

## Post-16 Transport Statement 2026/27

The following transport statement applies to post-16 travel in the 2026/27 academic year.

There is no automatic or legal entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a student is over compulsory school age. Compulsory school age ceases on the last Friday in June in the school year in which a child reaches the age of 16. This is usually at the end of Year 11. However, Newcastle City Council will provide travel assistance to eligible learners aged 16 to 25 years to their place of study to promote participation, where the council deems it necessary.

### Post-16 learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) – guiding principles

Some learners aged 16 to 25 years with Special Educational Needs, a disability or a medical need may be eligible for travel assistance if they study **full-time** on an approved course with the provider **closest to the learner's home** that can deliver the course.

Post-16 learners will have purposefully chosen their own post-16 programme of study or course. There should be a **clear pathway to employment or training** following the completion of post-16 education. This should be clearly articulated in their EHCP (education health and care plan).

It is expected that learners will **attend school or college regularly** to take up their chosen course. Where a learner is receiving home to school/college transport assistance and is not attending regularly (for example, average attendance for the academic year falls below **80%** after the first term) then the council reserves the right to review any transport assistance arrangements in consultation with the learner, their family and the provider.

Learners with special educational needs or a disability who attend a **Further Education College** have the same entitlement to travel assistance as those attending a school setting, except for the following:

- passenger transport assistants may be provided to a further education establishment if a learner's disability or medical condition requires this
- assistance required to alight from transportation must be organised by prior arrangement with the college staff.

### Repeating a course or programme of study

It is occasionally necessary for a post-16 learner to repeat a course or qualification. There are many reasons why this might be necessary. As a general guide, we would not consider it an appropriate use of public funds to support a post-16 learner to repeat a course or qualification more than once.

## Process of assessing post-16 SEND transport eligibility

If the post-16 learner is eligible for assistance with home to school/college transport, this will usually be in the form of a **personal transport budget** unless exceptional circumstances apply. We will adopt a graduated approach to considering the provision of home to school/college support according to the following steps:

1. Is the chosen post-16 programme of study/course a **full-time** course and at the **closest provider** to the learner's home where there is a choice of providers? If yes, then,
2. assess eligibility for SEND transport support - [Applications for travel support](#) for post-16 students with additional needs will be assessed in accordance with the criteria outlined on the [Special Educational Needs Disabilities web page](#). If eligible then,
3. assess eligibility for Independent Travel Training – see section below. If this is not appropriate for the learner at this stage then,
4. discuss an appropriate Personal Transport Budget according to learner's and family's needs – see section below. If this is not appropriate for the family at this stage then,
5. assess eligibility for a personal financial contribution to home to school/college travel costs – see section below. If this is not appropriate then,
6. SEND Transport Service may arrange home to school travel support arrangements according to the needs of individual children. Note: to ensure the appropriate use of public funds learners receiving local-authority arranged transport may be required to have a period of waiting time either before and/or after their timetable courses. This may allow learner journeys to be combined to maximise the use of public funds. This will be reviewed annually or if any circumstances change.

## Newcastle SEND Transport Service Independent Travel Training Offer

Newcastle City Council promotes independent travel training which enables young people with additional needs to learn new skills which can be used for travelling to post-16 education or training placements using public transport. Independent travel training enables young people to gain confidence, develop social, communication and life skills, promotes good health and wellbeing, and ultimately leads to them becoming more independent.

Independent travel increases access to education, employment, and training opportunities, to health services and social/leisure activities. If a young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the need for support with travel after the age of 16 should have been reviewed and written into their Transition Plan, which must include the views of the young person. The Transition Plan should specify actions that will be taken to help the student develop their independent travel skills in preparation for attending their next placement after leaving school.

For more information contact the SEND Transport Team on 0191 2774646 between 7.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, or via email to [SENDTransportservice@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:SENDTransportservice@newcastle.gov.uk).

## **Personal Travel Budget (PTB) for children with additional needs**

Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) will help families to arrange learners' home to school travel arrangements in a way that suits their personal circumstances.

A PTB is usually provided to parents or carers of learners with Special Education Needs Disability (SEND) who are eligible for travel assistance. It allows families to make flexible arrangements, monitor the quality of their young person's transport directly or they could work with other families to achieve the best possible travel arrangements for their young people in a cost-effective way.

### **What are the benefits of personal travel budgets?**

PTBs provide freedom and flexibility for families to choose the most appropriate travel arrangements that best fit with their individual circumstances.

It provides choice and control over how funding is used to get the learner to and from school/college on time in a way that suits the family best.

It ensures public resources are distributed in a fair and cost-effective way according to need.

It allows families to explore opportunities to share with other parents/carers and potentially increase buying power.

