



Total Mobility scheme

Requirements for public transport authorities

September 2026

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More information

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1 Introduction

This document sets out requirements, policy, principles, processes and explanatory notes relevant to public transport authorities to assist in the administration of the Total Mobility scheme.

1.1 Background and context

The Total Mobility scheme is one of the mechanisms by which the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) and public transport authorities fulfil their responsibilities towards assisting the transport disadvantaged. Its origins date back to 1981.

Funded in partnership with public transport authorities and central government, the Total Mobility scheme assists eligible people with permanent disabilities and long-term impairments in accessing appropriate transport to meet their daily needs and enhance their community participation. This assistance is provided in the form of subsidised door-to-door transport services.

The Total Mobility scheme complements the provision of public transport services by providing supported transport for eligible people who are unable to use public transport.

1.2 Roles and responsibilities

Public transport authorities are responsible for the administration of the Total Mobility scheme in their respective regions, including managing client relationships, client eligibility and transport services. Public transport authorities must ensure the scheme's central tenet is delivered and policies applied. They must be able to demonstrate:

- consistent and robust administration
- being cost-conscious and encouraging competition
- evidence-based decision-making
- ongoing risk management and
- transparent and accountable processes and decisions.

The Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) is responsible for Total Mobility policy settings. MCERT also sets the overall level of funding available to the NZTA through the national land transport fund and Crown appropriation funding.

The NZTA is responsible for national oversight, administration and setting of requirements and guidance in line with Government policy. NZTA works with public transport authorities to administer and fund the scheme.

1.3 Using this document

The following terms are utilised to distinguish between requirements and guidance:

- “must” denotes requirements. This term refers to content that public transport authorities must adhere to. These requirements can stem from either a statutory provision within the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) or statutory powers granted to NZTA under the LTMA, such as defining conditions of receiving funding from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) or approving procurement procedures. They may also stem from Government funding and policy requirements.
- “Should” and “May” denote guidance. The term “should” indicates strong recommendations or best practices, while “may” suggests optional guidelines.

2 Total Mobility scheme

2.1 Purpose of the scheme

The purpose of the Total Mobility scheme is to provide subsidised, accessible transport options to disabled people and people living with long-term impairments, who are unable to access public transport, to live their lives and participate in work, education and their community.

This assistance is provided in the form of subsidised door-to-door transport services for eligible people travelling in areas where Total Mobility services are available. The Total Mobility scheme provides a subsidy per trip up to a maximum subsidised fare for eligible people with permanent disabilities or long-term impairments.

The Total Mobility scheme is funded by NZTA out of the public transport activity class of the NLTF in combination with public transport authority and central government funding and must be managed within budget limits.

The Total Mobility scheme is intended to complement public transport services.

2.2 Central tenet

The Total Mobility scheme is founded on the central tenet that people with impairments who are unable to use public transport should be assisted with a subsidised alternative by local and central government.

The central tenet reflects the legislative requirement under the LTMA 2003 for local and central government to consider the needs of people who are transport disadvantaged. Providing the Total Mobility scheme is one way that public transport authorities may give effect to this aspect of the legislation. Further guidance is provided in the NZTA [development guidelines for regional public transport plans](#).

The Total Mobility scheme is primarily a transport service and is no more a social, health or disability service than any other type of transport service. Anybody would be at risk of social isolation and adverse health outcomes if they did not have adequate access to appropriate transport. The Total Mobility scheme provides eligible people with permanent disabilities or long-term impairments access to transport and the means to participate in their communities in whatever way they choose.

2.3 Terms and conditions of use

Public transport authorities must publish nationally consistent terms and conditions of use for people using Total Mobility services and advise clients of these terms and conditions.

Public transport authorities must adopt the terms and conditions set out in Appendix C and publish these on their websites. The terms and conditions are designed to explain the clients' responsibilities and ensure the scheme is utilised only as intended.

2.4 Privacy statement

Public transport authorities must publish a Total Mobility privacy statement in compliance with the Privacy Act 2020 – specifically, information privacy principles 3 and 3A which outline how personal information is collected, used, stored, shared and corrected.

The privacy statement must inform clients that:

- information from the mobility assessment will determine eligibility and may be used for anonymous statistics and research which will not identify them
- information will be accessed by Assessors, Assessment Agencies and representatives of the public transport authority
- NZTA, Audit New Zealand or similar Crown entities may access the information for oversight, reporting and audit and
- public transport authorities are required to supply information to NZTA when requested.

Public transport authorities must advise potential clients how their information will be managed during the initial Mobility Assessment.

3 Client eligibility

3.1 General eligibility criteria

Total Mobility eligibility is based on an individual's inability to use public transport. They must have a permanent disability or long-term impairment that has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more and that prevents them from undertaking any one or more of the following five components of a journey by public transport in a safe and dignified manner:

- 1. Getting to the place from where the transport departs**
- 2. Getting onto the transport**
- 3. Riding securely**
- 4. Getting off the transport**
- 5. Getting to the destination**

These journey components are consistent with the approach outlined by the Human Rights Commission, which describes an accessible journey as follows: “for a person to get from their home to a destination and then home again requires a number of linked steps. All these steps are of equal importance. If one link is broken or inadequate, the whole journey becomes impractical” (Human Rights Commission, 2005).

People who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and have a permanent disability or long-term impairment that prevents them from undertaking any one or more of the specified components of a journey by public transport are eligible for the Total Mobility scheme.

A permanent disability or long-term impairment must last longer than six months and may be psychological, psychiatric, physical, neurological, intellectual, sensory or other.

3.2 Impact on ability to use public transport

The permanent disability or long-term impairment must impact the person's ability to use public transport in a safe and dignified manner.

Eligibility for the Total Mobility scheme is not based on the disability itself but on the impact of the disability on a person's ability to use public transport. It must be the disability that prevents a person from undertaking the journey by public transport, not any other reason, for example:

- having too much shopping to take on the bus
- preferring taxis rather than buses
- not having a public transport route nearby
- not being able to afford a taxi or
- any situation not related to the disability or long-term impairment of 6 months or more.

The assessment of whether a person can use public transport in a safe and dignified manner should take account of the following concepts:

- **Safe** generally means ‘free from harm or danger’. In the Total Mobility context, examples of ‘unsafe’ might include:
 - a component of the journey causes an increase in the risk of significant deterioration in the person's condition (e.g. epileptic seizure or breathing difficulties)

- a component of the journey exposes the person's disability-related vulnerabilities to possible exploitation (e.g. vulnerabilities related to intellectual or psychiatric impairment) or
- a component of the journey (e.g. getting on to or off the transport) is unsafe for the person to attempt, because of their impairment).
- **Dignified** generally means in a manner that does not bring disrespect or humiliation. In the Total Mobility context, examples of 'undignified' might include:
 - a person has to depend on help from a stranger (who may or may not agree to help)
 - a person's impairment-related vulnerabilities are unduly exposed or
 - a person is expected to get on to or off the transport in a way that compromises their dignity.

