend that if your flights or holiday package costs more than £100 you should book by credit card as this gives you extra protection if something goes wrong.

Disabled access

By law all airports in Northern Ireland and the UK (including those in the European Union) have to be fully accessible to



people with disabilities. New laws have come into force from July 2008 which means that airports must provide services and assistance to enable disabled people and others to access flights. There are minimum standards set out for what sort of assistance should be provided. Airports are not allowed to charge passengers for this service.

When booking a flight, tell the airline company what your travel needs are. Before leaving for the airport remember to bring photographic identification with you when flying to UK destinations. You will need an up to date passport for international flights.

A guide is available with information and advice for disabled people who want to travel by air. To get a copy of the guide contact the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) on **020 7944 8011**. Website: www.dptac.independent.gov.uk

Information on disabled rights when flying can also be sought from the Consumer Council, telephone: **028 9067 2488**

Travel to Airports

By Bus

International Airport: Translink run an Airport Express 300 bus from Belfast Europa Buscentre to the International Airport every 10 minutes at peak times. The approximate journey time is 30-40 minutes subject to traffic. The Airport Express 300 is operated by low floor vehicles.



City Airport: Translink run an airport Express 600 from the Europa Buscentre to George Best City Airport every 20 minutes at peak times.

Dublin Airport: Translink run an hourly bus service from Belfast City Centre (side of City Hall (also stopping at the Europa Buscentre)) to Dublin Airport. Approximate journey time is 2 hours 20 minutes.

For more information on bus times contact Translink timetables on **028 9066 6630**. Website: www.Translink.co.uk

Aircoach

Aircoach provides a 24-hour coach service between Belfast (Jurys hotel, Great Victoria Street) and Dublin Airport. The first coach leaves from Belfast at 6:30am and the last is at 8.30pm. You can buy tickets from their travel shop based in the Europa Bus Centre Belfast. Cost for a return ticket for an adult is £15 and £10 for a child. The service is free for Senior SmartPass holders.

For more information on timetables go to Aircoach website: www.aircoach.ie/table.routes.belfast.php or ring **0870 225 7555**

By Car

Car parking at airports can be quite expensive especially if you park at the short stay car park which is closest to the



terminal. Long stay car parks are cheaper however there is usually a moderate/long walk to the terminal. A mini bus is available which regularly tours around long stay car parks collecting passengers and bringing them to the terminal. You will need to leave additional time on top of your check in time to allow waiting time for the mini bus.

TRAVELLING BY BOAT

Some boat companies have a special minibus to help you get to the boat. When you book your boat journey you should tell the travel company what your travel needs are.

Travel to the Boat Terminal

By Bus

Translink run a bus service from the Europa Buscentre to Larne Harbour, and from the Europa Buscentre and Belfast City Hall to Stena Line terminal (West Bank Road Stena Line).

Translink also offer an Ulsterbus cross channel service which will allow you to travel by bus/boat to a number of British destinations.

For more information on bus times to boat terminals as well as bookings on the cross channel service contact Translink on **028 9066 6630**. Website: www.Translink.co.uk



ADVICE SOURCES

Out and About website

The “Out and About” website (www.ni-transportguide.info) provides a guide to accessible transport in Northern Ireland for people who may have mobility problems. It provides information on transport services available by: bus; train; taxi; car; sea, and air. It also provides information on SmartPasses, door to door services, shopmobility and sources of advice.

Translink Enquiries

For information on Translink bus and rail timetable contact the Call Centre on **028 9066 6630**. Textphone: **028 9038 7505** if you are deaf or hard of hearing. Website: www.Translink.co.uk

The Action on Hearing Loss typetalk system can also be used to contact local bus and rail stations. Textphone users can dial 18001 followed by full telephone number.

Ricability

Ricability is the trading name of the Research Institute for Consumer Affairs (RICA). They are a national research charity dedicated to providing independent information of value to disabled and older consumers.



To obtain a copy of any of their reports telephone:

020 7427 2460, textphone: **020 7427 2469**.

Website: www.ricability.org.uk

Easibus Travel Club has been set up by Translink to provide a more personal service for people who are apprehensive about travelling because of health problems. Membership is free and it enables you to let the Easibus Team know about your concerns.

For more information contact Translink on **028 9073 1117** or write to Easibus Travel Club, Translink, Freepost Bel3036, Belfast, BT1 3BR.

Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory

Committee (IMTAC) IMTAC is a committee of disabled people and older people, plus others including key transport professionals. Their role is to advise Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of older people and disabled people.

For further information contact IMTAC on: **028 9072 6020**

Textphone: **028 9072 6016**

Email: info@imtac.org.uk, Website: www.imtac.org.uk

Consumer Council

The Consumer Council handles consumer complaints about planes, trains, buses, ferries, electricity, natural gas and coal. They aim to speak up for consumers and give them a voice.



Making a complaint

If you have a complaint about transport contact the Consumer Council's complaints team by letter, telephone or email.

For more information contact Consumer Council on
0800 121 6022.

Email: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk