Drive: the road to independence
The Trailblazers’ report on driving

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Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
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Trailblazers
Young Campaigners’ Network

This report has been researched and compiled by members of the Trailblazers network.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all the Trailblazers who completed our survey and to those who spoke to us directly about their experiences.

We would also like to thank the following organisations who have kindly contributed to the research and writing of this report.

- Association of Disability Driving Instructors
- Brotherwood
- Changing Places
- Contacta (Pinpoint)
- Disabled Motoring UK
- Forum of Mobility Centres
- Members of the ‘ADI’s with & for Disability’ Facebook Group
- Motability
- Queen Elizabeth’s Foundation for Disabled People

“Learning to drive is one of the best things I’ve done, and the independence it has given me is invaluable.”
Freya Levy, East of England

About Trailblazers

Trailblazers is a group of disabled campaigners from across the UK who tackle the social issues affecting young disabled people, such as access to higher education, employment and social and leisure opportunities. We aim to fight these social injustices experienced by young disabled people and to ensure they can gain access to the services they require.

About the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign

Trailblazers is part of the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, the UK charity for people affected by more than 60 different muscle-wasting conditions.
- We support research to drive the development of effective treatments and cures for all conditions.
- We ensure access to specialist NHS care.
- We provide services and opportunities that enable individuals and their families to live as independently as possible.

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Introduction

Learning to drive is an important milestone in many young people’s lives. For young disabled people especially, having a car means a great deal. Whether as drivers themselves or passengers in their own wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs), young people find having a car gives them greater independence and freedom from inaccessible streets and public transport.

Being able to go out in a vehicle suitable for their needs is vital for young disabled people. It will get them to college, university or work, attend hospital appointments and socialise with friends. As Sulaman, who is a passenger in a WAV says, “Since having a vehicle, my volunteering, social, and education life has been far more fulfilling”. For some young disabled people, travelling in a car may be their safest mode of transport. Public transport may not be suitable for their needs. And a young disabled person striving for independence should not be disadvantaged when applying for financial help with getting a car on the basis of their parent’s joint income.

In 2009, Trailblazers published our End of the Line report, which looked at the barriers young disabled people face when wanting to use public transport. Our report Drive: the road to independence followed on a similar subject, focusing on the issues young disabled people face when learning to drive and getting a car. In 2014, we asked Trailblazers about their experiences of learning to drive or being a passenger and the difficulties and challenges they experienced. The results of that survey informed this report.

Over the years, some Trailblazers have also told us they’d like to know more about learning to drive when you have a muscle-wasting condition. Although this report is not intended as a comprehensive guide, we hope it provides useful information for young disabled people thinking of learning to drive or getting their own adapted vehicle.

Young disabled people should be able to access the world of work, education, social gatherings and exciting opportunities just like everyone else does. We hope this report will contribute towards improving the driving experiences of young disabled people and, in turn, help them on the road to independence.

“My car allows me to get to training and games and is vital in my career as an international athlete as well as letting me see my friends and have a normal teenage life.”


“My car is a lifeline as I live in the middle of nowhere with very limited accessible public transport! So without a car I would be at risk of becoming isolated.”

— Hannah-Lou Blackall, East of England (learning to drive from her wheelchair)

Key findings

More than 100 Trailblazers took part in our investigation. They told us about their experiences of learning to drive, getting an adapted car and being a passenger in a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WW).

Learning to drive

■ Over 30 percent said it had been difficult to find a specialist driving instructor with experience and knowledge of teaching disabled drivers and using car adaptations.
■ Nearly half said there were not enough specialist driving instructors and there was a need for more training for driving instructors.
■ The lack of specialist driving instructors in local areas meant some respondents were forced to pay more by instructors who had to travel into their area to teach them, to cover the extra travel time and fuel costs.
■ Some Trailblazers reported that their driving instructors had used their lessons to run personal errands.
■ Forty percent said they didn’t know that people who received the higher mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment could learn to drive at 16, instead of the usual age limit of 17.

Getting a vehicle

■ More than 60 percent said there was not enough information made available about Motability – the national scheme where disabled people can lease a car, scooter or powered wheelchair.
■ Nearly 70 percent said there was not enough information available about grants to help with the costs of learning to drive.
■ Over 80 percent said the cost of adapted vehicles was too high.
■ Nearly 30 percent said their assessor was unhelpful.
■ A fifth of respondents said they were unaware that Motability gave disregarded income allowance for approved driving instructors (ADIs)
■ Over 40 percent said they had difficulty finding a disabled parking bay.
■ Eighty percent said disabled parking bays in their area were misused.

Motorway service stations

Trailblazers told us they’d welcome more accessible toilets at motorway service stations. Changing Places, who campaign for and produce extra accessible toilets for severely disabled people, told us only two out of 100 motorway service stations in the UK had Changing Places toilets.

Recommendations

Trailblazers are calling for:

■ a basic mandatory disability awareness course for approved driving instructors (ADIs)
■ a register of specialist driving instructors
■ an accreditation scheme underpinning training for specialist ADIs
■ all petrol stations to include an alert system for disabled drivers to use
■ all petrol stations to be wheelchair accessible.

Don’t think that you can’t learn to drive! I think it’s easy to believe we are unable to do things independently. When you think of driving, you think ‘no way’, there’s no chance I am strong enough to drive. However, there are so many modifications out there so that most impairments can be catered for. Don’t give up! It’s a long and tedious process, but if really is worth it. Just bear with it because the end result is worth waiting for.”

— Lauren West, London

“…”

— Emma Muldoon
Learning to drive: getting your driving licence

If you decide to go down the route of driving yourself, you must apply for a provisional driving licence through the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), which at present costs £50. The DVLA’s medical standards of fitness to drive stipulate:

In the interests of road safety, those who suffer from a medical condition likely to cause a sudden disabling event at the wheel or who are unable to safely control their vehicle from any other cause, should not drive.¹

You must inform the DVLA of your medical condition and they may ask you to come to one of their assessment centres to test your fitness level to drive. You can apply for a provisional driving licence from the age of 15 years and 9 months, as long as you meet the minimum eye sight requirement and know your National Insurance number.² If you get the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)³ you can drive a car when you’re 16 years old (for other people it’s 17).

Visit www.gov.uk to apply for your licence or to find out more about what’s involved.

“Learning to drive at 16 was very useful for me! It needs to be made more publicly aware in my opinion..”

