



Derby City Council

Consultation Evaluation Report: Response to the public consultation Post-16-19 Home to school travel assistance

Author: Home to School Travel Assistance Service

Date: January 2023



Purpose of this report

This report will:

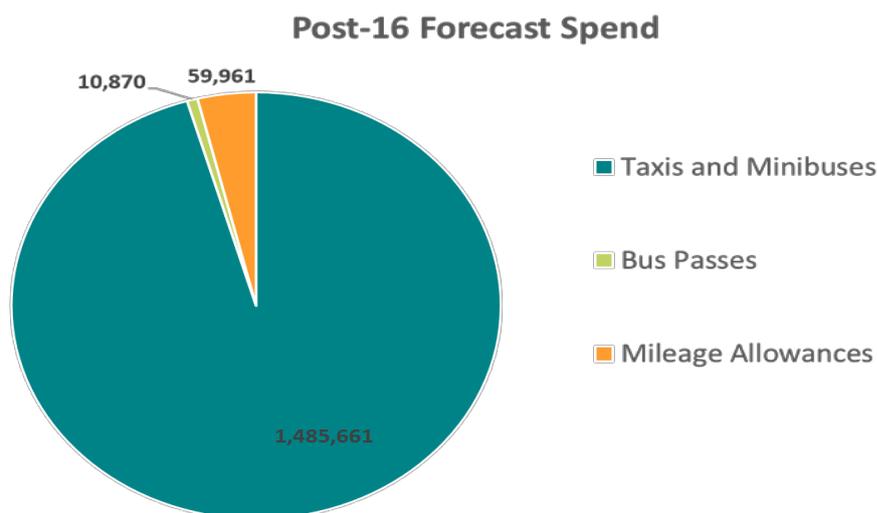
- Provide an overview of the consultation process for the Post-16-19 Home to School Travel Assistance Consultation.
- Outline response numbers, types and key themes.
- Be appended to a Cabinet report about the consultation to aid the Council in its decision-making process regarding the proposed change to Post-16-19 Home to School Travel assistance.

Introduction

Derby City Council is currently experiencing significant financial challenges, The Medium Term Financial Plan from 2022/23 to 2024/25 included £28.437m of new additional costs which means that the Council needs to make £16.767m of savings over the next three years. This means making difficult decisions about services in all areas of the Council's work.

The current travel assistance offer for eligible sixth form learners, mainly consists of providing single occupancy, or shared taxis. It is believed that this could be a barrier for some young people who may otherwise be able to access a wide range of opportunities available to support them on their journey into adulthood, employment and beyond.

Overall, the Council's expenditure (January 2023) on Post-16 travel assistance was £1.56m. 194 post-16 learners have a seat in a taxi or minibus at a cost of £1.48m. It is anticipated that demand will continue to rise.



The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide home to school/college transport free of charge to learners aged 16 to 19 in the same way as it does for children aged 5-16. With costs for all home to school travel assistance continuing to

rise, the Council has had to consider how the cost of non-statutory education discretionary travel assistance provision can be reduced.

Overview of the consultation process

A project team led by the Head of Service School Organisation and Planning was convened to coordinate the consultation process. The team included colleagues from the home to school travel service, Policy, Finance and Legal. The Council appointed a Project Manager.

The project had four distinct stages:

- Planning and research to inform the consultation approach
- Pre-engagement phase
- Public consultation period
- Consultation close, evaluation of responses and development of reports and revised draft Post-16-19 Policy statement

The Council followed the Gunning Principles of consultation.

Planning and research to inform the consultation approach

A significant amount of research, data gathering, benchmarking and modelling was undertaken as part of the wider policy review. This work helped the project team to understand the requirements for the consultation, develop the proposal for change and inform the policy development process.

The research included understanding the needs and the profile of the current cohort of children and young people receiving home to school travel assistance.

An analysis of the profile of groups currently receiving home to school travel assistance showed the following:

- The percentage of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is growing.
- The range of needs that children and young people have are increasingly complex and varied.