3.3 Eligibility and fluctuating need

People with permanent disabilities or long-term impairments who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and are unable to use public transport services some of the time, but not all of the time, should be eligible for the scheme.

This is intended to cover situations where a permanent disability or long-term impairment may present fluctuating need (e.g. epilepsy), or the disability is constant and non-fluctuating but is affected by other factors that make independent travel difficult at times. This may include people with permanent disabilities (such as Alzheimer's) that restrict travel on buses, trains or ferries to very familiar routes.

The fact that a person may be able to undertake all five journey components some (but not all) of the time does not affect their eligibility. However, this will affect their level of need for Total Mobility trips, which will logically be less than if they were unable to use bus, train or ferry services all of the time. Fluctuating need must be determined through a mobility assessment (refer section 5.2).

Where practical, a Total Mobility client with fluctuating need should use public transport as a first option. Some public transport authorities provide discounted public transport fares for people with disabilities.

3.4 Eligibility and duration of impairment

People who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and have an impairment that has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more should be eligible for the scheme.

A person whose impairment is permanent and who meets the criteria is eligible for Total Mobility. A person who has an impairment that has already lasted for six months or more may be considered eligible (provided they meet the criteria).

Whether the impairment is expected to last another six months is immaterial to the person's eligibility and does not imply a six-month stand-down period before a person can become eligible for Total Mobility.

3.5 Eligibility of children

Children with permanent disabilities or long-term impairments who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme should be eligible for the scheme from 5 years of age.

Children from the age of 5 may be eligible for the Total Mobility scheme, with eligibility based on the child's ability to access services, education or play in the same way that other children without disabilities can.

The ability to travel on public transport or not must be determined through a mobility assessment (refer section 5.2). The assessment must consider whether it is a child's age or their disability that prevents them from using public transport. If it is because of their age then they do not qualify. If it is because of their disability then they do qualify. A child's need to travel with a caregiver because of their age is not a relevant consideration when assessing eligibility for the Total Mobility scheme.

The Total Mobility scheme is not a substitute for transport services that are the responsibility of other funding providers, such as the Ministry of Education's Special Education School Transport Assistance (SESTA). A child may be eligible for both services as they each serve different purposes.

Students that do not qualify for SESTA funding, but who are eligible for Total Mobility, may use the Total Mobility scheme for travel to and from school. School trips during school hours do not qualify for the Total Mobility scheme and are expected to be funded from the school's operating budget, in line with Ministry of Education policy.

Children must have their eligibility reassessed every 3-years and photo identification updated (refer section 5.3.2).

3.6 Eligibility of people in residential care

People with permanent disabilities or long-term impairments who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and live in residential settings may be eligible for the scheme.

Residing in a rest home or retirement village does not automatically qualify an individual for Total Mobility. Eligibility must be determined through a mobility assessment (refer section 5.2).

The Total Mobility scheme must not be used as a substitute for transport services that are the responsibility of a rest home provider or be used by a rest home to provide transport for organised activities. For example, rest home providers are responsible for providing and meeting the cost of transport to stipulated health and medical services such as needs assessment and service coordination services, laboratory services, radiological services, dental services, specialist medical services and podiatry services.

Total Mobility can be used by eligible rest home residents for travel that the rest home would not otherwise be required to fund.

3.7 Eligibility and availability of public transport services

The presence or absence of local public transport services must not be taken into account when determining eligibility for the Total Mobility scheme.

Each applicant's eligibility must be evaluated as if public transport were available to them. For example, assume the person being assessed is visiting family in an area where public transport exists and consider how the five elements of the journey outlined in section 3.1 would apply in that setting.

3.8 Eligibility and citizenship

Total mobility eligibility is restricted to people who have the legal right to live in New Zealand either permanently or for a limited time period. People on holiday in New Zealand are not eligible for the Total Mobility scheme.

Residency or citizenship status must not affect eligibility. People who meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme and have the legal right to live in New Zealand may be eligible for the scheme.

New Zealand's human rights framework requires that access be provided to services without discrimination on the basis of nationality or citizenship.

4 Client entitlement

4.1 Standardised subsidy

The Total Mobility scheme must provide a 65 percent discount on the standard fare charged by the transport operator, up to a maximum subsidised fare set by each public transport authority.

4.1.1 Maximum subsidised fares (fare caps)

Public transport authorities must set maximum subsidised fares (fare caps) for the Total Mobility scheme in consultation with the NZTA. Public transport authorities must review fare caps at least every three years.

Maximum subsidised fares (fare caps) must reflect the purpose of the Total Mobility scheme. Maximum subsidised fares must be established at a level that is adequate and appropriate for each town/region operating a Total Mobility service, while also balancing the funding constraints that the public transport authority needs to operate within.

At a minimum, the maximum subsidised fare in each region must be reviewed every three years to ensure that fares consider increases in tariff rates, fuel prices, current government policy and funding constraints – including any increasing costs to ratepayers. When carrying out a review, the following information may be helpful in determining a reasonable maximum fare:

- any increases in demand balanced with funding available
- improved and evolving accessible public transport options
- average cost and subsidy per trip
- historical maximum and average fare data
- current and historical usage of the scheme
- distance and time-based travel factors
- benchmarking fares from similar regions
- relevant demographic data
- traffic conditions and
- customer satisfaction survey.

Public transport authorities must ensure that fare schedules, including maximum fares, are clearly published on both operator and public transport authority websites, specifying which items may or may not be included in a fare, e.g. tolls, transaction fees, flag fall, or airport charges.

4.1.2 Trip allocation criteria

Public transport authorities may limit the number of trips available to clients to manage costs, provided they continue to meet the central tenet of the scheme.

Public transport authorities must manage Total Mobility costs within budget constraints and therefore may limit the maximum number of client trips allowed. The following should be considered by public transport authorities before setting any limits on the maximum number of trips:

- the needs of each client, e.g. as reflected in the assessed number of trips and
- funding and budget constraints of the public transport authority.

Public transport authorities should ensure flexibility in setting any maximum trip limits by not strictly limiting the maximum number of trips. This can be achieved by having no limit, providing soft limits with clients notified, or by allowing clients to request additional trips when circumstances change or their allocation is insufficient.