### **Who can get a Personal Travel Budget?**

A family can get a PTB if the post-16 learner is eligible for travel assistance from the council. Additionally, when deciding to offer a PTB, the SEND Transport Service team would look at the learner's attendance record at school. Families may be refused a PTB if the learner's average attendance is currently below 80%.

### **How is a Personal Travel Budget worked out, and how much will I get?**

The Personal Travel Budget band is based on the mileage between home and school. The amount paid is based on two return journeys between home and school each school day of the year.

Band 1 – Up to 5 miles (between home and school, one way) = £2,000 per school year

Band 2 – Over 5 miles up to 10 miles (between home and school, one way) = £3,000 per school year

Band 3 – Over 10 up to 15 miles (between home and school, one way) = £4,000 per school year

Band 4 – Over 15 miles up to 20 (between home and school, one way) = £5,000 per school year

Band 5 – Over 20 miles (between home and school, one way) = £0.50 per mile to and from the school and based on a standard return trip. Payments are based upon 190 days travelling per school year.

### **How will I be paid and how often will I be paid?**

Payments will be made by bank transfer in advance on either a 4- or 5-weekly basis. 10% of the total amount is paid at the end of the academic year, subject to a minimum of 95% average attendance\*. The remaining 90% is paid in 11 instalments. Instalments will be made from the beginning of the academic year (September) or commencement of the PTB.

\*An authorised absence qualifies as an attendance for the purposes of calculating the average yearly attendance for PTB purposes.

#### **EXAMPLE**

Journey from home to school = 4 miles

PTB falls into Band 1 = £2,000 per year

11 x monthly payments from September of £163.64, paid in advance

Final payment £200 paid in August following confirmation of attendance across the school year.

### **Will I have to pay money back if transport support is not needed?**

Yes. The payment structure should make this less difficult for families to manage.

### **Can I get help with arranging transport if I have a PTB?**

Yes. We provide support and advice about how to use a PTB, and advice about how to make any arrangements with providers. However, you must put the arrangements in place yourself.

For further information about PTBs contact SEND Transport Service on 0191 2774646 between 7.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, or by email to [SENDTransportService@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:SENDTransportService@newcastle.gov.uk).

## **Personal financial contribution to post-16 transport costs**

We may ask families to make a financial contribution to the costs of any transport arranged by the council's SEND Transport Service. We will only do this if the family's financial circumstances mean that the free school meals criteria are not applicable. Families new to the city with post-16 learners with SEND may be required to provide appropriate financial information to the council to enable the free school meals assessment to be carried out.

### **How much will this financial contribution be?**

For the academic year 2026/27, the indicative financial contribution we will ask for is **£980.10**. This figure is based on the cost of a Network One Student and Young People monthly ticket (currently £89.10) for 11 months of the year, and is line with charges raised by some of our regional local authority neighbours. Please note that this charge will be confirmed in the spring or summer of 2026 when the cost of the monthly ticket for the 2026/27 school year is confirmed.

### **How will this financial contribution be collected?**

We will send an annual invoice which can be paid either in full or in instalments.

**What will happen if I don't pay?**

Any home-to-school transport support in place will be ceased immediately and action taken to recover any financial contribution due to the council.

**What happens if my family circumstances and income change during the year?**

You **MUST** contact the SEND Transport Service immediately to discuss any change in circumstances.

**Contact**

For further information or answers to any further questions, please contact the SEND Transport Team on **0191 2774646** between 7.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, or via email to [\*\*SENDTransportService@newcastle.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:SENDTransportService@newcastle.gov.uk).



**Statement to be reviewed:** in the autumn term of 2026 in preparation for the 2027/28 academic year

## Tell us what you think of this policy statement by –

- Filling in a short online form by clicking here: <https://forms.office.com/e/E20hgPCs6N>
- Writing to us at: Post-16 SEND Transport Consultation, SEND Transport Service, Newcastle City Council, Floor 3, Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH
- Responding via Let's Talk Newcastle Online: [www.letstalknewcastle.co.uk](http://www.letstalknewcastle.co.uk)
- Tell us what you think in person at one of our personal drop-in sessions:

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday 1 May	5pm-6pm	Gosforth Library, Regent Farm Road, Gosforth
Tuesday 6 May	1pm-2pm	Galafield Centre, Newbiggin Lane, Newbiggin Hall
Monday 12 May	10am-11am	Carnegie Building, Atkinson Road, Benwell
Friday 23 May	10am-11am	Byker Sands Family Centre, 19 Raby Cross, Byker

These drop-in sessions are for individuals who wish to give us their views in person. This means that you might have to wait until someone else has finished speaking with our staff.

- Call us and leave your views on **0191 277 8886**.

Remember the deadline for responses is **5pm on Sunday 25 May 2025**.

Field Code Changed