This means that the Council needs to ensure that our home to school travel assistance offer is appropriate to meet the travel needs of children and young people and is sustainable to meet predicted levels of need in the future.

Best practice research and benchmarking of policies and travel assistance arrangements in other local authorities

Other local authorities Post-16 home to school travel assistance policies and arrangements were researched. This included reviewing information on eligibility

criteria, types of travel assistance provision and arrangements and how Post-16 transport is arranged and paid for.

The consultation was developed collaboratively and coproduced through ongoing engagement with key stakeholders including the SEND Co-production Delivery Group. The research helped to inform the development of the proposal on personal travel budgets (PTB) as a means of travel assistance, for eligible sixth form learners. These valuable discussions helped to shape the consultation approach.

The proposed changes outlined in the consultation align with approaches taken by other local authorities.

Communications and media activity

The consultation was conducted thoroughly using a best practice approach and methods. The project team developed the consultation survey and a range of supporting documents using the planning and research information and findings, best practice methods and home to school travel assistance data. The communications plan which supported the consultation was robust and effective at raising awareness.

The Council has consulted with the public on the proposed change to the way in which it provides Home to School Travel assistance for Post-16 learners. A consultation document, which set out the proposal and survey were made available on the council website from 30 September 2022. This was accompanied by an Easy Read version. Copies were also available as a hard copy and in alternative formats on request. The consultation closed on the 12 December 2022.

A range of key stakeholders were identified as part of the consultation preparation phase. These were:

- Parents and carers of pupils and students using home to school travel assistance.
- Parent/carer representatives within Derby City.
- Schools and special schools
- Internal services and senior leaders
- Further education providers and other educational settings
- General public
- Derby City Council councillors

The following supporting information was provided on the Council's consultation page Let's Talk Derby:

- A consultation document to explain the background and context for the consultation.
- A specially developed easy read version of the document to explain the consultation to people with additional needs.
- A downloadable version of the survey for people to download, print and complete.

The survey design collected user data, to allow analysis. For example, the survey asked respondents to give the age range of their children, whether any of their children currently use Council organised school travel assistance and or if they knew about the 16-19 Bursary and accessed this funding.

The Council wanted to hear from as many residents and stakeholders as possible, therefore robust and extensive communications activity was planned and delivered. A range of both universal and targeted communications channels and methods were used to reach both the key stakeholders directly as well as wider audience groups.

Two of the main elements of the communication plan were direct stakeholder emails and the social media campaign.

The Council communicated the Post-16 Home to School Travel Assistance consultation in several ways, including:

- Press releases sent to local media at the beginning and mid-way point of the consultation period.
- Through the consultation webpage of the local authority website
- Regular social media messages for example, Facebook and Twitter
- An article on the SEND Local offer hosted on the Council's website
- Information disseminated to key stakeholders inclusive of all Derby Schools, all out of area schools and colleges who currently have learners accessing home to school travel assistance, all parents/families of children currently accessing travel assistance, CYP Scrutiny members, all SENDCO's, SENDCO networks, Youth Alliance, Voluntary sector providers and all families currently registered with SENDIASS.

The consultation was promoted at 5 public events which were held throughout the consultation period. The Council ensured that the venues were accessible. Two meetings had BSL interpreters, and one event also had subtitled facilities to support the delivery and sharing of information.

The Council facilitated 11 young people engagement events. Facilitators were specialists in engaging with young people.

The consultation opened on 30 September 2022, ran for 11 weeks, and closed on 12 December 2022. The Council did accept responses received for 1 week after the closing date due to the impact of postal strikes.

A total of 702 clicks through to the consultation page hosted on Let's Talk Derby were generated as result of the communication plan.

Summary of consultation responses

Response rate

The response to the public consultation has been analysed by the Council.

The public consultation was an open consultation.