4.1.3 Coverage of Total Mobility services

Public transport authorities are not required to provide Total Mobility services to all or any parts of their region, provided they continue to meet the central tenet of the scheme.

Public transport authorities must consider the needs of transport disadvantaged under the Land Transport Management Act 2003 when making decisions on the coverage of Total Mobility services in their region.

4.2 Purpose of trip

There are no restrictions on the purpose of the trip for the Total Mobility scheme, except where trips are funded by other parties or travel is for work.

Any other restrictions on trip purpose would be inconsistent with the purpose and central tenet of the scheme, which is concerned with providing access to subsidised transport, rather than prescribing appropriate or inappropriate destinations. This does not apply where travel is required while performing work duties (refer section 4.2.2).

The Total Mobility scheme must not be used as a substitute for transport services that should more appropriately be the responsibility of other government agencies, such as those in the health sector or by the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), or that would be appropriate for employers to provide.

4.2.1 No entitlement for trips funded by other parties

Total Mobility assistance must not be provided for travel that is funded through another source including other government agencies.

Public transport authorities must ensure that Total Mobility clients pay their portion of the fare to the driver using their own funds at the end of the trip. The Total Mobility scheme does not provide free travel.

If an individual receives funding for their transport needs that is paid directly to them from other sources, for example, a disability provider or other government agency, they may use that funding to pay their portion of the fare as this would be considered personal funds.

The following are examples of where the Total Mobility scheme must not be used:

- residents of rest homes and retirement villages must not use the scheme for transport that is funded by their residential care or retirement village
- school students must not use the scheme for transport to and from school if they are funded by the Ministry of Education's Specialised School Transport Assistance (SESTA)
- school students must not use Total Mobility for school trips during school hours. This travel is funded from school operating budgets in line with Ministry of Education policy
- ACC funded clients must not use Total Mobility assistance for ACC designated and funded transport and
- patients must not use Total Mobility when travel is funded by Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora or the Ministry of Health.

4.2.2 Travel for work

Total Mobility assistance must not be used while performing work duties but may be used for travel to and from a place of employment.

Total Mobility clients must not use the scheme for travel that is required in the course of performing work duties. The full cost of this travel must be met or reimbursed by the employer or entity that contracted the work to be done. Total Mobility may be used for travel to and from a place of employment as this is a personal cost.

4.3 No minimum fare

The Total Mobility scheme has no minimum fare threshold.

Any minimum fare penalises scheme clients who only make short trips. The policy of one transaction per trip applies.

4.4 No regional boundary restrictions

Clients of the scheme must not be confined to travel within regional boundaries.

Any boundary restriction disadvantages those who wish to travel in or to a destination that is just outside the boundary and could prevent members from being able to engage in activities in nearby regions, where many key services and activities may be located. This is a particularly significant issue for those living in small, provincial or country towns.

Clients must be allowed to choose which Total Mobility transport operator they wish to travel with.

When a trip crosses a regional boundary into another region, it is the public transport authority that has contracted that transport operator that pays the subsidy.

4.5 Group travel

For personal group trips that are not a formal ‘organised’ activity, for example, a family going out on a social trip together, it is not necessary for all passengers to be Total Mobility clients.

There is no limit on the number of passengers that can accompany a Total Mobility client on a personal trip, but the Total Mobility client must be in the vehicle for the duration of the trip and the trip must be for the direct benefit of the Total Mobility client. It is not acceptable for a Total Mobility client to be taken along on a trip simply so that other passengers can receive a cheaper fare.

If the Total Mobility client leaves the vehicle and the trip continues, the Total Mobility subsidy does not apply for the rest of the trip. In this example, the payment must be made before the Total Mobility client leaves the vehicle and then a normal unsubsidised trip begins.

This can be difficult for drivers to judge or to enforce, so it is important to inform a client at the time of the mobility assessment. Public transport authorities must cover this in Total Mobility scheme client terms and conditions (refer Appendix C).

4.6 Travelling in another region

Total Mobility clients must be allowed to access the Total Mobility scheme anywhere it operates throughout New Zealand.

When travelling outside of their region Total Mobility clients should check the maximum subsidised fare before they travel. Region-specific information can be found on each public transport authority website. A Total Mobility card must be presented at the start of the trip, otherwise clients will be charged the full, unsubsidised fare.

5 Client assessments

5.1 Assessment services

5.1.1 Access to assessment services

Public transport authorities must provide people in their region with access to assessment services. Assessment services may be provided in-house by the public transport authority or outsourced to assessment agencies.

It is important that potential Total Mobility clients have access to assessment services in their region. In most regions, disability sector agencies play an important role in supporting the Total Mobility scheme by providing these assessment services at little or no cost to the applicant. In regions where general practitioners provide assessment services, there must be at least one assessment facilitator that can provide assessment services for people who do not wish to go to a doctor.

Where assessment services are provided in-house by a public transport authority, all of the requirements that apply to assessment agencies also apply to the public transport authority.

5.1.2 Assessment agency contracts

Public transport authorities must have contracts in place for all assessment agencies providing Total Mobility assessment services in their region.

Assessment agencies are responsible for the assessment facilitators who undertake mobility assessments. Public transport authorities must ensure that assessment agencies and their assessment facilitators take a robust and consistent approach to the mobility assessment process. Appendix E outlines the considerations that public transport agencies must include in their contracts with assessment agencies.

Public transport authorities must periodically undertake collaborative reviews of the assessment process with assessment agencies to identify where improvements can be made.

5.1.3 Assessment facilitator responsibilities

Assessment facilitators are responsible for completing mobility assessments that are used to ascertain whether a person with a permanent disability or long-term impairment is eligible for the Total Mobility scheme.

The assessment facilitator completes an interview with the prospective client using the questionnaire in Appendix B and confirms that the information given is accurate. The assessment facilitator must also ensure that the client terms and conditions of use are made available and understood by the client.

A key responsibility of the assessment facilitator is to work collaboratively with prospective clients to ensure that the Total Mobility scheme is used for its intended purpose. Assessment facilitators must also provide clear guidance regarding circumstances in which the Total Mobility scheme cannot be used.

5.1.4 Training for assessment facilitators

Public transport authorities must ensure appropriate training is provided to assessment facilitators to assist in the consistent application of the eligibility criteria.

The public transport authority must determine who will conduct the training. An option may be that one of the existing Total Mobility assessment facilitators is appointed as 'Chief Assessor' and made responsible for training new assessment facilitators as they are appointed, and for conducting periodic 'refresher' training sessions for more experienced assessment facilitators.