James Tremain, South East [drives independently]

Funding for driving lessons

Family Fund is a charity that supports families with disabled children. Their Driving Ambitions grant supports young disabled people aged 16 and 17 to get started in learning to drive by funding a combination of: your provisional licence, theory test, learning materials, and a first taster driving lesson. www.familyfund.org.uk

Motability

Motability may be able to help with the costs of up to 40 hours of driving lessons. To find out if you’re eligible, contact Motability www.motability.co.uk

Pass Plus

Motability also offers extra support to young disabled drivers aged 16 to 24 through Pass Plus. Pass Plus is a six-hour course aimed at helping drivers to drive more safely. It can be taken at any time but is particularly useful to newly qualified drivers in the year after passing their test. The course is free for those on the Motability scheme (there are costs for non-Motability drivers). Successfully completing Pass Plus can reduce the insurance excess for young drivers. www.motability.co.uk www.gov.uk/pass-plus

Get Going Live!

Get Going Live is an all day event for young and newly disabled people who are interested in learning how to drive. It is organised by Disabled Motoring UK and Mobility Choice, the charity behind the annual Mobility Roadshow. Young disabled people can test drive a range of adapted cars and gain advice and information from mobility experts. www.getgoinglive.co.uk

Learning to drive: finding a driving instructor

Finding a good and supportive instructor is probably the most important part of learning to drive. Having someone who can understand your specific needs as a disabled person and as a learner driver, together with knowledge of car adaptations (if you need them) is crucial. An instructor should be able to challenge you and help build your confidence as a driver in equal measure. Driving instructors vary in affordability and experience. Not all driving instructors will have specialist experience teaching disabled drivers and those that do may not be instructing in your local area. Although some people choose to start having driving lessons with friends or family, it is recommended that disabled learners start with a course of driving lessons with an approved driving instructor (ADI). If you are a customer of Motability, they will recommend instructors through the British School of Motorimg (BSM).

Trailblazers’ top tips for finding a driving instructor

■ Contact larger driving schools directly to ask if they have specialist driving instructors in your area.
■ Search online or through the Yellow Pages for specialist driving instructors.
■ If you have been assessed for car adaptations, ask the company who assessed you for recommendations.
■ Go to the Driving Instructors Association website www.driving.org and use their online search tool to find a specialist driving instructor. Enter your postcode, refine the search option and under ‘I have learning difficulties and/or a disability’, select your impairment, e.g. ‘physical impairment’. This will then bring up the details of instructors in your area who are listed as ‘Teaching the disabled’.
■ Find driving instructors near you, who are approved and registered with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), by going to their website. However, there is no information about whether or not an instructor is a specialist in teaching disabled drivers. www.gov.uk/find-driving-schools-and-lessons

Remember - if you plan on having driving lessons in your own adapted car, you will need to get your car fitted with dual controls. This is a mandatory requirement for most driving instructors.

“A driving instructor should be able to challenge you and help build your confidence as a driver.”

Lee Hewis, specialist driving instructor, www.autowaydrivingschool.co.uk

² www.gov.uk/apply-first-provisional-driving-licence
³ www.gov.uk/applying-first-provisional-driving-licence

"Driving instructors who work with disabled drivers don’t get any help with the cost of adaptations. We don’t get any help with the costs of additional training. I do the extra (training) to try and help people, however bills still need to be paid. My first client with disabilities had had such a tough time finding an instructor, I helped her and she passed. We got in the paper and on the telly and it was a great achievement for my pupil. I was proud to have helped and I keep trying to help others.”
We asked specialist approved driving instructors to tell us about their experiences:

“I’m looking at changing my car next year. But the cost of having the adaptations done is putting me off. Disabled people are exempt from paying VAT on adapted cars but not those who teach them.”

A driving instructor.

“There is a significant additional investment in fitting adaptations and you never really get that money back. You get no incentive from government but some adaptation suppliers do give discounts and offers. DVSA could hold additional information on ADIs who have specialist knowledge and training but don’t seem interested.”

Haydn Jenkins, Specialist Driving Consultant, www.alphaautomaticshrewsbury.co.uk

“A lot of manual driving instructors will not want to become mobility instructors, who primarily use automatic cars, because of the cost involved. A full kit of adaptations for a car costs over £3,000. The DVSA does not recognise this specialist area of driving instruction. Therefore, they won’t keep a record of which instructors on their register are mobility instructors. If they did, it would be easier for disabled people to find an instructor.”

Lee Pollard, www.automaticandmobilityinstruction.co.uk

Key findings:

- Over 30 percent found it ‘extremely difficult’ or ‘difficult’ to find a suitable driving instructor with experience and knowledge of teaching disabled drivers and using car adaptations.
- Nearly half said there were not enough specialist driving instructors and there was a need for more training for driving instructors.
- The lack of specialist driving instructors in local areas meant some respondents were forced to pay more by instructors who had to travel into their area to teach them, to cover the extra travel time and fuel costs.
- Some Trailblazers reported that their driving instructors had used their lessons to run personal errands.
- Forty percent said they did not know that people who received the higher mobility component of DLA or PIP could learn to drive at 16, instead of the usual age limit of 17.

It was also unclear what training driving instructors needed to do to become specialist driving instructors. Most courses in teaching disabled drivers and using car adaptations were run by specialist organisations as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules. The Driving Instructors Association has a CPD module in ‘Training people with disabilities’ and the Queen Elizabeth’s Foundation for Disabled People has a training course called ‘Teaching People with Disabilities to Drive – Training for Qualified Driving Instructors (ADIs).’ But there is no clear accredited pathway for ADIs to undertake their specialist training, which means that some specialist ADIs may have fewer skills and less experience than others.

Most disabled adapted cars used by ADIs have to travel long distances as their client base is less dense. There aren’t many requiring automatic cars, so extra travelling is required and this explains why some charge for travelling. In the average area covered by an instructor, almost all the people living in that area would require manual cars, whereas those requiring automatics may only number a few, so to make it worthwhile owning an automatic, the ADI has to cover a bigger area than for a manual.

A driving instructor.