- 96 responses to the online survey
- 31 Easy Read versions
- 01 organisational response
- 03 responses Youth Alliance
- 72 young people participated in an engagement event
- 07 stakeholders attended a public event

Total responses received = 210

Respondents were asked several questions about the proposal.

Comments have been analysed into themes using thematic analysis. This means that all comments have been closely examined to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly.

Public online consultation

One of the key areas from respondents is that there is some confusion as to what defines a Post-16 learner. For example, 'my child is at college, so this does not apply to them as they are not at sixth form.'

Common themes from the public consultation,

- Definition of exceptional circumstances
- 'My' child cannot travel independently
- Attendance at education maybe put at risk
- Young people's awareness of personal safety
- The amount proposed will not cover the cost
- Increased stress to families and young people
- Other commitments would prevent 'parents' from transporting young people.
- ITT will provide great opportunities for some young people
- Provide greater flexibility to make our own arrangements.

Respondents were asked whether they had any other comments. They predominantly shared information that was relevant to their own personal circumstances.

Open ended comments from the overall survey

Open ended comments have been organised into themes using thematic coding, to identify any common points being made by respondents.

Comments on Personal Budget

Child cannot travel independently/ won't suit all young people	32
Stress on parents or child/parents who cannot manage a budget	16
Concerns on amount/ensure people spend it on travel/payment frequency	14
Agree with proposals/parents should or can transport child/will benefit those who can/teach them to be independent	10
Each child's needs should be taken into consideration/tailor to individual children	7
Will transport get them to school on time/no transport options available	6
Keep as it is/council more able than parents to organise	6
Concerns on safety	5
Transport multiple children/have other children	5
Agree as long as safe and on time	3
Will prevent access to post-16 education	3
If people go to a PB and struggle should be able revert back or get help from council	1

If you have any comments on the impact of the proposal or the ability of those affected to access any independent training, please tell us below

Child cannot travel independently/ won't suit all young people	21
Stress and anxiety on parents or child/ parents who cannot manage a budget	21
Each child's needs should be taken into consideration/tailor to individual children	17
Will prevent access to post-16 education	8
Concerns on safety	7
Concerns on amount of money/ensure people spend it on travel/payment frequency	4
Agree with proposals/parents should or can transport child/will benefit those who can/teach them to be independent earlier	4
Don't agree with proposals	2
Will transport get them to school on time/no transport options available	1
Transport multiple children/have other children	1
Keep as it is/council more able than parents to organise	1
Other concern	1
Vulnerable are being targeted	1

Home to School Transport Key Findings

Main survey responses

How are you responding to this questionnaire?	
As a Parent/carer or user of school transport now or in the future	65
Interested member of the public	26
School/educational establishment representative	2
Other (please specify)	3

Other

NHS therapist

Previous Parent of child using HTST

connexions Personal Adviser supporting NEET young people Post-16 (DCC).

Do you have a child or children in Post-16-19 education at school or college within Derby?	
Yes	43
No	51

Do you have a child or children in Post-16-19 education at school or college outside of Derby?	
Yes	20
No	71

Please tell us if you have a child or children in one of the following school year groups?	
Year 11 age 15/16	25
Year 12 age 16/17	17
Year 13 age 17/18	13
Year 14 age 18/19	17
Above age 20	11

What travel arrangements do you currently use to get to and from school or college?	
Walk	6
Public Transport	13
Your own vehicle	27
Minibus provided by Derby City Council	10
Taxi provided by Derby City Council	37
Other, please tell us how your child/children currently get to school or college	2

Other

Private minibus arrangement

Family member often has to take to keep safe

Which best describes your family's transport situation at the moment?	
I am a driver and have regular access to a vehicle	49
Another adult in the house drives and has regular access to a vehicle	13
I am a driver but don't have regular access to a vehicle	7
No-one in our house has access to a vehicle	9
I have a disability that makes it hard for me travel on public transport	16
I have access to a specially adapted vehicle that allows me to travel	3
I am able to use public transport	7

Do you have any other children living in your household?	
Yes	49
No	45

How do your other children travel to school or college?	
Walk	22
Public transport	5
Your own vehicle	16
Minibus provided by Derby City Council	3
Taxi provided by Derby City Council	5
Other, please tell us how your child/children currently get to school or college	6

Other

Private minibus/transport (2)

2 other SEND children needing transport

School bus

Aunty takes them

I have help from my parents with most of the school runs.