Another option is for the public transport authority to facilitate training sessions for all assessment agencies and assessment facilitators that provide Total Mobility assessments in their region.

Training requirements are outlined below:

- initial training for new assessment facilitators must be completed prior to conducting any Total Mobility assessments and
- ongoing training should be provided through training workshops at least once per year, or as otherwise specified by the public transport authority.

5.1.5 Financial contribution to assessment agencies

Public transport authorities may provide financial contributions to assessment agencies.

Public transport authorities should consider the following funding principles for financial contributions to assessment agencies:

- recognise that assessment agencies have an important role in supporting the Total Mobility scheme
- any funding arrangements must be clearly outlined in assessment agency contracts
- any costs to the prospective clients must be included on public transport authority website
- any financial support must be limited to Total Mobility assessments, distribution of cards or associated administrative tasks and
- applications for financial assistance from assessment agencies may be considered by public transport authorities on a case-by-case basis.

5.2 Mobility assessments

5.2.1 Mobility assessment process

Every person applying for the Total Mobility scheme must complete a mobility assessment with an assessment facilitator. The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate all available transport options that could meet an individual's needs, ensuring a comprehensive and accurate determination of eligibility for the Total Mobility scheme.

Although an individual may have a permanent disability or long-term impairment, eligibility is not automatic. The mobility assessment determines whether the person can use public transport or access other suitable transport options. All accessible alternatives are considered before confirming participation in the scheme. The mobility assessment process includes asking individuals detailed questions to establish eligibility, using the standard assessment questionnaire in Appendix B.

The mobility assessment includes whether a future reassessment may be required or a temporary card may be issued. A reassessment may be required if circumstances change — for example, improvements in accessible transport services that increase an individual's ability to use public transport.

Where an individual has fluctuating needs, the assessment will determine how these variations affect their ability to use public transport. Individuals with fluctuating needs are expected to use public transport whenever they are able.

Demographic information is collected during the assessment and recorded in the assessment form. Applicants must be informed about why their data is being collected, how it will be used, and the terms and conditions of participating in the Total Mobility scheme.

5.2.2 Medical certificate and evidence requirements

A medical certificate is not required to establish eligibility for Total Mobility. It is not the impairment itself that determines eligibility, but whether the impairment prevents the prospective client from undertaking the journey.

In the case of hidden disabilities and the scenarios outlined in 5.2.4, requesting a medical diagnosis may be appropriate. If the prospective client refuses to provide medical evidence, they may be refused access to the scheme. A self-diagnosis from a potential client must not replace a diagnosis from a medical practitioner when one has been requested.

5.2.3 Estimating client trips

The self-assessed needs model for Total Mobility centres around the fact that each individual's need for trips is unique to them and their particular situation. The mobility assessment must record the estimated number of trips that may reasonably be needed in a week or month.

The role of the assessment facilitator is to guide the individual and help them identify the number of trips that realistically matches their need. The assessment facilitator does not have a role in 'rationing' trips.

The purpose of travel is irrelevant to the number of trips estimated.

5.2.4 Criteria in practice - key scenarios

When applying the eligibility criteria, it is important to ensure that it is not the disability itself that determines eligibility, but whether the disability prevents the prospective client from undertaking the journey. Scenarios to consider include the following:

- Not being able to drive does not, on its own, make a client eligible for the Total Mobility scheme. Eligibility must be based on whether the client has an impairment that prevents them from using public transport. If a client is not driving because of cognitive impairment and that impairment also prevents them from using public transport safely, then the cognitive impairment should be considered as part of the eligibility assessment.
- Being a superannuitant is not a reason to qualify for the Total Mobility scheme, but age-related disabilities can be considered.
- If a client has a condition (e.g. severe arthritis) that can be worse in the winter but improves in warmer weather (fluctuating need) they may be able to use public transport when their condition is good but require Total Mobility at other times when they cannot complete all five components of a public transport journey.
- Mental illness, such as depression or anxiety, should be evaluated according to how these conditions impact the client's capacity to use public transport. To determine eligibility relating to these conditions, a formal diagnosis and medical certificate may be required to confirm that the severity exceeds the everyday anxiety commonly experienced by a large portion of the population. This should be thoroughly discussed during the mobility assessment. In certain cases, it may be appropriate to issue a temporary card with a follow-up reassessment to review any changes in the client's circumstances or condition.

Clients with a long-term impairment that has lasted or is expected to last six months or more may be eligible for a temporary card until their mobility improves. For example, this could include clients waiting for cataract or hip replacement surgery.

The following are further examples of mobility assessment and eligibility outcomes.

Scenario	Does the client have a permanent disability or long-term impairment	Does the disability prevent the client from using public transport	Does the client have fluctuating need	Total Mobility eligibility outcome	Reasoning for the Total Mobility outcome
Person A has a permanent disability and is able to complete all five components of a public transport journey	✓	✗	✗	●	Does not meet the criteria for Total Mobility because their disability does not prevent them from using public transport
Person B has a permanent disability and sometimes cannot use public transport due to their disability	✓	✓	✓	●	Meets the disability criteria and has fluctuating need
Person C has a permanent disability and is unable to complete one or more components of a public transport journey	✓	✓	✗	●	Meets the disability criteria because their disability prevents them from being able to use public transport
Person D has a medical issue that has lasted less than six months and is unable to complete one or more components of a public transport journey	✗	✓	✗	●	Does not meet the criteria for the scheme as short-term medical issues are not eligible
Person E is a six-year-old child who has a permanent disability and travels with a caregiver due to their age	✓	✗	✗	●	Does not meet the criteria because it is their age, not their disability, that prevents travel on public transport
Person F is a 10-year-old child who has a permanent disability and cannot use public transport due to their disability even when travelling with a caregiver	✓	✓	✗	●	Meets the criteria because it is their disability, not their age, that prevents travel on public transport
Person G is a 13-year-old child who has a permanent disability and sometimes cannot use public transport due to their disability	✓	⚠	✓	●	Meets the disability criteria, has fluctuating need and cannot use public transport at times, even when accompanied by a caregiver
Person H lives in a residential care facility, has a permanent disability but is able to complete all components of a public transport journey	✓	✗	✗	●	Does not meet the criteria for Total Mobility because their disability does not prevent them from using public transport
Person I lives in a residential care facility, has a permanent disability and cannot use public transport some of the time due to their disability	✓	⚠	✓	●	Meets the criteria even though they may be able to use public transport some of the time

✓ Yes ⚠ Sometimes ✗ No — NA ● Approved ● Not approved

5.3 Reviews and reassessments

5.3.1 Regular client contact

Public transport authorities must have processes in place to ensure client contact and card details remain current and that clients continue to require access to the scheme.