Case study:

I received my car (a wheelchair accessible Volkswagen Caravelle) in November 2011 and I was put in touch with a specialist instructor straight away. This instructor travelled 40 miles to teach me. He also had two other clients in the area that he had organised to teach on the same day. This was so he didn’t have to waste as much fuel coming to see us all on separate days. I had four two-hour lessons with my instructor and then I received a call informing me that he would no longer be teaching me as his other clients had passed their tests and he couldn’t justify coming to teach just me. I phoned Motability to inform them of this and to say I had a very expensive car not being used as I had no driving instructor. They told me not to find an instructor of my own and to be patient until they found someone suitable. It’s now been over a year and I still have no instructor. When I first got the car, I was over the moon. Having a car I could get into drive earlier on. Dr. Johnathon Byrne, East of England.

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Recommendations:

Trailblazers are calling for:

- a basic mandatory disability awareness course for ADIs
- a register of specialist driving instructors
- an accreditation scheme to ensure that driving instructors who support disabled learner drivers, particularly those with more complex physical needs, have received appropriate training
- support for ADIs who want to become specialist driving instructors through subsidised car adaptations and training.

Matilda Ibini, London

“I was extremely difficult to find a suitable driving instructor… there was only one instructor in my borough who had experience teaching someone with a disability to drive in their own car. Instructors from outside my borough were charging more because they would be travelling from another borough to meet me. Some instructors refused to teach me in my adapted car. Eventually the instructor I did find was good to begin with but I stopped lessons with him because he would use our lessons together to run his personal errands.”

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A driving instructor
The Motability Scheme enables disabled people to lease a new car, scooter or powered wheelchair, using their Government-funded mobility allowance. Anyone who receives the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the DLA, the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of PIP, War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement or Armed Forces Independence Payment can exchange their weekly mobility allowance payment to lease a new car through the Motability Scheme. Insurance, servicing, RAC breakdown assistance and replacement tyres are included in the cost of the lease.

You lease the Motability car for three years (five years if it’s a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle) and then give it back to Motability at the end of the agreement. You can then lease another Motability car if you wish to continue on the Scheme. After you’ve had an assessment and chosen your car, you arrange for your mobility allowance to be paid through your car dealer. The mobility allowance from your DLA or PIP is paid directly to Motability by the Department for Work and Pensions.

There are cars available that cost more than the weekly mobility allowance, such as Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs). In order to lease one of these larger and more expensive cars, you need to top up your allowance with what Motability call an Advance Payment. You need to pay this upfront to your car dealer, and then your weekly mobility allowance continues to pay off the cost of the lease.

Drivers under the age of 25 are restricted to cars with an ABI Insurance Group of 16 or lower and with a power output of 115 brake horse power (BHP) or less (this does not apply to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles). To find out which cars you can lease, go to the Car Search tool on the Motability website and opt for Only display cars suitable for drivers under 25. Also, only one named driver under the age of 21 is permitted as part of your lease (named drivers are people you authorise to drive your Motability car). This could either be yourself if you want to drive the car and are under 21, or another driver living at the same address as you. Up to two named drivers are included as standard in the lease and you can add a third driver for an extra cost.

Financial help
If you think you would struggle to afford the Advance Payment on a car, or the cost of adaptations or driving lessons, Motability might be able to offer financial help. But this is discretionary and there is no entitlement or guarantee of financial help.

Under the Motability Scheme, financial assistance towards the cost of driving lessons is not means-tested, as long as the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for the Motability Scheme.

Financial assistance towards the costs of car adaptations and Advance Payments is means-tested and the household income will be taken into account. For young people under the age of 20, this means they will be assessed on their parents’ joint income if the parents are in receipt of or are eligible for Child Benefit. A parent qualifies for Child Benefit if they’re responsible for a child under the age of 16, or under 20 if the child stays in approved education or training.

Motability states that, ‘Financial help is only awarded towards the least expensive solution that meets your mobility needs and you should also expect to contribute as much as you can afford.’

If you need a WAV but you don’t think you could afford the Advance Payment, Motability may be able to give you some financial help. Motability administers the Government’s Specialised Vehicles Fund, to help severely disabled people who need more complex adaptations or a WAV. Contact Motability to find out more. But bear in mind that even if you like the look of an expensive WAV, Motability would recommend the least expensive car suitable for your needs.

Speak to Motability as soon as possible if you think you would need some help with costs.

Where to find out more
Visit www.motability.co.uk for more information, or call 0800 093 1000 for an information pack.

Key findings
A fifth of respondents said they were unaware Motability gave discretionary financial support towards the cost of adaptations as well as the cost of vehicles.

Some respondents said they were frustrated by how long the process took from applying to Motability to getting their car.

There is a lack of transparency on the Motability website as to what the eligibility criteria is for their Charity fund and the Specialised Vehicles Fund.

Overall, the young disabled people who took part in our survey were very satisfied with the help and support they had received from Motability. Motability has clearly played a huge part in increasing the independence of young disabled drivers by providing them with vehicles that have opened up opportunities for them.
Assessment, adaptations and WAVs

Key findings

- A quarter of respondents said they were unaware you could privately adapt a car to your needs.
- Seventeen percent said they didn’t know you could drive from a WAV.
- Over 30 percent said their assessment had not been helpful.
- Many Trailblazers said the process of getting an assessment to finally getting their adapted car or WAV took far too long.

Overall, the majority of young disabled people who took part in our survey said they’d had a positive experience when getting an assessment for an adapted car or WAV. But there remain a number of young people who had not had a good experience or a helpful assessor, and some of them were not aware they could have their car privately adapted. Many didn’t know about wheelchair accessible vehicles either.

Concerns about changes from DLA to PIP affecting the Motability Scheme

Since April 2013, the Government has been changing the way disability benefits are paid to disabled people aged 16 to 64. Previously, under the DLA, a disabled person was entitled to the higher mobility rate if they were ‘unable or virtually unable’ to walk more than 50 metres. Under the new rules for PIP, the new walking distance criteria are reduced to 20 metres. This means that some people who had been on the higher mobility rate of DLA, and were eligible for the Motability Scheme, may not meet the new re-assessment criteria for the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of PIP. This would mean they will lose their eligibility for Motability and will have to return their car.

Disabled people who are reassessed for PIP and who are not awarded the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of PIP will have around six weeks from the DWP’s decision to return their Motability vehicle. Motability have a transitional package to support those in this situation, which includes financial support of up to £2,000 dependent on when you first joined the Motability Scheme.

For more information about PIP and Motability’s transitional support package, visit www.motability.co.uk/pip

Key findings

- Nearly a third of respondents said they were concerned that changes from DLA to PIP may affect their eligibility for the Motability Scheme.