Do you current access the Governments 16 – 19 Bursary Fund to support your child to access school or college?	
Yes	10
No	84

Do you think a personal travel budget will allow your child and family to have more freedom and choice to organise your own travel assistance?	
Yes	25
No	54
I am not sure	12

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce yearly personal travel budget payments?

Agree	25
Disagree	65
No opinion	5

Which of the following ways would you be most likely to use a personal travel budget payment?

Drive my child in the family car and pay for petrol	25
Pay a friend to help me/take my child	6
Take my child on public transport	15
Share duties with other parents/families	9
Use a taxi	36
Other (please specify)	22

Other

- Not suitable, won't work, needs of child don't allow it (22)
- All suitable (1)
- Child can already travel interpedently (1)
- Wont accept a PB (1)
- Don't agree with proposal (1)

A new and enriched independent travel training service will help and support more young people to become more independent and confident travellers and giving them skills for everyday life.

Do you agree or disagree with the increased opportunities for independent travel training?

Agree	36
Disagree	41
I am not sure	16

Demographics of respondents

Please tell us how you describe your gender.

Woman/girl	60
Man/boy	23
Non-binary	1
Prefer not to say	10

Do you identify as a gender other than what you were assigned at birth, that is you are a trans person or someone with a trans history?

Yes	28
No	59
Prefer not to say	8

I consider myself to be...	
Heterosexual/Straight	73
Bisexual	2
A Gay Man	3
Other	1
Prefer not to say	14

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?	
Yes	21
No	72

Do you have any religious beliefs?	
Yes	33
No	45
Prefer not to say	15

If yes, to which religion do you belong?	
Christian	20
Hindu	4
Jewish	1
Muslim	3
Sikh	2
Other	3
Prefer not to say	2

To which group do you consider you belong?	
Asian or Asian British - Indian	11
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3
Any other Asian background	1
Dual Heritage - White and Black Caribbean	1
Dual Heritage - White and Black African	1
Dual Heritage - White and Asian	1
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	67
White – Irish	2
Any other White background	2
Any other ethnic group	2
If you answered 'other' to any of the answers above, please use the box below to tell us more	3

Easy Read Survey Key Findings

Do you want to tell us anything about our ideas?

Yes/agree it's good, would like to travel independently	5
How much will I get/comment on payment	5
No don't agree	4
Need someone to keep you safe	1
Comment on taxis	1
Comment on the help	1

Do you have any other ideas for what may help young people to travel on their own?

Practical comments	5
No other ideas	3
Safety	2
Positive comment on independent training	2
Get help with travel costs	1

Are you...please pick as many answers as you want

A young person with additional needs?	29
A young person without additional needs?	2
A parent or carer of a young person with additional needs?	5
Other? Please tell us in the box	1

Do you get help from Derby City Council with travelling to school? Please pick one answer

Yes	18
No	8
Don't know	4

Do you use a bus, train or taxi to get to and from school? Please pick one answer

Yes	26
No	5

If you do use a bus train or taxi to get to and from school, how do you do this? Please pick all the answers you want

I travel with my family or with an adult	7
Yes, I travel on my own	23

Do you use a bus, train or taxi for other things? Please pick one answer

Yes	20
No	11

If you do use a bus, train or taxi for other things. How do you do this? Please pick the answers you want

I travel with my family or with an adult	11
I travel on my own	17

Do you think it is a good idea for a Personal Travel Budget payment. Please pick one answer