Public transport authorities must have procedures in place for removing clients who no longer require access to the scheme or who remain inactive for extended periods. These procedures must be consistent with the client terms and conditions (refer Appendix C).

5.3.2 Client reassessments

People who have been assessed as eligible for the Total Mobility scheme should usually only be assessed once, unless there is new information or a change in their circumstances that may affect their eligibility for Total Mobility.

Reassessment will occur in some circumstances for:

- children, who should be reassessed every 3 years
- when a temporary card has been issued
- when there is fluctuating need
- if a card has been suspended or cancelled or
- any change in circumstances.

The need and timeframe for reassessment should be established when the mobility assessment is undertaken.

The due date for reassessment should be discussed between the client and the assessment facilitator. A reassessment should occur at least every 3 years if it is determined that a reassessment is appropriate.

Children should have their photo identification updated when they are reassessed.

6 Transport operators

6.1 Transport operator access to the scheme

Transport operators that comply with NZTA requirements and meet the requirements of public transport authorities may be approved to provide Total Mobility services.

Transport operators include small passenger service providers such as taxi companies, private hire, community transport, volunteer organisations and incorporated charitable societies.

Transport operators must meet all NZTA and public transport authority policies and procedures for joining the Total Mobility scheme, including licensing requirements for volunteers and paid staff under the legislation.

Further information on [transport licence requirements](#) for passenger services and community transport operators can be found on NZTAs website.

6.2 Transport operator contracts

Public transport authorities must have contracts in place with transport operators providing Total Mobility services in their region. Transport operators must only deliver Total Mobility services for regions that they are contracted to.

The requirement for contracts includes situations where transport operators provide services through franchise or similar arrangements; those subcontracted entities must also be covered by a public transport authority contract.

Public transport authorities must, when developing transport operator contracts, consider the requirements and provisions for transport operator agreements set out in Appendix D. Transport operator contracts must also include the driver requirements in section 6.3.

Public transport authorities must undertake regular procedural audits to ensure that transport operators are fully meeting the contract requirements. This includes the responsibilities that drivers have to verify and complete trip transactions appropriately.

6.3 Driver requirements

6.3.1 Driver terms and conditions

Public transport authorities must ensure that the expectations of transport drivers are clearly defined in their transport operator contracts and that driver terms and conditions are developed and circulated to all drivers operating Total Mobility services.

The terms and conditions must cover the Passenger (P) endorsement process for a driver, including the fit-and-proper-person assessment. To pass the fit-and-proper-person assessment, a driver should not also be a Total Mobility client.

The driver terms and conditions must cover, but not be limited to, the following matters:

- a driver declaration
- general terms
- requirements prior to undertaking a Total Mobility trip
- accepting and processing Total Mobility card transactions
- completing and recording the trip detail accurately at the time the trip is taken
- ensuring that all clients pay their portion of a fare and that no free trips are undertaken
- payment of hoist fees and

- carriage of Total Mobility scheme clients including from other regions.

6.3.2 Driver training

Each new driver must be provided with a Total Mobility induction explaining the essential elements of the Total Mobility scheme before being fully trained in the courses set out below.

The transport operator must ensure that all drivers have been trained in:

- NZQA unit standard 1748 (Passenger service: demonstrate skills required to assist passengers with special needs) and/or
- a public transport authority approved training course to an equivalent standard.

The transport operator must ensure that all drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles are trained in:

- NZQA unit standard 1748 (Passenger service: demonstrate skills required to assist passengers with special needs), and
- NZQA unit standard 15165 (Transport passengers in wheelchairs using Total Mobility vehicles equipped with hoist or ramp), or
- public transport authority-approved training courses to an equivalent standard.

A driver register must be provided to the public transport authority annually (or at an agreed period between the transport operator and the public transport authority) to verify this training has occurred.

For more information on NZQA standards and providers refer to [NZQA](#).

6.4 Wheelchair accessible vehicles

A wheelchair accessible vehicle is required when Total Mobility clients are unable to get in and out of a vehicle without the use of a hoist or ramp. The Total Mobility client must be identified as requiring the use of a wheelchair accessible vehicle when they complete their mobility assessment.

Wheelchair hoists are intended for the purpose of lifting people that are appropriately restrained in their wheelchair during operation, including being lifted in the vehicle and while being transported. All Total Mobility clients who are lifted into and transported in a wheelchair accessible vehicle must be restrained at all times with either a harness belt, lap belt or lap-sash belt to ensure the safety of the Total Mobility clients.

While Total Mobility operators do not necessarily need to have hoist capable vehicles in their fleet, public transport authorities should ensure that there is an adequate number of hoist capable vehicles across their operator network to meet demand.

6.4.1 Wheelchair hoist fee (flat payment)

NZTA encourages adequate provision of wheelchair-accessible vehicles by providing a flat rate payment (in addition to the fare) to the transport operator for each trip undertaken by a Total Mobility client using a wheelchair hoist.

A flat rate payment of \$10 (excluding GST) must be paid to transport operators for each Total Mobility trip that requires the use of a wheelchair hoist because the customer is unable to transfer in and out of the wheelchair accessible vehicle independently. The flat rate payment is only available for the use of a wheelchair hoist and cannot be applied to other mobility aids, such as mobility scooters. The payment is fully funded by NZTA and transport operators in all regions are eligible for this payment. This flat rate payment is captured through the work category 521: Total Mobility wheelchair hoist use payments, which are designated specifically for flat rate payments with a 100 percent financial assistance rate.

The objectives of the flat rate payment are to:

- increase the financial viability of operating wheelchair accessible vehicles in recognition of the vital part they play in meeting the needs of the transport disadvantaged
- increase the availability of such services to Total Mobility clients at peak times and
- encourage the industry to provide an adequate number of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

To be eligible for this flat rate, the following criteria must be met by the transport operator:

- the transport operator must be contracted by the public transport authority to provide Total Mobility services
- the fare meter must not operate while the Total Mobility client is being loaded into or out of the wheelchair accessible vehicle
- the Total Mobility client cannot transfer in and out of a wheelchair accessible vehicle independently and cannot get into a wheelchair accessible vehicle without the use of a hoist or ramp
- the Total Mobility client is to be safely restrained while using the wheelchair accessible vehicle
- only one payment may be claimed for each trip taken by a Total Mobility client using the wheelchair hoist (the payment is for each passenger carried per trip), and
- the transport operator must pass the payment on to the owner of the wheelchair accessible vehicle if the vehicle is not owned by the transport operator.

