Nottinghamshire County Council

Post-16 SEND Travel Consultation Parents and Carers

Overview

We would like your views on how we should provide travel assistance in future for eligible young people aged 16 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Although the law does not require the Council to provide free or subsidised travel for young people with SEND who are attending post-16 education, the right travel support can make an important difference, helping young people attend school or college.

As part of our current Post-16 Transport Policy, eligible young people may currently receive:

- **Council-organised transport:** This could be a taxi, minibus or specialist vehicle. It costs the council an average of £11,000 per student each year.
- **A Direct Travel Assistance Payment (DTAP):** An upfront payment made directly to a young person or their parent or carer to arrange travel. This costs the council on average around £2,500 per student per year.
- **Parental mileage:** A payment at a lower rate than a DTAP that can only be used towards fuel costs for travel to school or college. This costs the council on average around £1,250 per student per year.

Why are we asking for your views?

We are asking for your views on the future of our post-16 SEND transport policy because demand for council-organised transport has almost doubled over the past five years.

Travel assistance for children and young people with SEND will cost around £29 million this year, and this figure is expected to rise to £35 million in the next two years.

The county council is facing a significant budget shortfall to maintain all the services that we provide.

We want to make sure future SEND travel assistance continues to meet young people's needs and remains affordable.

We are therefore reviewing our Post-16 Transport Policy to try and reduce costs and we're consulting on four options.

Options

Option 1 – A contribution for organised transport

- Council-organised transport would continue to be available to eligible learners aged 16 to 25 with SEND.
- Families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) choosing organised transport from September 2027 would be asked to pay £795, equivalent to 7% of the cost of the transport. This matches the proposed contribution for a council bus pass for pupils using mainstream school transport from September 2027.
- Families with household income below £7,400 would not be charged.
- This option is estimated to save the Council £0.4m.

Option 2 - Year 12 enhanced assessment from 2027 plus contributions

- Existing Post 16 SEND learners on organised transport would retain their current arrangements until they complete their post-16 education. However, from September 2027, families of young people aged 16 (in year 12) would only be granted organised transport in exceptional circumstances.
- To demonstrate exceptional circumstances, families would need to complete an enhanced assessment as part of their application for travel assistance.
- If families applied for a DTAP or parent mileage they would not need to complete the enhanced assessment. These options can be chosen at the application stage.
- If the Council decides the application does not meet exceptional circumstances, then a direct travel assistance payment (DTAP) will be offered.

- In addition, the Council would introduce the charge for organised transport from September 2027 for families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) on organised transport (as outlined in Option 1).
- This option is estimated to save the Council £1.5m

Option 3 - Post 16 enhanced assessment from 2028 plus parental contributions

- From September 2028, families of young people aged 16-25 would only be granted organised transport in exceptional circumstances.
- From September 2028, all families with young people in or entering Post 16 education would need to apply for travel assistance.
- If a family wished to apply for organised transport, they would need to demonstrate they had exceptional circumstances
- To demonstrate exceptional circumstances, families would need to complete an enhanced assessment as part of their application for travel assistance.
- If families applied for a DTAP or parent mileage they would not need to complete the enhanced assessment. These options can be chosen at the application stage.
- If the Council decides the application does not meet exceptional circumstances, then a direct travel assistance payment (DTAP) will be offered.
- In addition, the Council would introduce the charge for organised transport from September 2027 for families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) choosing organised transport (as outlined in Option 1).
- This option is estimated to save the council £2.3 million.

Option 4 - All Post 16 learners to have an enhanced assessment from 2027 plus parental contributions

- From September 2027, families of young people aged 16-25 would only be granted organised transport in exceptional circumstances.
- From September 2027, all families with young people in or entering Post 16 education would need to apply for travel assistance.
- If a family wished to apply for organised transport, they would need to demonstrate they had exceptional circumstances
- To demonstrate exceptional circumstances, families would need to complete an enhanced assessment as part of their application for travel assistance.

- If families applied for a DTAP or parent mileage they would not need to complete the enhanced assessment. These options can be chosen at the application stage.
- If the Council decides the application does not meet exceptional circumstances, then a direct travel assistance payment (DTAP) will be offered.
- In addition, the Council would introduce the charge for organised transport from September 2027 for families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) choosing organised transport (as outlined in Option 1).
- This option is estimated to save the council £3.1 million.

Our legal duties

There are different legal duties when it comes to Post 16 SEND travel assistance, and we recognise this distinction. Any changes made following this consultation would need to comply with the relevant legal duties for each age group.

For young people of sixth-form age, broadly 16 to 19, the Council must consider what transport arrangements or other assistance it considers necessary to facilitate attendance at education or training. This does not create an automatic entitlement to free council-organised transport, and the assistance considered necessary may take different forms.

For adult learners, generally those aged 19 to 25, there is a different duty under section 508F of the Education Act 1996. Where the Council considers that transport is necessary to enable an adult learner to attend relevant education or training, it must make the necessary transport arrangements and those arrangements must be free of charge.