Yes	17
No	4
Don't know	10

Do you think that Independent Travel training will help young people to travel or go to places on their own? Please pick one answer

Yes	23
No	3
Don't know	5

Do you think it is a good for the Council to help young people over the age of 16 to travel independently. Please pick one answer

Yes	24
No	2
Don't know	4

If you think it is good for young people to be able to travel independently, please tell us why. Please pick all answers you want

Confidence and feeling good about yourself	26
Being able to travel to friends and fun activities	19
Being able to travel to school and education opportunities	22
Being able to travel to work	18
Not having to rely on friends and family for travel	21
Other – please write in the box below	2

Are you? Please tick one

Woman/girl	8
Man/boy	20
Prefer not to say	2

Are you a disabled person? Please pick one

Yes	14
No	12

What is your race or ethnic group? (By this we mean your skin colour and which country you and your parents come from) Please pick one option

Asian	3
Mixed race	5
White	13
Any other	3
Prefer not to say	5

Do you have any religious beliefs? Please select one option

Yes	5
No	18
Prefer not to say	6

What religion are you? Please pick one

Christian	4
Muslim	1
Sikh	1
Other	5
Prefer not to say	7

Young people engagement events

There is a range of research, guidance and legislation that requires Local Authorities to involve and listen to the voice of children and young people. These are set out in several key statutory documents including the Children's Act 2004, Children & Families Act 2014, Care Matters White Paper, Leaving Care Act 2000, Duty to Consult 2012, Education Act 2002.

Overall, the expert facilitators met with 72 young people.

We extended an invite to participate in an engagement activity to 13 schools, colleges and voluntary sector organisations. These were chosen based on Home to school travel assistance data for 2021/22.

Criteria,

- high numbers of young people with SEND accessing travel assistance
- mainstream provision with a high number of young people accessing travel assistance
- high number of young people accessing education outside of area

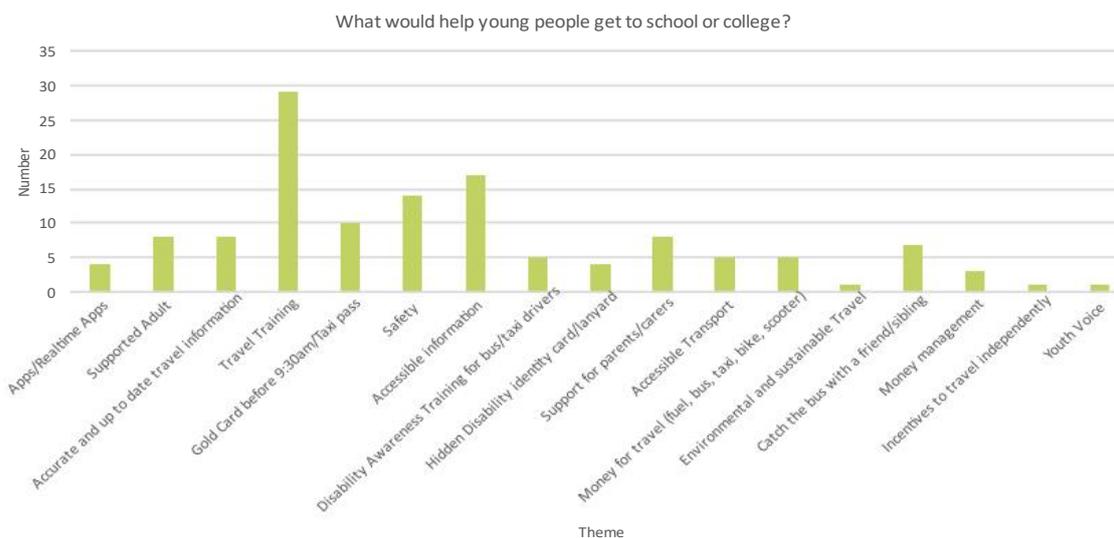
We delivered 11 engagement events. The majority of the engagement events with young people were held in provision in an environment they were confident in and with familiar adults to support communications. One event was held in a central venue and supported the young people who were independently travel training to meet facilitators there. St Clare's, St Martins and St Andrews sent representatives to the Council's SEND Ambassadors group.

