

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Informing our approach to fairness

Proposal: Review of the provision of SEND transport support to post-16 learners

Date of assessment: November 2023

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Portfolio: Growing City

Version: 1

Planned review date: January 2024

Section A: Current service

1. What does the service / function / policy do?

Newcastle City Council believes that strong and effective education, training, and care for everyone – whatever their background – will create a more productive economy, fit for the future, and ensure that everyone has a chance to reach their potential to live a more fulfilled life.

Local authority transport policies play an important role in supporting young people's participation in education and training. By publishing their transport policies each year, local authorities enable young people (and their parents/carers) to take reasonable account of the arrangements available when choosing between different options.

Local arrangements should ensure that those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation are able to undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday to help them move towards more independent living.

Local authorities must act reasonably, taking into account all relevant matters, such as the needs of their population, the local transport infrastructure, and the resources available.

Newcastle City Council currently offer a variety of travel arrangements for eligible students aged 16-25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access education and training places including:

- travel permits.
- passenger transport assistants if a student's disability or medical condition requires this.
- independent travel training.
- personal travel budgets provide freedom and flexibility for families and carers to choose the most appropriate travel arrangements for their child that fit with their personal circumstances.

2. Who do we deliver this service / function / policy for?

The SEND Transport service supports children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who need help to get from home to their place of education and back again. Not all children and young people can access this service. The government publishes rules that the Council has to stick to when deciding who can use the service.

Currently 967 (85% of all SEND transport users) children aged 16 and under use this service, and 165 (15% of all SEND transport users) young people use the service to access post-16 education.

3. Why do we deliver this service / function / policy?

Supporting eligible children and young people with SEND to get from home to school is a legal requirement for those up to and including the age of 16 years. It is an optional service for those young people with SEND aged over 16 years in their post-16 education studies, with some exceptions.

The relevant statutory guidance documents are published by the Department for Education as **Travel to school for children of compulsory school age, June 2023**¹, and **Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training, January 2019**². Further reference to legal statute (for example the relevant Education Act) are contained in these guidance documents.

4. How much do we currently spend on this service / function / policy?

Gross expenditure (post-16 SEND transport): £1,132,660

Gross income (post-16 SEND transport): £0

Net budget (all SEND transport services): £9,040,020

Comments: The expenditure is funded by the council's General Fund.

5. How many people do we employ to deliver this service / function / policy?

Number of posts: 8

Number of full-time equivalent officers: 7.4

Comments: These staff deliver the whole of the SEND Transport service, not just the post-16 element. All staff members deliver the service to families with children and young people of all ages. There are no staff members who only work with post-16 young people.

Section B: Proposal for future service

1. How do we proposed to change the service / function / policy?

We are proposing to consult on a small number of options to reduce the impact of this service on the council's budget. The options being consulted on will be:

1. Stop delivering this service completely from September 2024 for all post-16 students.
2. Stop delivering this service from September 2024 for any eligible **new** post-16 students with SEND. Students currently in receipt of support will continue to receive this until their educational studies end.
3. From September 2024, introduce a fixed sum of money for each eligible post-16 learner as a **contribution** to their educational travel costs.
4. Make no changes to the current policy.

The consultation is likely to take place early in the spring term 2024, with a decision from Cabinet in late spring or early summer 2024.

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1165730/Travel_to_school_for_children_of_compulsory_school_age.pdf

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c48534c40f0b616fba5cb6a/Post16_transport_guidance.pdf

2. What evidence have we used to inform this proposal?

The consultation options above have been proposed based on an analysis of the costs of this service in the past and on indicative forecasts of post-16 learner numbers in the next few years. In addition to this, see the research done with other local authorities that is reported in Section C1 below.

The final decision on any proposed change to the post-16 SEND transport policy will be taken by the Council's Cabinet. This decision will be informed by the outcomes of a full stakeholder consultation.

3. What will be the financial impact of this proposal?

The financial impact of each option is summarised below:

1. Stop delivering this service completely from September 2024 for all post-16 students.
Financial impact: £660,720
2. Stop delivering this service from September 2024 for any new post-16 students. Students currently in receipt of support will continue to receive this until their educational studies end.
Financial impact: £227,770
3. From September 2024, introduce a fixed sum of money for each eligible post-16 learner as a contribution to their educational travel costs.
Financial impact: £61,410
4. Make no changes to the current policy.
Financial impact: no net savings made to this element of the Council's expenditure. It is likely that expenditure will, in fact, increase. This is because there are likely to be more post-16 learners with SEND in the future.

4. What will be the impact upon our employees of this proposal?

Number of FTE: Not applicable.

% of workforce: Not applicable.

Comments: There is no anticipated impact on Council employees.

Section C: Consultation

1. Who did we engage with to develop this proposal?

Who we have engaged with to develop this proposal: we have spoken with and researched what other local authorities do.

When / how: this research work has been done over the last six months or so through a mixture of talking with individual local authorities and researching their policies published on their council websites.