“I am majorly concerned. I think my disability is severe enough but then again I’m not in a wheelchair. I am afraid that they’ll ask why I don’t just use taxis. Because I’ve been taking my time learning to drive.”

Catherine Gillies, Scotland (learning to drive with adaptations)

“I am concerned. No car means no life for me. If I didn’t have my car, life would be unbearable.”

Marc Pyle, South West

“I am very worried about this. My disability is not very, very severe but getting myself to and from places is very stressful and tiring for me. My car is so important. I would feel like a useless human being if I didn’t have it to do simple things like go to college or buy something to eat.”

Elora Radly, London (drives an automatic car)

Recommendations

Trailblazers are calling for:

- an increase in the time young disabled drivers (who become ineligible for Motability) need to return their Motability vehicle from six weeks to three months.

Losing their eligibility for the Motability Scheme would have a huge impact on the lives of young disabled people, particularly those who need to drive to college or university.

Recommendations

Trailblazers are calling for:

- assessors to ensure they listen to the views of young disabled drivers and do not make assumptions on what they can and cannot do, or assume that every disabled driver’s needs are the same.

Nowadays there are lots of adaptations that can be made to cars so that disabled people, who wouldn’t have been able to drive a standard car, can now drive. If you think you might need adaptations to drive a car, you can contact the Forum of Mobility Centres for advice and to book an assessment at a Mobility Centre closest to you. The Forum of Mobility Centres is a network of 17 independent organisations based in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, who provide information, advice and assessment to disabled people who want to drive a car or who want some advice on accessing wheelchairs in vehicles. These assessments are not driving tests and you’re not expected to have had any driving lessons.

The assessment is about looking at whether or not you would be physically able to drive and what car adaptations you might need to do this.
**Trailblazers say...**

Q. What does it mean to you to be able to drive and have your own car?
A. Having my own (adapted) car means that I am independent. Before I passed my driving test, I would have to rely on my parents to drop me off at university. This meant very long days, going in at 8.30 and not leaving until 5pm or after! Now I have the freedom to go wherever and whenever I want, without having to depend on other people and their plans.

Q. Tell us about your assessment?
A. I went to the assessment centre in Derby, where they had a room with the inside of a car set up and hooked up to some computers. I did some ‘in-car’ tests to test my grip, arm strength, foot/leg strength, etc. If I could have driven with a normal steering wheel, I could have done a mini-test drive, but it turned out that I needed a special, lightened steering wheel to drive.

Mathy Selvakumaran from the East Midlands, drives an adapted car through the Motability Scheme. We asked her about her experiences.

Because the assessor had already formed an opinion rather than looking at my disability, I had to be re-assessed…Due to this, my Motability agreement had to be cancelled early and I was given a new car. This seemed a very expensive way around rather than just giving me the car which suited my needs in the first place.

Hannah Lou Blackall, East of England (is learning to drive in a WAV)

**Trailblazers’ top tips**

- Book an assessment as soon as you decide you’d like to have a go at learning to drive.
- Be honest with your assessor about how your disability affects you and whether or not you think the adaptations they suggest suit your needs.

Q. What adaptations do you need?
A. It took a while having to figure out little changes and adaptations that I would have to make. For example, because I can’t turn my head very far to the right, I have several mirrors put up around me so I can see every angle around the car without having to turn too far. I also went through a couple of different types of manual controls for the horn/indicator, as the first system I had installed didn’t work for me. Once I received my adapted car, I would say it didn’t take me too much longer than anyone else to learn to drive.

Q. Do you ever have problems refuelling your car at petrol stations?
A. Yes, always. I always take my parents with me to refuel because some of my local petrol stations don’t quite know how to use Service Call Plus. I don’t feel safe carrying around that much cash to pay for fuel at the pump.

Q. What tips or words of advice would you give to someone thinking of learning to drive?
A. Having a driving instructor who knows your strengths and limits – and adaptations – inside out, is invaluable. They know what works for you.
Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)

WAVs are designed for people who want to remain in their wheelchair when they get into the car, either as a passenger or driving from their wheelchair, or by internally transferring from their wheelchair to the driver’s seat. WAVs are available on the Motability Scheme on a five-year lease instead of the usual three-year lease for other cars. WAVs, particularly for those who wish to drive in their wheelchairs, are larger than standard vehicles and can be more expensive. If you think you’d like to consider getting a WAV, have a look at the Motability website for their selection of WAVs and what Advance Payments they would need.

Trailblazers told us about their experiences with WAVs

“The process is very lengthy and tiresome, paperwork-wise. But worth it in the end.”

Trailblazer, London

“We are currently looking for a new WAV and considering using Motability for the first time in well over 10 years. The last time we approached Motability for a vehicle was three years ago and we were told that there was at least a six-month waiting list for a WAV assessment as they don’t have a wheelchair assessment centre in Northern Ireland (there is a very occasional visit by an assessor and adapted vehicle to Belfast). To this point, we have only had one WAV provided by Motability. We have bought the rest privately, converted them ourselves if needed, but we try to get them fully converted. As a result, the WAV tends to be fairly old, and cash constraints contribute to that…Almost all our purchases have come from England and my dad has had to fly over, buy the vehicle and drive it home. Cash constraints are huge!”

Michaela Hollywood, Northern Ireland (a passenger in a WAV)

“After a driving assessment, I felt quite discouraged by the assessor’s attitude. I was told that it would be possible to drive but that it would cost so much it may not be worth it…It was discouraging and implied that the cost of driving (from wheelchair) was likely to be prohibitive.”

Clara Robertson, Scotland (looking into learning to drive her wheelchair)

**Case study**

“When my son was still in a position to be lifted physically and had a small amount of mobility, we were able to get a Motability vehicle with £9 Advance Payment. But my son’s needs changed and so we needed a different vehicle. We ended up going for a Kia Sedona vehicle, which had an Advance Payment of £7,500. As both my partner and I work, we were not entitled to get the Advance Payment fully covered (as is the case with families where no parent is employed) and so took out credit cards in each of our names to then transfer the available funds to our bank accounts as a means to make this payment. Some Advance Payments can cost over £20,000 depending on the company providing the WAVs. This means a great financial strain for families who are not eligible for Advance Payments to be fully covered.”