Young people were keen to listen, engage and share their experiences. For some young people they felt that they were contributing to make things better for others as sometimes their experiences of home to school travel had not been as good as it could have been.

At all engagement events an overview of the proposal was provided. Three core questions were shared and discussed. Young people were able to write and add their own post it notes to flipcharts. Or a facilitator recorded what was said so that discussions were not interrupted.

Question one

What would help young people to get to school or college?

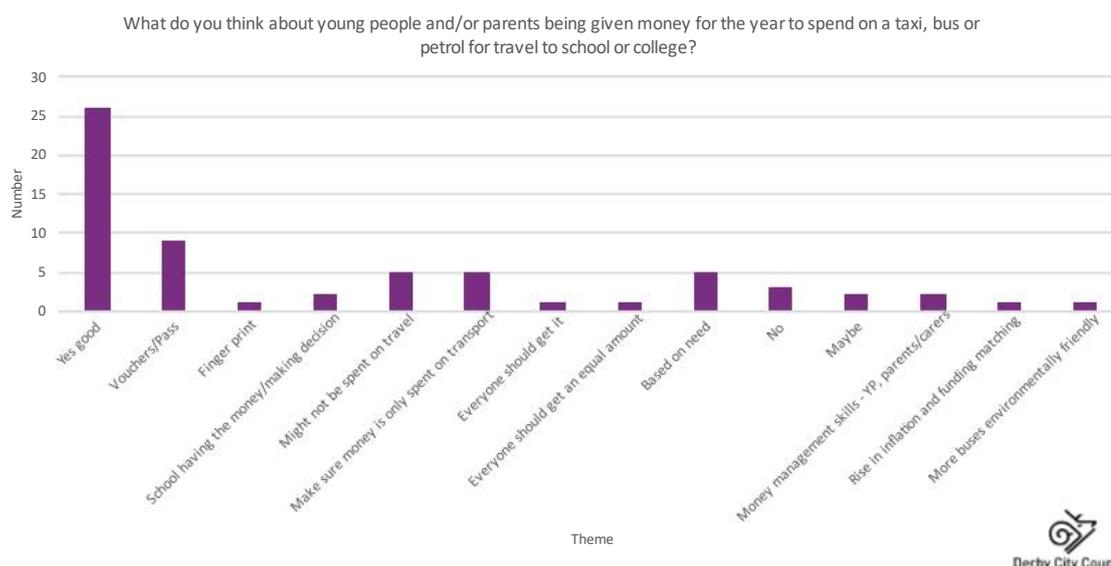


The main outcome themes:

- **Travel training** – support to know how to travel independently, option to practice and learn with someone to help you know and understand what to do.
- **Safety** when travelling on public transport, walking or cycling to school or college – knowing how to stay safe and how to deal with certain situations that may occur. Young people provided examples of what they could do.
- **Accessible information** – including how to use a timetable to know what times buses are, how to get around the city, knowing what was in the local area.
- **Gold Card issues** – a high number of the young people had a Gold Card but this did not meet the need to get to school or college before 9:30am.
- **Support to and from parents** – A high number of young people shared their hopes that their parents and families would support them to travel more independently. This was a very emotive area for young people who said they wanted their parents to have more confidence in their abilities and to allow them to try even if they make mistakes.

Question 2

What do you think about young people and/or parents being given money for the year to spend on a taxi, bus or petrol for travel to school or college?

