

# Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Informing our approach to fairness

**Proposal:** Review of the policy for SEND personal transport budgets for eligible families

**Date of assessment:** November 2023

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**Assessment team:** Deanne Taylor, Linda Steel, Alice Gunn

**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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

As a local authority, we have, in certain circumstances, a statutory duty to provide eligible children with free travel between home and school. The services required to meet this duty are commissioned by our internal SEND Transport Team.

To date, the main way that we have met this duty has been to procure taxi services. There are currently 285 routes commissioned to external transport providers.

Another way in which we have met the duty has been to offer a **Personal Travel Budget (PTB)** to the parents or carers of eligible children to transport their child to school. The PTB is far more cost-effective than a taxi service and has many other benefits such as enabling parents or carers to have more control over how and when their child is transported between home and school. Some families have reported that being able to use a PTB has greatly improved their child's independence.

#### **Personal Travel Budget**

Under the current Personal Travel Budget arrangements, we may pay parents or carers 40p per mile for two return journeys to school for 190 school days a year. In certain circumstances where the needs of the child or young person are unusual, such as a large vehicle required to carry heavy equipment, for example, a wheelchair or a pupil has complex needs which can include behaviours that challenge others, the rate can be 70p per mile. Families are paid 80% in advance and the remaining 20% if the child has a school attendance of at least 95%.

### 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 we have to adhere to when deciding who can use the service.

Currently, 1132 children and young people access a variety of support processes to help them get to their place of education and back home again each school day. Of these, 83 (7% of all SEND transport users) are aged 16 and under with a PTB; and 21 (2% of all SEND transport users) access PTBs to access post-16 education.

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

We have a legal requirement to support eligible children and young people with SEND to get from home to school up to and including the age of 16 years. Parents and carers can find managing the home-to-school arrangements themselves much easier and less stressful compared with being bound by a definitive pick-up and drop-off time by a service-commissioned taxi. This is particularly the case for families with more than one child accessing different schools, families with children who find changes to routes very hard to manage, and for families with complicated work arrangements. PTBs provide flexibilities that many families find very helpful.

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

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

**Gross expenditure (Personal Transport Budgets):** £203,205<sup>3</sup>

**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 PTB 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 families on PTBs.

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1165730/Travel\\_to\\_school\\_for\\_children\\_of\\_compulsory\\_school\\_age.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1165730/Travel_to_school_for_children_of_compulsory_school_age.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c48534c40f0b616fba5cb6a/Post16\\_transport\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c48534c40f0b616fba5cb6a/Post16_transport_guidance.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> based on the cost of 104 pupils currently accessing PTB in preference to commissioned taxis, pro-rated for a full financial year

## **Section B: Proposal for future service**

### **1. How do we propose to change the service / function / policy?**

We are proposing to consult on a change to the current Personal Transport Budget policy.

It is proposed, following consultation with families, that the PTB could be extended to pay for such things as:

- a childminder or family member to care for a sibling whilst the parent/carer takes the eligible child to school.
- a breakfast or after school club for a sibling in order to allow the parent the time to collect the eligible child from school.
- two hours of the relevant hourly rate of a personal assistant (who may already be involved in the child's care) to drive the eligible child to school (and back) in addition to the mileage costs of both journeys.

In addition, it is proposed to introduce a banding system to calculate the value of payments, rather than a straightforward mileage reimbursement. This method is in place in other local authorities and has been found to be highly successful.

#### **Newcastle's proposed Personal Transport Budget banding values**

It is proposed that individual PTBs would be grouped into bands according to the total distance of two return journeys to and from the child's school to the child's home each school day. The proposed bandings are as shown below:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Value</b>
Band 1 – Up to 2.999 miles	£2,000 per school year
Band 2 – 3 to 4.999 miles	£3,000 per school year
Band 3 – 5 to 6.999 miles	£4,000 per school year
Band 4 – 7 to 10 miles	£5,000 per school year
Band 6 – Over 10 miles	£6,000 per school year

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

The proposal has been developed based on individual conversations with families about the use of PTBs and on an analysis of the costs of this service in the past and on indicative forecasts of PTB usage by families in the next few years. It has also been discussed with our legal team where appropriate to ensure compliance with current statutory guidance and legislation.

The final decision on any proposed change to the Personal Transport Budget 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 will be an estimated saving of £252,600 in 2024/25.

## 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 families and researched what other local authorities do.

**When / how:** this research has taken place over the last six months or so through a mixture of talking with families and researching other local authority policies published on their websites.

**Main issues raised:** the SEND Transport Team has personally consulted with many parents and carers who do not consider the Personal Travel Budget to be a viable option for their family because it does not cover the actual costs involved in transporting their child between home and school – costs which they cannot otherwise afford.

There is also an indication that many parents and carers would prefer to take their children to school themselves if they could receive assistance in doing so. This has been confirmed when discussing arrangements for the new academic year, particularly with children who are just starting school.

The SEND Transport Team recognises that a broader use of the Personal Travel Budget could enable more children to attend school, start to address some of the broader SEND Transport budget overspend, and may have other benefits such as passing some responsibility for transporting children to school from the Council to parents and carers. It could also be seen as a first step towards independent travel training with the aim of increasing independence in our young people as they prepare to move into adulthood.

### 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 Let's Talk platform, website 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:** None.

**Detail of impact:** Not applicable.

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

#### **Disability**

**Type of impact:** Potential positive.

**Detail of impact:** Opportunity to be more flexible and personalised around home-to-school transport arrangements.

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

#### **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:** Additional time required to organise and maintain alternative modes of transport.

**How will this be addressed or mitigated?:** Parents and carers can choose to use a Personal Transport Budget or not. It is not obligatory. If families choose not to use a PTB then, if the child or young person is eligible, the SEND Transport team would have to arrange the home-to-school transport.

**Type of impact:** Potential positive.

**Detail of impact:** Opportunity to be more flexible and personalised around home-to-school transport arrangements.

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

### **People vulnerable to socio-economic impacts**

**Type of impact:** None.

**Detail of impact:** Not applicable.

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

### **Businesses**

**Type of impact:** None.

**Detail of impact:** Not applicable.

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

### **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:** None.

**Detail of impact:** Not applicable.

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

## **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.