Dean Widd, father

Trailblazer Helen Phelps-Starbuck, South West, tells us about her WAV

I passed my driving test in April 2012. All 25 of my hour-long lessons were in my adapted VW Transporter. The controls I was assessed for are a little different from everyone else’s. I opted for the tiller bar steering rather than the small wheel. I had tried the small wheel and joystick brake and acceleration and beeper button for indicators, and I just couldn’t manage with it. I also chose these adaptations because I don’t know what the future holds for my arm strength. With the tiller bar (which acts as a steering wheel but needs less movement), I literally only need to move my thumbs for levers, which control acceleration and brake. My arms can rest on my armrests and the tiller bar works just like a bicycle bar. Indicators and windscreen wipers etc are on the second picture, and for this, again, I just lift a finger from tiller bar to push. The first picture shows the box with colour buttons and a cup to the side where my key drops in. This box with colour buttons starts my vehicle, controls my windows, hazards, radio, etc. The tail lift is controlled by a black box I carry with me and this opens the boot and deploys the lift and lowers it and vice versa. I could not live without my vehicle. It took a lot of tweaking in the first year or so, but it’s worth it to have the independence that I have. I do not drive long distance. I’ve only done over an hour and half’s driving twice. I find that enough for me. Just being able to pop into town or take my sister and nephew for a trip into town, makes my day, especially when my nephew’s in the back telling me to go faster and giggling when we come to a traffic light waiting for light to go green!

Tori Elliott, South West, tells us how she uses Space Drive to drive her WAV

The thought of driving independently was incredibly daunting, but almost eight years on I’ve even travelled 4,000 miles around Europe with thanks to the Space Drive System which enables me to activate the brake, accelerator, and steering wheel using driving aids controlled by microprocessors. Here’s the complete set up I use to drive independently, although I have the steering wheel removed when I drive the vehicle. I use a Paravan Space Drive system, with a brake and accelerator on the left joystick and a steering joystick on the right. Many people have asked me in the past why I have to push forward to brake, and that’s because our initial reaction in a stressful situation is to tense and push our hands forward to brace ourselves. Can you imagine the danger if you pushed the pedals forward in an accident? I can’t show you all the pedals in the photo but it’s basically a piston lever, so the joystick I push operates a lever which presses onto the pedal. The bleeper on the accelerator joystick operates the horn, indicators, lights and wipers, and the control panel on the right has all of the other functions. I simply drop my keys into the ignition hole and we’re all ready to go on an adventure! These personalised adaptations were adjusted and built around my chair, to my strengths and weaknesses. I couldn’t imagine being without a car now. I thrive on the independence and confidence it gives me and would encourage other wheelchair users to give it a go!

Helen’s car, picture 1

“Tell them how you really are! You need to be able to drive this car all the time, so the adaptations need to be right. Don’t feel bad for admitting something is too difficult, there are always changes they can make.”

Lauren West, London

“Look carefully at all the options. When being assessed, you may not know that much about driving but you do know about your abilities, so ask for a second opinion if you feel you are not being listened to.”

Hannah Lou Blackall, East of England (learning to drive in a WAV)

“Definitely go along to an assessment centre because they’re so friendly and there are so many adaptions to suit everyone’s needs. Driving has really changed my life for the better and it could change yours too.”

Elena Kadle, London (drives an automatic vehicle)
**The Queen Elizabeth’s Foundation for Disabled People (QEF Mobility) tells Trailblazers about their work with young disabled drivers.**

**Q. How do you support disabled drivers and those wanting to learn to drive?**

**A.** QEF Mobility supports not only learner drivers with a disability, but also those who want to return to driving after an acquired disability from accident, illness or age. We have helped many people with muscular dystrophy – not just young people – but also experienced drivers who have developed adult onset muscular dystrophy. Everyone is different and the person is central to our efforts to help them to drive. The first thing that we do is offer an assessment. Here at the Mobility Centre, we have both occupational therapists and driving instructors who are very experienced in assessing and training people with all kinds of disabilities.

For the assessment, we have a static driving rig which allows people to try a range of car adaptations that can tell us a lot about whether or not it is safe for someone to drive. The static driving rig also helps measure cognitive, visual and physical tolerances and whether or not a person has the physical strength and fine control to operate vehicle controls.

The static driving rig can also help us to determine the kind of car set-up ergonomics and types of controls a person will require. We can also consider transferring into and from a car, such as wheelchair compatibility with drive-from-wheelchair vehicles, provisions for helper dogs and much more.

**Q. Any specific things that young people with muscle weakness might need to consider?**

**A.** Expectations have changed over the past few years and most young people will want to learn to drive. It is an expectation that is reasonable, and with the right support and resources, everyone should have the opportunity to learn to drive. However, good advice is needed to consider important factors such as wheelchair provision, funding, and changes in home location as the person matures and their environment and expectations change.

Some people with muscle weakness may be able to transfer into a car seat, while others may need to get into a vehicle in their wheelchair. Each person will need to consider their own abilities on an individual basis.

In addition to the car controls, it’s important to consider other things that go with driving: securing the seatbelt, petrol stations and filling up with fuel, wheelchair compatibility with drive-from-wheelchair vehicles, provisions for helper dogs and more.

**Q. What advice do you have for young disabled people who are thinking of learning to drive?**

**A.** Get in touch with us! An assessment at a mobility centre is definitely the right place to start and we can recommend a mobility centre close to you. It should be possible to book an assessment before you apply for a provisional licence, so you have time to prepare and are ready to start to learn as soon as you’re allowed to. With suitable controls, most young disabled people can learn to drive. Frequently people feel their condition affects their potential to drive more than our assessment shows it does. Finding out that you have the potential to learn to drive can be a huge boost to confidence and self-esteem.

Disability Motoring UK has been working with the company Contacta who have created an alert system called Pinpoint. Using wireless technology, the aim of Pinpoint is to alert service stations and filling up with fuel, wheelchair compatibility with drive-from-wheelchair vehicles, provisions for helper dogs and much more. Using wireless technology, the aim of Pinpoint is to alert service stations and filling up with fuel, wheelchair compatibility with drive-from-wheelchair vehicles, provisions for helper dogs and much more.

**Key findings**

- Over 40 percent of respondents said they had difficulty requesting assistance when refuelling at petrol stations.

**Recommendations**

Trailblazers are calling for:
- All petrol stations to include an alert system for disabled drivers to use, so they can get assistance to refuel and pay for their petrol
- All petrol stations to be wheelchair accessible.