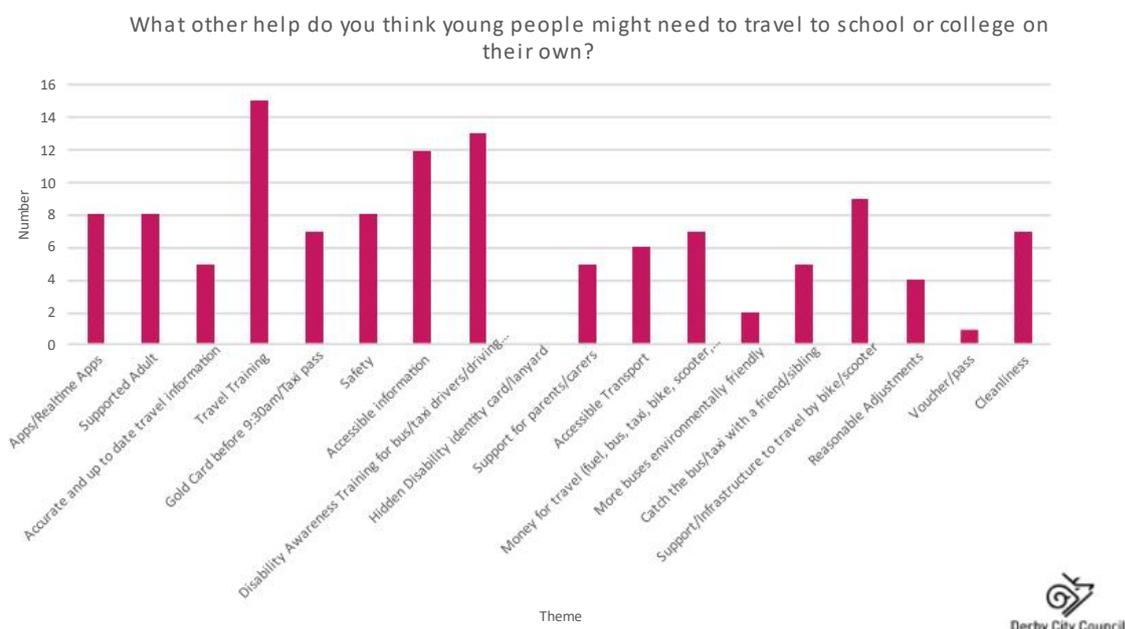


The main outcome themes:

- **Good idea**
- **Vouchers or passes** – to use on travel for example buses or trains
- **Amount of PTB should be based on need** – some families may need more and some have money that could be used on travel but is not
- **Schools** – maybe they could have the money and make decision on who gets it as they know individual circumstances of the young person and their family
- **Misuse of a PTB** - might not be spent on travel assistance and that some young people might not get to school or college

Question three

What other help do you think young people might need to travel to school or college on their own?



The main outcome themes:

- **Travel training** – help young people to develop the skills to travel independently.
- **Training for bus and taxi drivers on disabilities** – concerns raised by a high number of young people about the treatment some of them have received when using public transport and from taxi drivers. Particularly young people who consider they have a hidden disability.
- **Easily accessible information** - to support travel options and making decisions about travel.
- **Support and infrastructure to travel by bike or scooter in the city** – majority of young people talked about sustainable travel options, some would like to use bikes or scooters to travel around the city. However, some young people were not confident in riding a bike and or felt they would need an accessible bike. Safe storage facilities across the city were discussed.

The following were areas that were equally identified by young people,

- **Use of apps to support travel** – communication tools for learners to access and know what time buses should be there, apps linked to being able to be understood by travel operators and apps to manage money.

- **Support from a trusted adult or family member**
- **Safety** – know how to stay safe when travelling independently around the city.

Public events

The Council offered five public events to provide stakeholders with information on the proposal and an opportunity to share their views.

Overall, seven members of the public attended the events.

Key comments from the public events,

- The amount of the proposed PTB may not cover the cost of travel assistance
- Resources to support children who will never be able to travel independently
- What would be considered an exceptional circumstance
- Has the Council considered means testing

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

As part of the consultation an EIA has been undertaken. An EIA was necessary to understand any potential differential impact prior to any formal decision to approve the proposal and change in policy is made by Council Cabinet. In the case where any potential negative differential impact has been identified and may possibly arise from implementation of the new policy suggested mitigations the Council may need to consider have been made. These have been included as part of the EIA.

