

**What is ACROSS?**

ACROSS is a charity which takes seriously ill and severely disabled people by Jumbulance to the Christian shrine at Lourdes in south west France. Priority is given to those in terminal illness and those confined to a bed or wheelchair.

**What is a Jumbulance?**

A Jumbulance is a unique road vehicle especially constructed to provide long distance transport for persons whose medical or physical condition makes normal methods of travel either impossible or impracticable.

**What makes it so special?**

It has seven beds and eighteen seats to provide maximum comfort, a fully equipped kitchen, and a fully accessible toilet, which makes it completely self contained. It carries oxygen, a limited supply of disposable and medical supplies and is fully air-conditioned. A hydraulic lift provides access for those in wheelchairs or trolley beds.



*Jumbulance dedicated to Pope John Paul II*

**Who looks after those who need care?**

An ACROSS group consists of 24 persons. 10 of those are VIPs, those who are sick or disabled, and the other 14 are volunteer carers, chaplain, nurses, doctor and helpers who give their spare time freely and pay their own expenses.

**How long does an ACROSS pilgrimage last?**

Each pilgrimage lasts ten days with 8 full days spent in Lourdes. The Jumbulance travels throughout the night and all meals are served on board, so there is no need to have lengthy stops.

**How are groups formed?**

There are two types of groups. A national group is comprised of individuals who apply to ACROSS to travel on any one of their many pilgrimages which depart on various dates throughout the year from Easter to November. Individuals are responsible for their own expenses.

A local group is a group organised by a society, parish or organisation which arrange their own carer team and choose their own VIPs. The local organiser is responsible to ACROSS for the cost of the entire group and different groups have different methods of raising funds.



*Inside the Jumbulance*

**Where do ACROSS Groups start?**

National groups start in the north of the country, sometimes in Glasgow travelling down the M6 or A1/M1 as appropriate. They uplift travellers en route at convenient motorway service stations. London is circumvented and pick up points are on or close to the M25.

The departure point of a local group is determined by the organiser and is normally a convenient location in the group's locality.

Travellers are responsible for their own transport arrangements between home and the Jumbulance departure point.

**Where do ACROSS Groups stay in Lourdes?**

The complete group stays at a specially selected three star hotel with facilities for disabled persons. The preferred hotel is the Mediterranee, within easy reach of the Grotto where ACROSS has installed hospital beds and has a stock of equipment including wheelchairs and hoists. Occasionally another hotel might be used.

**How much does it cost?**

The equipment required and the special vehicles used are expensive. ACROSS is constantly fundraising and is grateful to their supporters for the voluntary donations which defray some of our expenses. Costs for travellers, which are fully inclusive, are shown on the insert sheet.

**What about medical insurance?**

Everyone travelling with ACROSS is covered by a comprehensive travel and medical insurance which is included in the cost. Every traveller must obtain an EHIC (formerly an E111). Details on obtaining an EHIC can be found by telephoning 0845 6062030 or at [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers)

**Does ACROSS only take very ill persons?**

No! Whilst ACROSS has the facility to take heavily dependent persons to Lourdes, each group is made up of persons with varying degrees of illness or disability. Those who are most in need of the Jumbulance facilities will always be given priority, but the inclusion of those with lesser disabilities allows the carer team to devote more time to those who need it.

**I need care during the night. Can I go?**

Each VIP will share a room with a helper or if necessary a nurse. Care is provided 24 hours per day.



*Carers showing Eileen the Lourdes streets*

**Can I bring my own carer with me?**

By all means - carers are welcome to accompany you, however they must realise that the group as a whole look after each other and their remit is much wider than just caring for you.

It is not always possible for husbands and wives to share rooms.

**I would love to go as a carer, but I am not as fit as I used to be.**

An ACROSS group is very tiring and demanding of carers. A lot of stamina is required to provide a holiday atmosphere as much as a pilgrimage, and the carer team must have the capability to care for the needs of the VIPs. There is, however, room for carers with minor medical complaints, and for those who perhaps are unable to lift or push wheelchairs. In order that a balanced team can be created, this must be declared on the application form.



*A happy group of ACROSS pilgrims relaxing in a Lourdes café.*

**I would like to go as a helper, but I have no experience of caring.**

Every group requires a medical team and willing helpers, especially fit strong men for muscle power, but groups are made up of persons with various degrees of caring experience. None is essential! What is required is a willing heart and a willingness to provide unselfish Christian love not only to the VIPs but also to other carers.

**How do I apply?**

Contact the group organiser at the address overleaf for an application form stating whether you are a doctor, nurse, helper or chaplain, or unable person.



*The Grotto at Lourdes where the Blessed Virgin appeared in 1858*

**If you cannot travel as a helper but would still like to help us:**

- You can help by sending a donation and if you are a taxpayer by completing a gift aid declaration which allows us to reclaim the tax you have paid, increasing the size of your donation by 28%.
- By becoming a *Friend of ACROSS* and donating a regular amount by bankers order each month/quarter/year.
- You can join our 200 Club which costs just £4 per month payable by standing order.
- By leaving ACROSS a legacy in your will.
- By organising a fundraising event locally.
- By spreading word of ACROSS in your work or church, highlighting our need for more volunteer helpers.

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# Travel To Lourdes



# With ACROSS

**Travel for those needing  
special care!**