Get involved

- If your local petrol station doesn’t use an alert system, write to them and ask them to install one.

**Refuelling**

In our survey, we found that many young disabled drivers had difficulty refuelling their cars when driving unaccompanied. They felt ‘embarrassed’ about having to honk their horn across the forecourt, and sometimes staff were not aware that assistance was required. Some respondents found that petrol station staff were often unable to come out and assist them. Because of this, many young disabled people were reliant on asking their friends or family to refuel for them. For a young disabled person who wants to increase their independence, having to ask mum or dad to refuel for them is a move backwards into dependence. There is also the problem of not being able to pay for the petrol on the forecourt or not being able to physically get into the station to pay.

**“Sometimes petrol stations only have one member of staff available, so it can be a bit awkward. I tend to refuel my tank when I'm with friends or family, for convenience.”**

**Joe Richardson, South East**

**“I’m always embarrassed to honk my horn across a quiet forecourt. Some staff inside don’t know what you’re doing, so you have to keep honking, while others mouth through the window that they can’t come out because they are manning the station alone.”**

**Marc Pyle, South West**

**“Sometimes it’s hard to get into the shop part to pay for my fuel as the shop is inaccessible.”**
Insurance

Car insurance is mandatory for all vehicles in the UK. As the owner of a car it is illegal for you or any driver to be driving a car that is not covered for the cost of physical damage to the vehicle or bodily injury to those involved, in the case of road or traffic accidents. The minimum coverage of insurance any vehicle can have to be driven on UK roads is third party cover.

The price of insurance premiums for your vehicle will vary based on a number of factors. These include age, the value of your vehicle, the length of time you have had a full licence and the number of other drivers who can drive your vehicle.

If you are on the Motability Scheme, insurance is included in your contract. The maximum number of drivers covered to drive your vehicle is three named drivers (including yourself). You can nominate either yourself or another fully licensed driver as the primary named driver and then have two secondary named drivers.

Key findings

■ Thirteen percent of respondents said they had difficulty finding suitable car insurance.

On the whole, Trailblazers who lease a car through the Motability Scheme were ‘relieved’ that insurance was included and were happy with how easy it was to get insured. A smaller number of Trailblazers reported having difficulties getting private insurance because their car adaptations meant they were automatically quoted higher premiums.

Helen Dolphin, Director of Policy and Campaigns for Disabled Motoring UK:

“My advice to people looking for insurance is to get a number of different quotes. Also, try the specialist insurers for disabled people such as Fish or Chartwell. From my experience, they are usually very competitive and provide an excellent service for disabled drivers. For example, they usually insure your wheelchair if it is in your car and damaged in an accident. Sometimes it’s not just about how cheap you can get the insurance, but also what you actually get if you have an accident. So, will the replacement car be adapted, for example?”

“From looking into this issue of disabled people paying more, I don’t believe that insurance companies generally charge any extra. Insurance can be very expensive, especially if you have no ‘no claims’ discount’, are under 25 and live in expensive insurance areas. It may just be that the insurance is expensive and has nothing to do with having a disability. Therefore, if possible, I’d suggest you join the Motability Scheme until you are over 25 and have some ‘no claims’ under your belt before getting your own vehicle.”

www.disabledmotoring.org

Recommendations

Trailblazers are calling for:

■ insurance companies not to discriminate against disabled drivers by charging excessively higher premiums or refusing to give quotes to disabled drivers on the basis that their cars have adaptations.

Before I had my Motability car, I had a privately insured car and because of the adaptations and the fact I was disabled, my insurance was sky high.  
Freyja Levy, East of England

“I have a Motability car now so not a problem. But when I used to own my own car, I couldn’t ever find an insurer that would cover me as I was classed as a ‘boy-racer’ and disabled.”

Marc Pyle, South West

Pricing

Car insurance is mandatory for all vehicles in the UK. As the owner of a car it is illegal for you or any driver to be driving a car that is not covered for the cost of physical damage to the vehicle or bodily injury to those involved, in the case of road or traffic accidents. The minimum coverage of insurance any vehicle can have to be driven on UK roads is third party cover.

The price of insurance premiums for your vehicle will vary based on a number of factors. These include age, the value of your vehicle, the length of time you have had a full licence and the number of other drivers who can drive your vehicle.

If you are on the Motability Scheme, insurance is included in your contract. The maximum number of drivers covered to drive your vehicle is three named drivers (including yourself). You can nominate either yourself or another fully licensed driver as the primary named driver and then have two secondary named drivers.

Key findings

■ Ninety-two percent of respondents said they had difficulty finding a suitable designated parking space for disabled people. Often this was because the disabled parking bay was taken by a vehicle without a Blue Badge. Those who drive WAVs also found that while they might be able to find a parking space, the narrowness of the space meant they couldn’t always open doors or deploy ramps properly.

Trailblazers fully supports Disabled Motoring UK’s Baywatch campaign against abuse of parking spaces for disabled people.

w: www.disabledmotoring.org

“My car has a long side ramp. Disabled spaces do not have enough space on the side so I need to park at the end of a row. On-street parking is far better for access but near impossible to find. Many people do not have badges and just park there for convenience. I think there need to be two tiers of disabled space—those close to the door for those who can’t walk far and those which are further away and much larger. I don’t mind how far I need to wheel so long as I know I can get in and out of my car.”

Lauren West, London

Parking

Parking is a crucial component of driving. You may need extra space to open doors, make transfers or deploy a ramp. Having a Blue Badge means disabled people can park closer to their destination, with a dedicated space for a passenger to safely transfer in or out of the car.

In our survey, we heard from some Trailblazers about the difficulties they faced finding a suitable designated parking space for disabled people. Often this was because the disabled parking bay was taken by a vehicle without a Blue Badge. Those who drive WAVs also found that while they might be able to find a parking space, the narrowness of the space meant they couldn’t always open doors or deploy ramps properly.

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Lauren West, London

Recommendations

Trailblazers are calling for:

■ large supermarket car parks and hospital car parks to have at least one space reserved solely for WAVs with more space at the sides and at the rear for ramps

■ car parks to ensure disabled parking bays are used only by Blue Badge holders, by issuing parking charge notices (PCN) to those who don’t display a badge.

Trailblazers’ top tips

■ If you do not have a Blue Badge, find out from your local authority how to apply, as you may be eligible for one.

■ You can also find out from your local authority about whether or not you’re entitled to a dedicated disabled parking bay in front of your home.

