

## Home to school transport consultation for post-16 students with SEND

We proposing to review the way in which we provide home to school transport support to those students who are aged 16 years and over, and who have a special educational need and/ or disability (SEND). We are asking you to tell us what you think about some options we are considering.

### Background information

The law requires a local authority to provide free home to school transport to eligible children and young people who are aged 5 to 16 years old. At the end of the academic year in which a young person reaches age 16, there is no longer a legal duty on a local authority to provide transport. In addition, the right to transport assistance is at the discretion of the individual local authority.

Transport costs have significantly risen year on year and with budget restraints across the council it is no longer viable for Newcastle City Council to continue to provide free transport assistance to everyone regardless of their age.

Newcastle City Council currently provide transport assistance to **162** students to support them to attend their post-16 education setting. The same eligibility criteria are currently applied as to young people who are below 16 years of age.

Academic Year	No of post-16 pupils receiving home to school transport assistance	Total cost
2021/22	78	£1.2m
2022/23	127	£1.4m
2023/24	178	£1.3m

In proposing these changes, we are looking to increase independent travel training and to create more inclusive opportunities for family-based approaches. This will help us to make efficient use of public resources to gain better outcomes and value for money.

We introduced independent travel training to eligible students in September 2022. This has been hugely successful and positively received by young people, their parent/carers, and the educational placements we are working with. We are hoping that the continued success of this training will allow us to expand this offer and assist more young people to access this valuable opportunity to develop their independence as they move into adulthood.

We would like your views on how we can shape our service to make it sustainable for the future.

Many other local authorities both nationally and regionally have changed their post-16 SEND transport policy or are currently consulting to make changes to their post-16 transport offer in line with our proposals below.

### **What are the options we are thinking about?**

The following are possible changes that we could make to ensure that we can continue to offer support where it is most needed.

#### **Option 1**

Stop delivering this service completely from September 2025 for all post-16 students.

#### **Option 2**

Stop delivering this service from September 2025 for any new post-16 students with SEND. Students currently in receipt of support will continue to receive this until their educational studies end.

#### **Option 3**

From September 2025, introduce a tiered offer consisting of Independent Travel Training or a Personal Travel Budget following the outcome of assessment of the young person's needs and ability.

#### **Option 4**

From September 2025, if an eligible student is not able to travel independently or is not able to benefit from a Personal Transport Budget, we will introduce a fixed charge of £650 per eligible student towards the cost of their travel support for each school year. The charge is a contribution from the student toward the costs of arranging their home to school transport. Students aged 16-17 years old living in a low-income household would be exempt from the charge.

Please see the frequently asked questions at the end of this document for further information.

## How do I reply about these proposals?

There are a number of ways that you can tell us what you think is the best option. You can:

- email us at this email address: [SENDTPConsultation@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:SENDTPConsultation@newcastle.gov.uk)
- complete a simple online form. You open the online form by clicking [here](#).
- come and tell us what you think at one of these drop-in sessions:
  - 6 August, 10am-11am
  - 23 August, 11am-12pm
  - 3 September, 5pm-6pm
  - 11 September, 10am-11am
  - 17 September, 4pm-5pm

The venues for these drop-in sessions will be posted on the Local Offer website in the next week or two.

Thank you for reading this proposal and for thinking about it. And thank you for telling us what you think. This will help Councillors to make the best decision possible.

**This consultation closes at 5pm on Friday 19 September 2024.**

10 July 2024

## FAQs (frequently asked questions)

**If the post 16 transport offer is withdrawn will this impact on children who are currently in year 11 at a school who will be moving up to 6<sup>th</sup> form in the same school for their post 16 education?**

Yes. The same rules apply to schools as to all other educational establishments. Once pupils complete the academic year in which they turn 16, and changes to the post 16 transport offer will apply regardless of whether they are moving establishment or not.

**If the post 16 transport offer is withdrawn for students going into year 12 or above in September 2025 is there any other financial support available to families to contribute towards getting young people to their education placement?**

16 to 19 bursary funds are there to help students remain in education. Families and young people can apply for funding if the young person meets the criteria. Students who are granted such a bursary will also need to agree to standards of attendance and behaviour with their school or college.

In Newcastle the following secondary schools have agreed a joint scheme called the Newcastle Schools' 16-19 Bursary Scheme, which is managed by the council:

- Benfield School
- Excelsior Academy
- Gosforth Academy
- Jesmond Park Academy
- Kenton School
- North East Futures UTC
- Sir Charles Parsons School
- St Cuthbert's Catholic High School
- St Mary's Catholic School
- Studio West
- Thomas Bewick School
- Walker Riverside Academy.

For more information of the Newcastle bursary scheme, follow the following link [16-19 Bursary Scheme | Newcastle City Council](#)

Further Education colleges also run bursary programmes that can offer assistance to students that can be used to support travel. For further information students or families should contact the college directly.

**If a tiered offer is introduced, will families have the option to refuse to accept the Personal Travel Budget (PTB) offer or opt out of Independent Travel Training (ITT)?**

Independent travel training and public transport will be considered as the first option for all post 16 students requesting support with travel. The provision of transport may be withdrawn

if a student or parent/carer refuses an assessment to determine their ability to travel independently or to undertake independent travel training, where this is felt to be appropriate by the local authority and/or placement provider. A Personal Travel Budget will always be offered to eligible students where the local authority believes this is appropriate based on the student's needs and is a more efficient use of funds, as opposed to arranging taxis.

### **Who will need to pay if a contribution for post 16 transport is introduced from September 2025?**

The proposed travel contribution of £650 per academic year and can be paid either in one full amount or in monthly instalments through a Standing Order arrangement. The amount identified is equivalent to an All Zone over-16 Travel Permit supplied by Nexus. The SEND transport team will offer PTB's and ITT and in exceptional circumstances door to door transport will continue to organise taxi provision where eligibility has been met and, in all cases, will still subsidise a large proportion of the cost.

Exemptions to the contribution include:

- children in Care (CiC)
- low-income families (Highest Working Tax Credits or Free School Meals)
- young people assessed in their own right who are already making payments to Adult Social Care via a Personal Budget.