Although this payment is fully funded by NZTA, the assistance of the public transport authority is required to administer the payment to Total Mobility transport operators, as legislation prevents NZTA from making payments from the NLTF directly to transport operators.

These conditions must be specified in contracts between the public transport authority and each transport operator or agreed to in a separate flat payment contract between the two parties before the transport operator will be eligible for the payment, and before NZTA will accept payment claims from the public transport authority.

To enable payment for wheelchair-assisted Total Mobility trips, the public transport authority must distinguish between hoist and non-hoist trips. Claims made are subject to verification as part of the regular procedural audit function of NZTA.

6.4.2 Safety standards for wheelchair accessible vehicles

All wheelchair hoist vehicles must be compliant with Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Standards Compliance 2002.

All wheelchair hoists (and/or ramps and winches) must be inspected and certified as safe for use by an approved engineer of low volume vehicles and the hoists (and/or ramps and winches) must be maintained at certificate of fitness standard at all times.

All Total Mobility clients who are transported in a wheelchair accessible vehicle must be restrained with one of the following:

- harness belt
- lap belt or
- lap-sash belt.

Drivers must not carry any passengers who do not wear the appropriate seatbelt.

6.4.3 Wheelchair hoist purchase and installation

NZTA and public transport authorities may co-fund a portion of the purchase and installation costs of wheelchair hoists. The purpose is to support adequate investment and coverage of wheelchair hoist capable vehicles across the operator network contracted to deliver Total Mobility.

Public transport authorities may seek an allocation in Work Category 519: wheelchair hoists purchase and installation from NZTA.

Public transport authorities must set and follow appropriate policies and procurement procedures for funding hoist grants, including grant limits that may be made available.

Transport operators must pay any costs exceeding the approved grant amount for hoist purchase and installation.

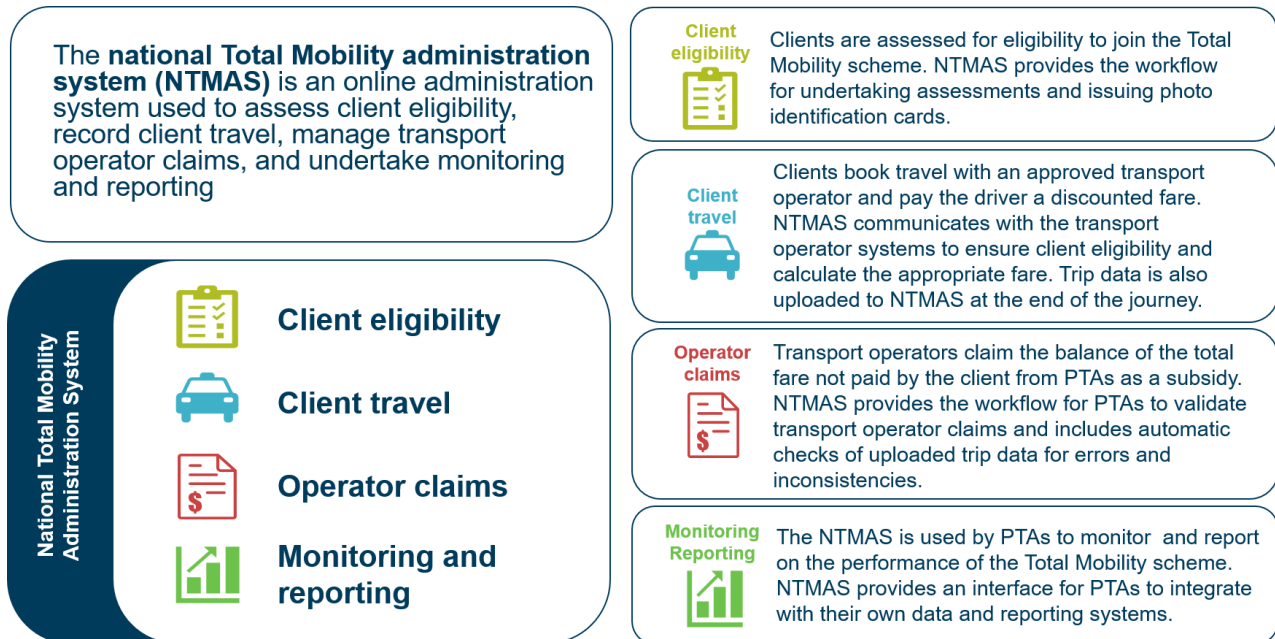
7 Administration and monitoring

7.1 Total Mobility administration

Public transport authorities, transport operators and assessment agencies must use the national Total Mobility administration system to manage client eligibility, record client travel, manage transport operator claims and undertake monitoring and reporting.

The key components of the national Total Mobility administration system are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Key components of the Total Mobility administration system



7.2 Monitoring and reporting

Public transport authorities must continuously monitor, review and report on the operation of the Total Mobility scheme in their region.

Public transport authorities must implement robust processes that monitor and effectively mitigate fraudulent activity to ensure the ongoing integrity of the Total Mobility scheme. These processes should be regularly reviewed and updated so that they remain fit for purpose and continue to address any emerging risks.

Public transport authorities must provide regular reporting to NZTA on all aspects of the Total Mobility scheme. Required reporting includes:

- daily data feeds – transport usage data must be supplied through the national Total Mobility administration system to support scheme oversight.
- monthly achievement returns – refer to [monthly reporting requirements for public transport authorities](#)
- annual achievement returns – refer to [annual reporting requirements for public transport authorities](#)
- customer satisfaction surveys – surveys must be undertaken to assess service quality from the perspective of Total Mobility clients.

NZTA needs to know that the service provided is safe, comfortable and affordable, and whether any improvements could improve the Total Mobility scheme. This information can be obtained through client surveys and tracked over time and reported every three years.

NZTA will monitor the Total Mobility scheme, including client eligibility assessments and delivery of transport services, to ensure the effective, efficient and appropriate management of the scheme in line with Government expectations. Information relating to Total Mobility trips and the costs associated with providing the trips will also be verified as part of the statutory and procedural audit function of NZTA.