■ You may want to invest in a warning sticker that notifies drivers about the extra space your vehicle requires because of wide-opening doors or deploying ramp.

“What I would do is use a wheelchair accessible vehicle and get a sticker that says it is a WAV.”

Rebecca Young, North West (has a WAV through the Motability Scheme)

“My wheelchair accessible van needs a big wide space with room to use the tail-lift. It doesn’t fit in a multi-storey car park either.”

Sarah Croft, South West (transfers from her wheelchair into the driver’s seat to drive)
Accessible toilets at motorway service stations

Young disabled people who drive, or are passengers in WAVs, should be able to use motorway service stations just like everyone else does. They should be able to stop and have a break, get something to eat and drink, and be able to use an accessible toilet. In our survey, we found that of the three main motorway service operators, only one – Moto – listed on their website that their locations had ‘disabled toilets’. Although the other operators may have accessible toilets too, it wasn’t clearly signposted on their websites. We also spoke to Changing Places, the organisation for accessible toilets, and they told us that out of over 100 motorway service stations across the UK, only two have a Changing Places toilet. Changing Places toilets are more accessible than standard accessible toilets and include space for passengers.

Key findings

- Out of 100 motorway service stations, only two (run by Moto) have a Changing Places toilet that would fully support the needs of severely disabled drivers and passengers.

Top tips

- If you’re planning on driving on the motorway, check the websites for Moto, Welcome Break and Roadchef in advance to see if their service stations along your route have accessible toilets.
- If the information is not online, phone them to check about accessibility to their service stations including disabled parking, toilets and general access.
- It is also worth checking out reviews on Trip Advisor and Disabled Go, which often have access information and reviews from disabled customers.
- If you encounter good or poor access at a motorway service station, give your feedback to the company and let us know too.

Recommendations

Trailblazers are calling for:

- motorway service operators to work with Changing Places and Trailblazers to look into increasing the number of Changing Places toilets available across their network of locations
- motorway service operators to state clearly on their websites which locations have standard accessible toilets.

Trailblazers’ top tips

- If you’re planning on driving on the motorway, check the websites for Moto, Welcome Break and Roadchef in advance to see if their service stations along your route have accessible toilets.
- If the information is not online, phone them to check about accessibility to their service stations including disabled parking, toilets and general access.
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Disabled Motoring UK

Helen Dolphin, Director of Policy and Campaigns at Disabled Motoring UK (DMUK), tells Trailblazers about how DMUK supports disabled drivers and gives her advice for young people thinking of learning to drive.

Q. What support does your organisation provide?
A. DMUK is a membership organisation for disabled drivers, passengers and Blue Badge holders. Anyone can join and membership is free. We provide advice on all different aspects of motoring, including getting back to driving, buying cars VAT free, parking problems, Motability, refuelling and Blue Badge abuse. We work closely with Motability, the UK Petroleum Industry Association (UKPIA) and the British Parking Association (BPA) and pride ourselves on being able to resolve the majority of our members’ issues. We also campaign on behalf of disabled motorists. One of our most notable campaigns is the Baywatch campaign, which aims to stop abuse of disabled parking bays. We also run the Disabled Parking Award which is a standard we award to car parks that meet our accessibility criteria www.dpaward.org

Q. Do you think there is enough availability of information about car adaptations?
A. There is a lot of information online about different adaptations; the difficulty can be knowing which adaptation is right for you. For anyone looking at getting into driving, we always recommend an assessment with the Forum of Mobility Centres www.mobility-centres.org.uk. There are 17 of these centres dotted around the country and they can help people find out what adaptations are right for them. The Motability Scheme usually refers people who need adaptations for an assessment when they first apply to join the scheme. Once you know what adaptations you need, you can then look at all the different brands available and the different companies able to fit them. Motability One Big day events, the Mobility Road Show or Naidex are good places to see the different adaptations available and what’s new on the market.

Q. What improvements need to be made to encourage more young disabled people to try driving?
A. There is now a lot of help available with funding for vehicles, adaptations and driving lessons through the Motability Scheme, so whereas cost was once a huge issue I’m hoping that it is now more affordable, although fuel of course is still very expensive. Occasionally parents don’t want their children to drive as it means losing the family car when they get their own Motability vehicle. So it’s important that parents are aware of all the benefits that driving can provide for their children. Another issue can be the availability of driving instructors who are willing to teach disabled students.

Q. What advice would you give someone who is interested in learning to drive?
A. We encourage all young people to have a driving assessment and take it from there. There is sometimes an assumption that some people can’t drive because of their disability but there are so many adaptations available, which can overcome all manner of issues. Once you know you can drive, the next step is choosing a vehicle and getting some driving lessons.

Q. What can be done to improve the service disabled people receive when asking for help at petrol stations?
A. This is a problem that DMUK has been working on for many years. There are really two elements to it: getting fuel in your car and paying for it. There was a gadget called ServiceCall, which some petrol stations still have, but this has been superseded by Pinpoint (see page 19). However, if there is only one member of staff then they won’t come out as they can’t leave the kiosk unattended. Then when it comes to paying they can’t bring out the chip and PIN machine, so you need to apply for a chip and signature card so you can sign. Your bank should be able to sort this out for you. It doesn’t seem like you can have chip, PIN and signature, so you may want a card just for getting fuel. There is a phone app called assist-mi which could solve both of these issues by enabling you to check before you go to the petrol station that someone can help you and also to pay using your phone. www.assist-mi.com

Q. If you could change one thing that would improve the driving experience for disabled people, what would it be?
A. I would completely overhaul the Blue Badge scheme so only those with severe mobility problems qualify, and I’d crack down hard on any abusers. There is little point having adapted vehicles if when we get to our destination we cannot park because of the selfishness of others. www.disabledmotoring.org
“Driving Dreams”

Trailblazer Martyn Sibley is co-founder of disability lifestyle magazine, Disability Horizons. He tells us how learning to drive has changed his life.

When I was a teenager I had youthful exuberance and disability demons in abundance. Quite a weird combination. So much of me wanted to see the world and change it at the same time. However, having spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) meant feeling it was all impossible for poor little me.

Being able to drive is an important part of life for most people. From shopping to socialising, and employment to exploring; having wheels is cool. How on earth could someone with no leg movement, weak arms and bad balance dream of driving? Fortunately my family and friends always encouraged the positives and found solutions. I was pushed into contacting Motability, attended their assessment centre and even test drove a car. I struggled with the type of controls on the day, but was promised that with the right adaptations I would be perfectly able to drive. Amazing!

