

## **Vulnerable Passenger Transport Policy**

*The Apple Rambler (Private Hire)*

### **1. Purpose of This Policy**

This policy sets out how we safely transport **children, elderly passengers, and vulnerable adults**, in line with:

- The **Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards (DfT)**
- Somerset Council's safeguarding expectations
- Somerset Adult Social Care & SEND transport principles
- The Care Act 2014 definition of a vulnerable adult

Our priority is always **passenger safety, dignity, and wellbeing**.

### **2. Who Is Considered a Vulnerable Passenger?**

A passenger may be considered vulnerable if they:

- Have care or support needs
- Are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Cannot protect themselves from harm
- Have medical conditions affecting awareness or consciousness
- Have mobility, cognitive, or communication difficulties
- Are elderly and frail
- Are children under 18

This follows the definition used in the **Care Act 2014** and Somerset safeguarding guidance.

### **3. Independent Travel Requirements**

Passengers can travel independently **only if** they can:

- Walk or self-propel their wheelchair without physical support
- Transfer in/out of the vehicle without being lifted
- Manage their own mobility and personal needs
- Communicate their needs clearly
- **Reach staff, reception, or check-in points independently**
- Travel without requiring medical monitoring

We are happy to assist with:

- Loading mobility equipment
- Offering a steady arm

- General reassurance and support

But we **cannot** provide:

- Lifting or physical handling
- Personal care
- Medical assistance
- One-to-one supervision
- Escorting inside buildings or hospitals

#### **4. Medical Conditions & Safety**

Some passengers have medical conditions that are well-managed and do not affect travel.

However, a passenger is **not classed as independent** if they have a condition that is:

- **Unmanaged**
- **Uncontrolled**
- **Recently worsening**
- **Causing frequent or unpredictable episodes**
- **Likely to cause sudden loss of consciousness or awareness**

This includes (but is not limited to):

- Epileptic seizures
- Non-epileptic seizures
- Fainting or blackouts
- Sudden collapses
- Cardiac or neurological episodes

In these cases, a **responsible escort must be provided** by the family, school, or care home.

#### **Disclosure Requirement**

The Responsible Party must provide **accurate and up-to-date** information about:

- The condition
- Recent frequency of episodes
- Any changes in risk

Failure to disclose relevant information may result in transport being refused for safety reasons.

#### **5. Hospital & Medical Appointment Drop-Offs**

For safety and safeguarding:

- Passengers must be able to **reach hospital staff or reception independently**

- Drivers cannot escort passengers inside the building
- Drivers cannot remain responsible for a passenger once dropped off
- If the passenger cannot safely reach staff, **an escort must be present**

This aligns with Somerset's safeguarding expectations and the Statutory Standards.

## 6. Escorts

An escort is required when:

- A passenger cannot travel safely alone
- A medical condition requires monitoring
- Mobility or cognitive needs require supervision
- The passenger cannot navigate the destination independently
- The passenger is at risk of wandering, confusion, or collapse

Escorts must be provided by:

- Family
- School
- Care home
- Support service

Drivers cannot act as escorts.

## 7. Risk Assessments

We may request a complete risk assessment when transporting:

- Elderly passengers
- Passengers with medical conditions
- Passengers with mobility or cognitive needs
- Passengers attending medical appointments
- Passengers with recent changes in health

Transport may proceed **only if the risk is manageable**.

## 8. Senior Tours & Group Outings

We love spending time with our seniors and stay with the group for companionship and general support.

However:

- We do **not** provide personal care or medical assistance
- We do **not** provide lifting or physical handling

- We do **not** provide one-to-one supervision
- Passengers must be able to manage their own mobility and personal needs
- Anyone requiring additional support must attend with an escort

This ensures safety and complies with Somerset safeguarding expectations.

### **9. Safeguarding Responsibilities**

We follow Somerset's safeguarding principles:

- Report concerns immediately
- Protect vulnerable passengers from harm
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Never leave a vulnerable passenger unattended unless assessed as safe
- Follow the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Standards

If a passenger is at immediate risk, we will contact emergency services.

### **10. Driver Responsibilities**

Drivers must:

- Treat all passengers with dignity and respect
- Follow safeguarding training
- Report concerns immediately
- Never provide personal care or medical intervention
- Never lift passengers
- Never escort passengers inside buildings
- Ensure safe loading of mobility equipment
- Ensure seatbelts and restraints are used correctly

### **11. Refusal of Transport**

We may refuse transport if:

- No escort is provided when required
- The passenger cannot travel safely
- Medical information is incomplete or inaccurate
- The risk assessment identifies unacceptable risk
- The passenger requires care beyond our role

This is to protect the passenger and comply with safeguarding law.

### **12. Emergency Situations**

If a passenger becomes unwell:

- The driver will stop safely
- Call emergency services
- Provide information to paramedics
- Contact the emergency contact
- Remain with the passenger until help arrives

Drivers are **not medically trained** and cannot administer medication.

For questions regarding this information, please contact us :

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