

Choosing the Right Specialist Transport for Your Child

A parent's checklist for safe, comfortable, dignified journeys.

Why specialist transport matters

Not every taxi is right for your child. Specialist transport means:

- A driver trained in SEN, autism, dementia, and mobility needs
- A vehicle that is **clean, calm, and accessible**
- Time, patience, and a willingness to follow your child's routine
- Insurance, DBS checks, and council licensing you can verify

If your driver can't explain their training, can't show you their licence, or rushes you on the phone — **walk away.**

The 12-point checklist

Use this before booking. A good provider will say **yes** to every question.

About the driver

1. **DBS checked and up to date?** Ask to see it.
2. **Local council licensed private hire?** Not just "insured."
3. **Trained in SEN / autism / dementia awareness?**
4. **Has experience with similar children?** Don't be afraid to ask.
5. **Will do a short "meet the driver" visit before the first real journey?**

About the vehicle

6. **Clean, smoke-free, scent-free?**
7. **Wheelchair accessible if needed?** Ask which type of chair they can secure.
8. **Has a 5-point harness or appropriate child seat available?**
9. **Spare seat cover / cushion for sensory needs?**
10. **Carries water, tissues, and a basic first aid kit?**

About the service

11. **Will they wait if the appointment runs late?** No extra charge for the first 15 minutes.

12. **Do they have an emergency plan if the journey breaks down?**

Red flags

Walk away if:

- They won't give a fixed price
 - They can't show their licence
 - They pressure you to book and pay in cash
 - They say "we'll figure it out on the day"
 - They refuse to follow your child's communication style
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Green flags

Look for drivers who:

- Ask you detailed questions before the first booking
 - Offer a "taster journey" (short trip, no cost, just to see if it's a fit)
 - Send a text or WhatsApp the day before to confirm
 - Wait calmly if your child needs extra time
 - Charge transparently — base fee + per mile, or a flat hourly rate
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Sample questions to ask on the phone

1. "What's your council licence number?"
2. "Are you DBS checked, and when was the last check?"
3. "Have you driven children with my child's condition before?"
4. "What happens if my child has a meltdown mid-journey?"
5. "Can my child bring a comfort toy, blanket, or seat cover?"
6. "Is the car fully insured for specialist passenger transport?"
7. "What does it cost for an X-mile journey, and is parking included?"

A good driver answers all of these without hesitation.

Pricing models — what to expect

Base + per mile (£7 + £2.50/mile) — Best for longer, fixed-route trips. Watch for "surging" prices at peak times.

Flat hourly (£40–50/hr) — Best for school runs, hospital appointments. Usually a minimum 2-hour booking.

Airport fixed (£75 BHX, £220 London) — Predictable, all-in pricing. Watch for "parking extra" surprises.

Distance only — Best for local hops. Watch for hidden booking/admin fees.

Always confirm the total in writing before the journey.

Funding the cost

You may be entitled to:

- **Local authority SEN transport** (free for school-age children who qualify)
- **Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component** (can be used for transport)
- **NHS Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)** for hospital appointments
- **Charitable grants** from DCF and other disability charities

Ask your SENCO, social worker, or local council for a transport assessment. It's free.

About DCF

Disabled Children Fund BD is building a world-class disability centre in Sylhet, Bangladesh. Our founder, **Mohammed Eijaz**, runs **TeslaRides** — a licensed private hire service specialising in SEN, autism, elderly, and airport transport across the West Midlands and beyond.

Donate: www.disabledchildrenfundbd.org

Volunteer with us in Sylhet: raise £1,500, we cover accommodation + food

Contact: hello@disabledchildrenfundbd.org

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