

Home to School/College Transport Consultation 2014

The City council currently spends a total of circa £3.5 million per year on home to school/college transport. Whilst extensive work has been undertaken within the council to reduce this cost over recent years, financial pressures continue as the demand for transport increases.

In order to manage increased demand whilst balancing the budget the proposals are to reduce discretionary home to school/college travel provision and move to lower cost modes of travel.

If approved, the changes will be implemented in September 2015 for pupils over 16 years, and take effect immediately for other students who are due a review of their travel arrangements.

This consultation has been produced to give pupils/students, parents/carers and other people the opportunity to comment on the City council's proposals for these changes.

All councils are facing considerable pressure on public services and Derby City Council has to find savings of £81m over the next three years to balance the budget.

Whilst a large proportion of the home to school transport budget funds pupils who are eligible in law for free transport assistance to school, the council also provides transport to other pupils and students at its own discretion. Additionally, the law gives discretion over which types of transport the council can provide.

The consultation seeks views on this matter, covering:

- ♦ Discretionary Post 16 Special Educational Needs transport arrangements, and
- ♦ Types of transport assistance offered to Special Educational Needs pupils.

Derby City Council has a duty to ensure that every child in the city has access to a school place; for some children the council has a legal duty to provide free home to school travel assistance.

Most parents/carers send their children to the school in their catchment area school, or to the nearest available school. The council provides free transport assistance to the nearest available eligible school for any full-time pupil when there is no school place available within the 'statutory walking distance' as stated in the Education Act 1996.

Current provision

Local authorities have statutory responsibilities to provide home to school transport assistance in specified circumstances. This provision is protected in law and will be unaffected by the proposed changes. This includes providing transport to pupils who:

Age / Type of Pupil	Statutory entitlement
Pupils up to the age of 8 (year 3)	Free transport assistance to the nearest available eligible school if it is more than two miles walking distance from home. (see note 1)
Pupils between the ages of 8 and 16 (years 4 – 11)	Free transport assistance to the nearest available eligible school if it is more than three miles walking distance from home.
Pupils aged between 8 and 10 (years 4 – 6) who are in eligible for Free School Meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit	Free transport assistance to the nearest eligible school if it is more than two miles walking distance from home.
Pupils aged between 11 and 16 (years 7 – 11) who are eligible for Free School Meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit	Free transport is provided to one of the three nearest eligible schools if it is between two miles (walking route) and six miles away (road route). If a school is preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief then free transport is provided if the school is more than two miles (walking route) and not more than 15 miles away (road route) and it is the nearest school of that faith.

Note 1: Eligible schools are defined as the closest school(s) to the address at which the child resides with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A faith school is only classed as an eligible school for children of the faith represented by the school; a single sex school is only classed as an eligible school for children of the same sex admitted to the school (i.e. only boys or only girls).

The following key changes are proposed:

Proposal 1: Discretionary Post 16 special educational needs transport arrangements

In addition to the above statutory requirements, the Council provides free transport to Post 16 students where they have statement of special educational needs and

receive their education in either an enhanced resource/special school sixth form, or they attend a further education college/other education provider and they meet the published eligibility criteria.

This is a discretionary provision not required by law.

Eligibility for transport to a college is based on the student having previously had a statement of special educational needs; the student being unable to travel on public transport (as evidenced by a letter from a medical professional); the course of study being over 16 hours per week; and the college being the nearest designated college, or other (subject to further criteria). Students remain eligible until the end of the term they turn 25 years old. This includes students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The council currently transports 139 post 16 students at a cost of £480,000 per annum. The average cost of providing this transport is £3,451 per student per annum.

The council fully subsidises the cost of this transport for all students that receive transport, regardless of income – there is no charge to the student. The majority of students with SEN are transported in a private hire vehicle (taxi/minibus), door to door, which is provided free of charge.

The council does not provide free or assisted transport to any other post 16 student group, including those with low incomes.

In order to enable the Council to manage an increased demand for transport without putting increased pressure on an already overstretched budget position it is proposed in future to provide transport assistance only to those students with special educational needs who have severely restricted mobility* up to the end of the term in which they reach the age of 19.

*as defined by being eligible for the Disability Living Allowance mobility component at the highest rate.

Transport assistance provided for students over the age of 16 may be in the form of a personal travel budget.

It is proposed this change will come into effect from September 2015 for **all** students, including those that are currently receiving a service.

Proposal 2: Types of transport assistance offered to eligible special educational needs pupils.

During academic year 2013/14 Derby City Council provided home to school transport assistance to 767 pupils with special educational needs at a cost of £2.7 million per

annum, and at an average cost of £3,520 per student per annum. This cost is wholly met by the council.

The majority of eligible students with SEN are transported in a private hire vehicle (taxi/minibus), door to door, which is provided free of charge.

Where it is a legal requirement to offer free transport assistance, the law gives discretion over how transport is provided.

- In order to support students' transition to adulthood, it is proposed that more students should be supported to travel to school by commercial bus.
- In line with the approach to provide personalised support to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), a personal travel budget should be able to be considered.

It is therefore proposed that in future, transport assistance to eligible SEN pupils would include:

- Travel pass or season ticket for a school bus service or local bus service,
- Independent Travel Training to support students to become independent travellers,
- Fuel allowance, or
- Personal travel budget.

Where the parent/carer has a motability vehicle for the benefit of the child, there is a reasonable expectation that this will be used to transport the child to school and fuel will be reimbursed.

It is proposed these changes will be phased in immediately should the changes be agreed.

- The full proposed Home to School Transport Assistance Policy can be viewed at: [insert link](#)
- The current Home to School Transport Assistance Policy and can be viewed at:
<http://www.derby.gov.uk/media/derbycitycouncil/contentassets/documents/schools/DerbyCityCouncil-Transport-Policy-parents-Oct2011.pdf>

The council is also currently implementing all aspects of the current Home to School Transport policy and is reviewing entitlement for children with special educational needs according to the council's defined criteria.

Have your say.....

The council is seeking your views on the proposals set out above. You can respond by completing the online questionnaire or by printing a copy of the questionnaire to fill in and sending (no stamp required) to:

CYP Commissioning
Home to School/College Transport Consultation
Derby City Council
FREEPOST
MID24259
DERBY
DE1 2BR

Members of the public can access the council's website free of charge on computers in the Council House or in local libraries within the city.

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