We will take these different legal duties into account in considering the outcome of the consultation and in developing any future policy. Nothing being proposed through this consultation is intended to remove or restrict the Council's statutory duties. Any individual assessment, including consideration of exceptional circumstances, would therefore need to be applied consistently with the legal duties relevant to the learner's age and circumstances.

What does exceptional circumstances mean?

We propose that exceptional circumstances would apply where, following an individual assessment of the young person and their circumstances, the Council considers that council-organised transport is necessary to enable them to attend their education or training.

In deciding whether exceptional circumstances apply and council-organised transport is necessary, the Council would consider whether:

1. the young person is eligible for post-16 SEND travel assistance; and
2. because of the young person's SEND, medical needs, journey requirements, family circumstances or a combination of relevant factors, neither a DTAP nor parent or carer mileage would provide a reasonable and practical way for them to attend their education or training; and
3. there is no other reasonable and practical travel arrangement that could meet the young person's needs, including arrangements that could reasonably be secured using a DTAP; and
4. taking all of the individual circumstances into account, council-organised transport is considered necessary to enable the young person to attend their education or training.

No single factor would automatically establish exceptional circumstances. The assessment would consider the individual circumstances as a whole and whether council-organised transport is necessary, rather than requiring a family to demonstrate that one particular circumstance is exceptional.

Post-16 SEND Travel Consultation Questionnaire

Section A: About you

A2A) Where do you live?

Please tick	Options
☐	Ashfield
☐	Bassetlaw
☐	Broxtowe
☐	Gedling
☐	Mansfield
☐	Newark and Sherwood
☐	Rushcliffe
☐	Nottingham City
☐	Outside Nottinghamshire
☐	Prefer not to say
☐	Other, please state:

A2B) Which school, college or place of learning does your young person attend?

A2C) How many days per week does your young person attend school, college or place of learning?

Please tick	Options
☐	Less than one day
☐	1–2 days
☐	3–4 days
☐	5 days

A2D) Do you currently receive Post-16 SEND travel assistance (organised transport, DTAP or parent mileage) from Nottinghamshire County Council?

Please tick	Options
☐	Yes
☐	No
☐	Not sure
☐	Prefer not to say

A2E) What type of Post-16 SEND travel assistance do you currently receive?

Please tick	Options
☐	Parent mileage
☐	Direct Travel Assistance Payment
☐	Council-arranged transport
☐	Bus pass whilst I receive independent travel training
☐	Not sure
☐	Prefer not to say

A2F) How important is Post-16 SEND travel assistance (organised transport, DTAP or parent mileage) in helping the young person access education or training?

Please tick	Options
☐	Essential
☐	Very important
☐	Fairly important
☐	Not very important
☐	Not important
☐	Not sure

A2G) How does the young person currently travel to their place of education or training? Please tick all that apply.

Please tick	Options
☐	Council-arranged transport
☐	Parent or carer transport
☐	Public transport
☐	Supported travel with a personal assistant, escort or support worker
☐	Taxi or private hire arranged by the family
☐	A combination of methods
☐	Not sure
☐	Other, please tell us:

A2H) Do you have any additional comments?

Section B: Your views on the proposed changes

The council is looking at different ways of providing travel support in the future. Please read each option and tell us what you think.

Option 1 – A contribution for organised transport

- Council-organised transport would continue to be available to eligible learners aged 16 to 25 with SEND.
- Families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) choosing organised transport from September 2027 would be asked to pay £795, equivalent to 7% of the cost of the transport. This matches the proposed contribution for a council bus pass for pupils using mainstream school transport from September 2027.
- Families with household income below £7,400 would not be charged.
- This option is estimated to save the Council £0.4m.

B1. Do you think the council should make this change from September 2027?

Please tick	Options
☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree
☐	Neither agree nor disagree
☐	Disagree
☐	Strongly disagree

Option 2 - Year 12 enhanced assessment from 2027 plus contributions

- Existing Post 16 SEND learners on organised transport would retain their current arrangements until they complete their post-16 education. However, from September 2027, families of young people aged 16 (in year 12) would only be granted organised transport in exceptional circumstances.
- To demonstrate exceptional circumstances, families would need to complete an enhanced assessment as part of their application for travel assistance.
- If families applied for a DTAP or parent mileage they would not need to complete the enhanced assessment. These options can be chosen at the application stage.
- If the Council decides the application does not meet exceptional circumstances, then a direct travel assistance payment (DTAP) will be offered.
- In addition, the Council would introduce the charge for organised transport from September 2027 for families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) on organised transport (as outlined in Option 1).
- This option is estimated to save the Council £1.5m

B2. Do you think the council should choose this option from September 2027?