Key mitigations identified

Enriched Independent Travel training offer

ITT is not a blanket policy/requirement of the Post-16-19 policy statement. The enriched service is an option featured in the refreshed Post-16-19 Travel Assistance Policy that may benefit children and young people. It is reasonable to ask parents/carers and young people to consider independent travel training. ITT will be based on individual assessment and tailored to the young person's needs. The Council recognises that there may be some young people who may never manage independent or supported travel by public transport.

The Council's enriched ITT service will be led by Transition 2.

Communications strategy

A robust communication strategy will be in place to ensure that accessible information is available to families, young people and stakeholders to inform them of the changes to the Post-16-19 travel assistance offer. Accessible information will be placed on the Council's website. This information will be co-produced with stakeholders inclusive of young people.

Post-16-19 Home to school travel assistance policy statement

The revised policy statement will be shared through a range of communication tools and resources. For example, the Council's website and social media accounts. The refreshed policy statement will support parents/carers and stakeholders to understand the Council's Post-16-19 Home to school travel service assistance offer.

Application form

Home to school travel assistance applications will be available online from 1 April 2023. The automated decision software will enable parents/carers and young people to know and understand more about the eligibility criteria and home to school travel assistance offers available to them.

Partnership working with stakeholders

The Home to School travel service will continue to work in partnership with stakeholders inclusive of young people to promote sustainable active travel assistance. Officers within the home to school travel service will continue to work with teams/services across the Council to further improve knowledge and understanding of home to school travel assistance. As a result, there should be an increased awareness and promotion of travel assistance offers to help prepare young people for transition to adulthood and to gain maximum independence.

Conclusion

Following the robust consultation period, we have carefully and conscientiously taken the views of respondents into account and considered the impact of the proposal in relation to equality. The public consultation has demonstrated that many respondents who completed the survey as a parent do not support changing the current Post-16-19 home to school travel assistance. However, young people feel that independent travel training would support and promote increased independence for young people.

It is crucial that the Council recognises and listens to the voice of young people to support and promote increased independence for young people with SEND as they become young adults, so that they can take part in work and social opportunities more easily. The positive feedback from engagement and participation events confirmed that young people value their independence highly. They expressed that they want their parents, schools and the services that support them to help them prepare for adulthood, including continued access to education, employment and to essential services and activities within the community. The consultation has identified that the proposal for PTB's and an enriched ITT offer will strongly support the development of essential independence skills to attend school, to participate in community life and socialise with friends; it is also fundamental to their future ambitions.

We have considered whether the proposal could lead to actual or potential discrimination and have considered whether the mitigation we have proposed is sufficient. We believe that the mitigation measures that we have proposed demonstrate that we have met the authorities' responsibilities in relation to equality. If the proposal is approved and following implementation, there will be a 12-month post implementation review to ensure that any adverse impacts on young people are being considered and mitigation where possible is taking place.

At a cost of £1.56m and set to raise further in future years, home to school travel assistance places a considerable financial pressure on the Council at a time when managing budgets is becoming increasingly difficult. Changes to how the service can be delivered can help meet some of this financial pressure in the face of anticipated increased demand. Changing and adapting the service experienced by some eligible sixth form learners and the subsequent change to the Post-16 Home to School Travel Policy Statement, will help manage the pressures, whilst, where appropriate also preparing young people for adult life where public transport is shared by members of the public.

Appendix

Appendix number	Title	Document
1	Open ended comments to the consultation survey	 Post_16-19_Home_T o_School_Travel_Assis
2	Consultation response from Derby SEND Alliance	 Derby SEND Alliance public response to Po
3	Derby Youth Alliance responses	 Derby Youth Alliance Consultation Respons

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this report, Derby City Council cannot be held responsible for any errors or omission relating to the data contained within the report.