Main issues raised:

- Many local authorities are struggling to maintain support for post-16 SEND transport because it is unfunded by central government.
- Some local authorities, like Newcastle, have a 'full' offer.
- Other local authorities pay post-16 learners a fixed sum each year (or term) as a **contribution** to their education travel costs. A typical sum is £638 per year.
- Some larger local authorities use a system of means-testing to assess whether families can afford to support their post-16 young people with the costs of travelling to their chosen place of education. If they can, then no financial support is provided. If families cannot afford to support their young people with educational travel costs, then support is provided. This is closely and regularly monitored, and the support is withdrawn if affordability becomes possible for the family. The number of eligible post-16 SEND learners in Newcastle is relatively small (currently less than 200). It is estimated that the costs of setting up and then maintaining a means-testing process would negate any potential savings. It was also felt that such means-testing may be perceived by families as unnecessarily intrusive.
- Some local authorities do not fund post-16 SEND transport at all.

2. Who do we want / need to engage with during consultation?

Who we want to engage with during consultation: all stakeholders –

- Current Year 10 and Year 11 pupils with SEND and their families.
- Current post-16 learners and their families.
- Newcastle's Parent-Carer Forum.
- All post-16 providers, including schools, colleges, and training providers.
- Council for Disabled Children (CDC).
- Elected members.
- Newcastle's MPs.

The consultation will also be publicised to the wider general public via our council website, Let's Talk and social media and the city's Local Offer website (our one-stop shop for all things SEND).

When / how: spring term 2024 (January-March). People will be able to use a variety of ways of telling us what they think about the options, including –

- electronically via the Council's Let's Talk process.
- writing to us.
- talking with us at various face-to-face drop-in sessions that will be publicised.
- talking with us in a number of online sessions that will be publicised.

3. Who provided feedback during the consultation process? (to be completed post-consultation)

Who provided feedback in the consultation process (to be completed post-consultation):
To be completed post-consultation.

When / how: To be completed post-consultation.

Main issues raised: To be completed post-consultation.

Section D: Impact assessment

The section below sets out actual or potential disadvantages or benefits that may arise from implementing this proposal. This assessment is set out for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 and other broader areas of potential impact.

People with protected characteristics

Age

Type of impact: Potential disadvantage and potential benefit.

Detail of impact: Potential disadvantage may be that post-16 learners with SEND are unable to access education providers further away from their home.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: improved access to independent travel training for children and young people to mean that they can use public transport confidently. In addition, a contribution travel costs may be provided, depending upon which option is agreed following consultation.

Disability

Type of impact: Potential disadvantage and potential benefit.

Detail of impact: Potential disadvantage may be that post-16 learners with SEND are unable to access education providers further away from their home.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: improved access to independent travel training for children and young people to mean that post-16 learners with a disability can use accessible public transport confidently. Signposting to other sources of support that are available for young adults with disabilities. In addition, a contribution travel costs may be provided, depending upon which option is agreed following consultation.

Gender reassignment

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Sex

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Marriage and civil partnership

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Pregnancy and maternity

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Race and ethnicity

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Religion and belief

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Sexual orientation

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Other potential impacts

Unpaid carers

Type of impact: Potential disadvantage.

Detail of impact: Post-16 learners with SEND are unable to access education providers further away from their home, removing choice. There may be significant risk to the young person linked to their disabilities and cost implications to households who are already/likely to be experiencing poverty.

How will this be addressed or mitigated? improved access to independent travel training for children and young people will mean that they can use public transport confidently. In addition, a

contribution travel cost may be provided, depending upon which option is agreed following consultation.

People vulnerable to socio-economic impacts

Type of impact: Potential disadvantage.

Detail of impact: Post-16 learners with SEND may be unable to access education providers further away from their home.

How will this be addressed or mitigated? improved access to independent travel training for children and young people will mean that they can use public transport confidently. In addition, a contribution travel cost may be provided, depending upon which option is agreed following consultation.

Businesses

Type of impact: Potential disadvantage.

Detail of impact: employers wishing to provide training, apprenticeship, internship, or work experience opportunities for post-16 learners may find that young people are unable to travel to the workplace and/or their place of education affordably.

How will this be addressed or mitigated? improved access to independent travel training for children and young people to mean that they can use public transport confidently. In addition, a contribution travel cost may be provided, depending upon which option is agreed following consultation.

Geography

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Community cohesion

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Community safety

Type of impact: Potential disadvantage.

Detail of impact: If post-16 learners with SEND are unable to access education providers further away from their home or are unable to travel to the workplace and/or their place of education affordably, they may become at risk due to interlinked vulnerabilities of disability alongside dis-engagement with education and/or employment, with limited support, and nothing to do all day.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: improved access to independent travel training for children and young people to mean that they can use public transport confidently. In addition, a contribution travel costs may be provided, depending upon which option is agreed following consultation. If children and young people can be supported to access independent travel safely, and can continue to access education and training, this should benefit them in the longer term.

Public Health

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.

Climate

Type of impact: None.

Detail of impact: Not applicable.

How will this be addressed or mitigated?: Not applicable.