Please tick	Options
☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree
☐	Neither agree nor disagree
☐	Disagree
☐	Strongly disagree

Option 3 - Post 16 enhanced assessment from 2028 plus parental contributions

- From September 2028, families of young people aged 16-25 would only be granted organised transport in exceptional circumstances.
- From September 2028, all families with young people in or entering Post 16 education would need to apply for travel assistance.
- If a family wished to apply for organised transport, they would need to demonstrate they had exceptional circumstances
- To demonstrate exceptional circumstances, families would need to complete an enhanced assessment as part of their application for travel assistance.
- If families applied for a DTAP or parent mileage they would not need to complete the enhanced assessment. These options can be chosen at the application stage.
- If the Council decides the application does not meet exceptional circumstances, then a direct travel assistance payment (DTAP) will be offered.
- In addition, the Council would introduce the charge for organised transport from September 2027 for families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) choosing organised transport (as outlined in Option 1).
- This option is estimated to save the council £2.3 million.

B3. Do you think the council should make this change from September 2028?

Please tick	Options
☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree
☐	Neither agree nor disagree
☐	Disagree
☐	Strongly disagree

Option 4 - All Post 16 learners to have an enhanced assessment from 2027 plus parental contributions

- From September 2027, families of young people aged 16-25 would only be granted organised transport in exceptional circumstances.
- From September 2027, all families with young people in or entering Post 16 education would need to apply for travel assistance.
- If a family wished to apply for organised transport, they would need to demonstrate they had exceptional circumstances
- To demonstrate exceptional circumstances, families would need to complete an enhanced assessment as part of their application for travel assistance.
- If families applied for a DTAP or parent mileage they would not need to complete the enhanced assessment. These options can be chosen at the application stage.
- If the Council decides the application does not meet exceptional circumstances, then a direct travel assistance payment (DTAP) will be offered.
- In addition, the Council would introduce the charge for organised transport from September 2027 for families of young people aged 16-18 (years 12 and 13) choosing organised transport (as outlined in Option 1).
- This option is estimated to save the council £3.1 million.

B4. Do you think the council should make this change from September 2027?

Please tick	Options
☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree
☐	Neither agree nor disagree
☐	Disagree
☐	Strongly disagree

B5. Do you have any other thoughts about these options?

(Write your answer in the box below)

Section C: The impact of proposed changes

C1A) If a financial contribution for organised transport was introduced, what, if anything, could help reduce the impact?

Please tick	Options
☐	Discount for low-income households (£7,400 or less)
☐	Discount for low-income households (please specify the threshold in the box below)
☐	Instalment payments
☐	Other (please specify below)

Please explain your answer

C1B) If a financial contribution was introduced, what would you be most likely to do?

Please tick	Options
☐	Continue using council-organised transport and pay the contribution
☐	Stop using council-organised transport
☐	Apply for a Direct Travel Assistance Payment (DTAP) instead and organise my own transport
☐	Request a parental mileage allowance and organise my own transport
☐	Nothing, I don't use council-organised transport
☐	Unsure
☐	Other

C1C) If, after an enhanced assessment for exceptional circumstances you were offered a direct travel assistance payment (DTAP) and not organised transport, how would you be most likely to use it to support your young person's travel to school or college? (Please select all that apply)

Please tick	Options
☐	I would drive my child or young person myself
☐	Another parent, carer or family member would provide transport
☐	I would share transport arrangements with another family
☐	I would use the payment to contribute towards a taxi or private transport arrangement
☐	I would use the payment to support my child to travel independently by public transport
☐	I would combine family transport with independent travel

Please tick	Options
☐	I would use public transport with support from a parent, carer or travel buddy
☐	I would arrange transport through a personal assistant or support worker
☐	I am not sure how I would use the payment
☐	I do not think a DTAP would meet my child or young person's needs
☐	Other (please specify)

C1D) How confident would you feel that a DTAP would enable your child to get to school or college?

Please tick	Options
☐	Very confident
☐	Fairly confident
☐	Neither confident nor unconfident
☐	Not very confident
☐	Not at all confident

Please tell us more about your answer.

C1E) If you feel a Direct Travel Assistance Payment would not work for your family, what are the main reasons? (Select all that apply)

Please tick	Options
☐	My child or young person has complex SEND needs
☐	My child or young person cannot travel safely without specialist transport
☐	I am unable to provide transport myself
☐	The time required to arrange transport would be difficult to manage
☐	The cost of arranging transport would be too high
☐	My work commitments would prevent me from providing transport
☐	My caring responsibilities for other family members would make this difficult
☐	There is no suitable alternative transport available in my area
☐	I would need additional support to arrange transport
☐	Other (please specify)

C1F) If an enhanced assessment resulted in not being offered organised transport, would any of the following apply to your family?

Please tick	Options
☐	My child would be unable to attend their current school or college
☐	Attendance would be more difficult
☐	I would need to reduce my working hours
☐	I would be unable to continue working
☐	I would need support to arrange transport

Please tick	Options
☐	None of the above
☐	Other (please specify)

C1G) Do you have any other comments about the impacts of these options?

Thank you for completing this consultation.

Please send your response to:

Post-16 SEND Travel Review

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