Appendix A Glossary

Term/Acronym	Definition
NTMAS	National Total Mobility Administration System is the software used by all PTAs, transport operators and service providers for all total mobility transactions and reporting.
Assessment Agency	The business entity responsible for the identification, assessment and registration of eligible clients for Total Mobility services.
Assessment facilitator	The person who undertakes client assessments.
Client	Total Mobility scheme client.
Driver	The person working for a Transport operator that drives a vehicle. A Driver may operate one or more vehicles over a period of time.
Fare	Total amount of a Trip to be shared by Client, the public transport authority and NZTA.
Fare Cap	Refer maximum subsidised fare.
Long term impairment	A physical or mental impairment that has lasted or is expected to last for six months or more and which is ongoing, that limits a person's movement, senses or activities and prevents them from undertaking one or more of the five components of a public transport trip.
Maximum subsidised fare	The total portion of the fare eligible for subsidy, before applying the Total Mobility discount. This is the same as the fare cap.
Maximum fare subsidy	The maximum subsidy after applying the Total Mobility discount.
NZTA	NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.
Operator Claims	Transport Operator claims for payment based on number and subsidy value of valid trips undertaken.
Permanent disability	The long term physical or mental impairment that limits a person's movement, senses or activities and prevents them from undertaking one or more of the five components of a public transport trip.
Personal Funds	The personal money used by a client to pay their portion of a fare at the end of a trip.
PTA	Public transport authority.
Public transport authority	Public transport authority. Variously a Regional Council, City Council, Unitary authority or a combination (e.g. Nelson/Tasman are a single PTA).
Small passenger services	A service that carries 12 people or less and may include taxis, rideshare and shuttles.
Transport Operator	The entity approved by a PTA that organises Vehicles and Drivers to provide the Total Mobility transport service and takes care of administration, systems and settlements.

Transaction	The financial exchange and payment that takes place in the vehicle between the driver and client at the end of every Total Mobility trip.
Trip	The conveyance of a Total Mobility Scheme client from point A to B in a vehicle, with a Total Mobility subsidised fare payable by the client.
TM	Total Mobility.
Vehicle	The Vehicle is registered with a Transport Provider and operated by a Driver. A vehicle may be operated by one or more Drivers over a period of time.

Appendix B Client assessment questionnaire

The following is the standard client assessment questionnaire, implemented through the National Total Mobility Administration System.

1. Assessor declaration

- 1.1. Assessment date:
- 1.2. Assessor name:
- 1.3. Name of agency:

2. Client details

- 2.1. First name(s):
- 2.2. Surname:
- 2.3. Preferred contact method: (Telephone / Email)
- 2.4. Date of birth:
- 2.5. Address:
- 2.6. Postal address:
- 2.7. Contact number:
- 2.8. Email address:
- 2.9. Client number:

3. Alternative contact details

- 3.1. Contact name:
- 3.2. Contact number:
- 3.3. Relationship to Client:
- 3.4. Email:

4. Impairment information

- 4.1. Which of the categories best describes the general nature of the applicant's impairment(s)? (Select as many as applicable)
 - 4.1.1. Physical: Mobility, Physical
 - 4.1.2. Intellectual: Fragile X, Down Syndrome, Prader Willi Syndrome, Dyslexia, Intellectual/learning other
 - 4.1.3. Sensory: Hearing, Seeing, Sensory other
 - 4.1.4. Mental health: Anxiety, Schizophrenia, Mental health other
 - 4.1.5. Neurological: Epilepsy, Dementia, Stroke, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, Neurological other
 - 4.1.6. Other conditions: Arthritis, Cardiac, Respiratory, Other
- 4.2. What is the primary cause of the applicant's impairment? (Select one)
 - 4.2.1. Congenital (since birth)
 - 4.2.2. Due to an accident
 - 4.2.3. Degenerative

4.2.4. Due to other disease or illness

4.2.5. Multiple

4.3. Eligibility Length: (Permanent / Temporary)

4.3.1. Date of review:

4.4. Additional Information (Optional): (Please provide relevant information about the applicant's impairment)

5. Eligibility information

5.1. Can the applicant do the following independently in a safe and dignified manner?

5.1.1. Get to and from the nearest public transport stop or station without assistance (Able / Unable)

5.1.2. Stand and wait without assistance for public transport (where there is no seat) (Able / Unable)

5.1.3. Get on or off public transport without assistance (Able / Unable)

5.1.4. Handle money or tickets without assistance (Able / Unable)

5.1.5. Travel securely on public transport without assistance (Able / Unable)

5.1.6. Travel on public transport without getting confused or anxious (Able / Unable)

5.2. Does the applicant use any of the following mobility aids?

5.2.1. Manual wheelchair (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.2. Electric wheelchair (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.3. Scooter (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.4. Walking frame (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.5. Walking stick (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.6. Guide dog (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.7. Travel buddy (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.8. Crutches (Yes / No / Sometimes)

5.2.9. Other (Please specify)

5.3. Does the applicant require the use of a wheelchair accessible Vehicle to travel? (Yes / No)

6. Government funding

6.1. Is the applicant in full-time dependent care funded by the Government health system? (Yes / No)

7. Transport related financial assistance

7.1. Transport related financial assistance details:

7.1.1. ACC (Yes / No) Please specify

7.1.2. WINZ (Yes / No) Please specify

7.1.3. Workbridge (Yes / No) Please specify

7.1.4. Other (Yes / No) Please specify

8. Trip estimator calculator

- 8.1. Trip estimate of one-way Trips: (table)
 - 8.1.1. Trip reason: (multiple rows)
 - 8.1.2. Frequency: (Weekly / Fortnightly / Monthly)
 - 8.1.3. Trip count:
 - 8.1.4. Monthly Trip count:
 - 8.1.5. Monthly total:
- 8.2. Has the applicant previously used the total mobility scheme in any public transport authority? (Yes / No) Please specify (Note: suggested this goes to top of form to find out early in interview if Client is registered elsewhere).

9. Personal information

- 9.1. Gender: (Male / Female / Gender Diverse / Prefer not to say)
- 9.2. Age: (0-16 years / 17-29 years / 30-64 years / 65 years or over)
- 9.3. Ethnicity: (New Zealand European / New Zealand Māori / Pacific Peoples / Other European / Asian / Middle Eastern / Latin American / African / Prefer not to say / Other (please specify))
- 9.4. Income Source: (In full-time paid work / In part-time paid work / A super-annuitant / Undertaking voluntary work / A student (specify level) / A beneficiary / Other (please specify))

10. Declaration

- 10.1. I hereby confirm that the above details are correct. I declare that I have read, or have had read to me, and understand the enclosed applicant declaration and conditions of use for the Total Mobility scheme and agree to abide by them.