I was scared, excited and surprised all in one go. The apprehension of driving passed by quickly, but I was more scared of what such a contraption would cost. It was very hi-tech! This was 13 years ago, I was scared, excited and surprised all in one go. The apprehension of driving was hard to get independent. After another year of re-assessments, fittings and tweaks; my car was ready. January 2004, my second year in university; and the dream had come true. I had a green Mercedes Sprinter. It was a bit larger than I’d anticipated, but necessary for my needs. I used a remote control for a rear-access lift, drove my wheelchair inside, clamped it in automatically, and drove using all sorts of hand controls. Simply put, I steer with a computerised handle bar, accelerate/brake with my thumbs, have a deeper switch with nine functions (such as indicators, wipers and horn) and various other modifications for windows, heating and the radio.

Learning to drive had its own stories, especially involving the slightly strange instructor. Then on taking my test, the examiner was more frightened than I was when he saw the vehicle set-up. But I calmed him down and we circled Coventry ring road and football stadium successfully. I passed with only two minor faults. It was life-changing. I had a driving licence, independence and freedom; all in one moment.

Two years later, aged 19, we did it. I had the money and was ready to get independent. After another year of re-assessments, fittings and tweaks; my car was ready. January 2004, my second year in university; and the dream had come true. I had a green Mercedes Sprinter. It was a bit larger than I’d anticipated, but necessary for my needs. I used a remote control for a rear-access lift, drove my wheelchair inside, clamped it in automatically, and drove using all sorts of hand controls. Simply put, I steer with a computerised handle bar, accelerate/brake with my thumbs, have a deeper switch with nine functions (such as indicators, wipers and horn) and various other modifications for windows, heating and the radio.

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Since then I’ve driven thousands of miles. I’ve repaid my parents with lifts, visited friends at the cinema and in restaurants, done the family shop, commuted to work lots of times, attended a festival in Scotland, a holiday in Wales and driven around Europe. The technology itself has been unreliable and problematic at times. Motability covers all insurance, servicing and breakdown. Therefore it’s not hit me financially. However I’ve met the RAC a few too many times. Plus, the companies adapting the cars, like in the wheelchair market, aren’t always so ‘customer focused’, especially after sales.

My current car is a Kia Sedona. It has a side entrance, easier to park, but it’s hard to manoeuvre my wheelchair inside. I’m going through the process of getting a new vehicle now and I’m hoping for a new blue VW Transporter.

I don’t have to spell out any more clearly how possible, powerful and important driving is for me. If you’re disabled and interested in driving too, just do it. There’s a whole world out there. You’ll never look back, I promise.

w: www.disabilityhorizons.com

Trailblazer Tori Elliot has SMA type 2. She is a freelance illustrator and blogger. Her blog, Our SMA! Adventure, is about her journeys driving across Europe from her WAV. Here, she tells us why her WAV is so important to her.

I can honestly say that I wouldn’t have been able to achieve as much as I have without the ability to drive independently. Having a car through the Motability Scheme and driving from my wheelchair give me the freedom, which is sometimes limited in other aspects of my life. I am able to operate my vehicle without help, just like any able-bodied person my age. It’s also given me the confidence to explore places outside of my home town, enabling me to live away from home at university but still be able to pop back for appointments if need be, without having to book and prepare public transport. Although many public services do provide wheelchair access, in my experience they’re geared towards manual chairs which can be lifted over small bumps or gaps. Electric wheelchairs that are much heavier seem to struggle, but being able to drive removes all these problems.

As I type this, I’m in a hotel in Prague. I’m travelling around Europe driving my vehicle around 14 countries with my boyfriend and PA, to promote independent accessible travel and reviewing the cities for other wheelchair users on our blog, sponsored by GM Coachworks. In the past I’ve had my wheelchair and equipment damaged by both budget and international airline companies, so our tour of Europe was only made possible by my ability to drive.

I’m able to take all of my equipment, such as a mobile hoist and a pressure relieving mattress with me, knowing my personal care needs can be met fully during my time away from home. If we were to fly to each city for 15 short breaks, not only would it have been more stressful to worry about my electric wheelchair being damaged in transit, but also I’d be very limited in what I could take with me space/weight-wise on the plane. Driving around Europe allows us to sightsee at our own pace. If I’m aching, we can pause, but a weekend away would give us a prescribed time in which we could explore an unknown and possibly inaccessible city and hope to catch our flights in time.

Having a car gives me the freedom sometimes limited in other aspects of my life.

w: www.oursmalladventure.blogspot.com
fb: www.facebook.com/oursmalladventure
Useful links

AA
www.theaa.com
Provides car insurance, driving lessons and other services.

British School of Motoring (BSM)
www(bsm.co.uk
One of the UK’s largest driving schools.

Chartwell Insurance
www.chartwellinsurance.co.uk
Provides specialist insurance to disabled people.

Changing Places
www.changing-places.org
Campaigns for extra accessible toilets for those who can’t use standard disabled toilets.

Disability Rights UK
www.disabilityrightsuk.org
Has published a useful booklet for disabled people called Get Motoring.

Disabled Motoring UK
www.disabledmotoring.org
Information and advice to disabled motorists, and publishes a monthly magazine which includes car reviews by disabled drivers.

Driving Instructors Association
www.driving.org
Their website includes a search tool for finding a driving instructor.

Fish Insurance
www.fishinsurance.co.uk
Provides specialist insurance to disabled people.

Forum of Mobility Centres
www.mobility-centres.org.uk
Advice and assessment to disabled people who want to learn how to drive or access a car.

Gov.uk
www.gov.uk
Provides information about a range of topics including applying for a driving licence, Blue Badges and booking your driving test.

Motability
www.motability.co.uk
A national scheme where disabled people who are eligible can lease a vehicle.

Queen Elizabeth’s Foundation for Disabled People
www.qef.org.uk
Provides a range of services for disabled people, including a specialist driving school.

Rica
www.rica.org.uk
Consumer research into the needs of older and disabled people. Rica have published useful guides to motoring.

Pinpoint
www.pinpointbycontacta.co.uk
Provides an alert system for disabled customers who need support with refuelling at petrol stations.

“...in driving, just do it.”
Martyn Sibley