11. Upload client photo in Total Mobility system

Appendix C Client terms and conditions of use

Total Mobility scheme terms and conditions of use

1. General

- 1.1. The Total Mobility scheme provides transport options for those people who have a permanent disability or long-term impairment and meet the eligibility criteria.
- 1.2. By using the Total Mobility scheme and accepting your Total Mobility card, you are agreeing to the terms and conditions set out in this document. Please read these terms and conditions carefully before using your Total Mobility card.
- 1.3. If you fail to adhere to the terms and conditions, knowingly provide misleading or false information, or fail to notify your public transport authority of any misuse, you risk cancellation of access to the Total Mobility scheme and, at the discretion of your public transport authority, legal action.
- 1.4. You understand that your public transport authority will investigate any suspected client fraud or misuse and take appropriate action.
- 1.5. You understand that these terms and conditions may change in the future due to funding policy, legislative changes or otherwise, including termination of the scheme in its entirety. Your public transport authority will use reasonable endeavours to inform you of any changes and how they affect your use of the scheme.

2. Privacy

- 2.1. We understand that it is important for you to know how we treat your personal information. We will comply with our obligations under the Privacy Act 2020.
- 2.2. You understand that your public transport authority has a privacy policy that explains how we collect, store, use and share your personal information.
- 2.3. You understand that your public transport authority may hold other information about you if you use other services. This may include information linked to a travel card, customer service request, or complaint. This personal information is covered by the privacy statement on your public transport authority website.

3. Use of your Total Mobility card

- 3.1. You must take all necessary steps to protect your card from theft or fraudulent use.
- 3.2. If you lose or mislay your card, if it is stolen, if you know that your card is in the possession of another person or believe that another person has used your card, you must immediately notify your assessment agency or public transport authority and you will be issued a replacement card, otherwise you will not be eligible for a subsidy and you will be required to pay the full fare for your travel until you receive your new card.
- 3.3. If your card has an expiry date, you are responsible for contacting your assessing agency of public transport authority before the card expires to reconfirm your eligibility and arrange for a new card to be issued. If you fail to renew your card on time it may be cancelled.
- 3.4. Your card may be cancelled or suspended if unused for an extended period of time. To prevent this, you should keep your public transport authority informed of any changes to your travel needs or contact details.
- 3.5. Your card and card number are the property of your public transport authority. They may not be copied or reproduced and may be retained by us at our sole discretion. You agree to immediately return or destroy your card if we ask you to.
- 3.6. Should you attempt to use a card that has been cancelled or suspended it will not be accepted by the Total Mobility transport operator and you will be required to pay the full fare.

4. Use of Total Mobility services

- 4.1. You must not use your Total Mobility card for transport services that are the responsibility of other government agencies such as (but not limited to) ACC, Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora, the Ministry of Health, or Ministry of Education.
- 4.2. You must not use your Total Mobility card for travel undertaken in the course of your job. You may use your card to travel to and from your place of work.
- 4.3. Your Total Mobility card is your responsibility. You must not give or leave your card with a driver or another person. You acknowledge that the card could be used fraudulently if you leave it with another person.
- 4.4. You may only use a vehicle from an approved Total Mobility transport operator to claim the subsidy. If you use another transport operator, you will not be eligible to claim the subsidy and will be required to pay the full fare.
- 4.5. You must advise the transport operator that you are a Total Mobility client when arranging your travel. If you do not, they may send a driver who is not approved for the Total Mobility scheme, meaning you will not be eligible for a subsidy and will be required to pay the full fare.
- 4.6. You must advise the transport operator if you require the use of a wheelchair accessible vehicle when arranging your travel. If you do not, they may send a vehicle that does not have the necessary equipment.
- 4.7. You must provide your Total Mobility card to the driver at the beginning of your trip. If you do not have your card when you travel, you will not be able to claim the subsidy and will be required to pay the full fare. Your card is your responsibility at all times and you must make sure it is returned to you immediately after processing, otherwise you will not be able to use it to travel again.
- 4.8. You understand that your public transport authority will pay a percentage of the total fare up to a maximum subsidised fare as published on the public transport authority's website. The value is subject to change at your public transport authority's sole discretion.
- 4.9. You must pay your portion of the fare to the driver using your own funds at the end of the trip. You understand that the Total Mobility scheme does not provide free travel and that you cannot use an account or card from another organisation to pay your portion of the fare.
- 4.10. You understand that an eligible trip is a one-way journey from point A to point B. A round trip that starts and ends at the same location does not qualify for a Total Mobility subsidy and you will be required to pay the full fare.
- 4.11. You must be travelling in the vehicle to receive a Total Mobility subsidy. You cannot ask a driver or other passengers to collect goods and use your card to pay for that service.
- 4.12. You may have other people in the vehicle, but the trip must primarily serve your needs, not those of family or friends, including during outings together. The Total Mobility subsidy only applies while you are in the vehicle.
- 4.13. You must only use Total Mobility services when your disability or long-term impairment prevents you from using public transport. If your ability to use public transport fluctuates, you must only use Total Mobility services during periods when you are unable to use public transport.
- 4.14. You must not use your Total Mobility card if the driver is a family member or other associate who may have a financial interest in the fare.

Further information is available on your public transport authority website.

Appendix D Contract provisions for transport operator agreements

Public transport authorities must consider the following matters when developing transport operator agreements:

- General conditions
- Contract term and termination
- Health and safety of employees
- Safety of passengers
- Resolutions of disputes
- Audit provision
- Fare schedules
- Licensing requirements
- Legislation compliance including the Children's Act 2014
- Complaints
- Use of the National Total Mobility administrative system (NTMAS)
- Rules of operation
 - Fares including requirement that clients are charged their portion of the fare
 - Electronic card rules and transaction processes
 - Third party contracts with Technology service providers which facilitate the transaction process
 - Invoice and payments
 - GPS tracking data
- Safety standards
- Driver terms and conditions
- Driver training
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Hours of service
- Indemnity
- Variations to contract

Appendix E Contract provisions for assessment agencies

Consideration must be given to the following when developing these contracts:

- Appointing an assessment facilitator
- Scope of assessments
- Undertaking assessments
- Prevention of fraud
- Conflicts of interest
- Data management including,
 - collection and storage of data for administrative records
 - audit requirements
 - privacy obligations and confidentiality
- Assessment facilitator responsibilities
- Local authority obligations
- Use of administrative system
- Fees (if applicable)
- Health and safety
- Disputes resolution
- Termination

More information on service quality and performance management and attendance at meetings may also be added if required.