



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Travel Assistance Policy for young people resident in
Wokingham post-16, including young people with
SEND**

Academic Year 2024/25

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Introduction

The Council's annual Post 16 Policy Statement and the practice that results from it is intended to encourage the use of more environmentally sustainable forms of transport, supporting young people to walk, cycle and use public transport such as local buses and trains.

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport statement by the 31 May each year. This statement specifies the arrangements for the provision of transport and/or other support that a local authority considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of young people of sixth form age receiving education or training.

In determining the Wokingham statement, we have taken into account all relevant matters including the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment. Wokingham is also committed to reducing emissions and improving Air Quality, to improve the quality of life for all our residents. This links to our **Climate Emergency Action Plan**.

This policy statement gives information about the schemes and support available within Wokingham for the provision of college Travel Assistance aged 16 to 19 and 19 and 25. It outlines the transport schemes and assistance available for post 16 learners who live and study in Wokingham or those learners who live in Wokingham and attend an educational establishment outside of the Borough if it is the nearest provider offering the appropriate course.

This document is the current policy of Wokingham Borough Council. It will be reviewed annually and republished on the 31 May each year.

The full **National Home to School Transport guidance** is set out for reference.

Further information regarding Wokingham's commitment can be found by accessing the **Statutory School Age Travel Assistance policy**.

All young people carrying on their education Post 16 must reapply for travel support in Wokingham.

'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (Years 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

This policy uses the term 'Post 16' to include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Wokingham Borough Council (the Council) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which will lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the Council (for example, colleges, charities, and private learning providers).

This document describes the support available to young people of Wokingham entering or continuing with full-time Post 16 Education. It explains the support packages in place to encourage participation and prevent transport being a barrier to young learners.

This policy statement gives information from the Local Authority, schools, academies and FE colleges and other relevant sources. The aim is to provide the most up to date details of the latest charges and any means testing procedures.

This statement gives advice on the support available to learners with learning/mobility difficulties and explains the commitment to encourage independent travel to and from the place of learning.

Another aim of this policy is to support those that are vulnerable to becoming 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) at 16-17 by offering Travel Assistance to help overcome barriers in registered places of learning. The same will apply to Young Parents (Care to Learn - C2L) aged under 20.

The provision of Travel Assistance to Post 16 students will support those students wishing to continue in education as part of the Raising Participation Age legislation.

The Council may consider a request to exercise its discretion in a particular case to provide travel assistance in order to meet a child's individual need.

Travel Assistance Offered by External Organisations

The Council seeks to support all Post 16 students to continue with their education and training. Through running this scheme and providing information about the bursary funding available to support student access to education through their Post 16 education provider (FE colleges and school 6th Forms), the Council considers it has met its statutory duties regarding the majority of students.

1. Concessionary fares schemes available

On most local bus routes operators offer reduced fares for under 19s. This helps ensure that students can buy passes at reduced rates, including those for travel to establishments outside the Borough. Where students attend sixth form provisions attached to secondary schools within the borough, the Council may be able to offer annual fare payer seats on school coach services.

The parent/young person should check for themselves the cost of season tickets and compare the rates before selecting the best value for their own travel arrangements.

If, having purchased an annual ticket for transport from the Council and it is later decided that it is no longer required, refunds will be available on the following basis:

- If the Community Transport Team receive the bus pass before the last day of the Autumn Term, a refund for 2 terms of transport will be provided.
- If the Community Transport Team receive the bus pass before the last day of the Spring Term, a refund for 1 term of transport will be provided.
- If the Community Transport Team receive the bus pass after the last day of the Spring Term, then no refund will be offered.

2. Bursaries available from your Education Provider

Students should contact their school, sixth form college, or further education college to find out about financial and other support available - for example, help with childcare or other costs. They can also visit Learner Support: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

3. The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16-19 Bursary Fund, administered by individual education providers, is available to support any young person who faces genuine financial barriers to participation in education, including transport costs. All education providers must make available a copy of their 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy. Applications should be made directly to the education provider.

For further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund, visit: www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund. Key local providers and contact details can be found on the [Council Local Offer website](#).

There are two types of 16-19 bursary available;

4. Vulnerable Student Bursary

You could get a bursary worth up to £1,200, depending on your circumstances and benefits.

5. Discretionary Bursary

You could get a discretionary bursary if you need financial help but do not qualify for a bursary for students in vulnerable groups. Your education or training provider decides how much you get and what it is used for.

If you are over 19, you will only be eligible for a discretionary bursary.

For further information on the Vulnerable Students Bursary and the Discretionary Bursary, including the eligibility criteria and how to apply, visit the [GOV.UK website](#).

6. Residential Support Scheme

You may be able to get help with the cost of accommodation from the Residential Bursary Fund (RBF).

You must:

- meet the residency requirements (your college will check this)
- be at least 16 and under 19 on 31 August 2023

You may be eligible if you are 19 and either:

- continuing a course you started aged 16 to 18
- have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)

Your course must:

- be at a specialist residential centre (your college can confirm this)
- be too far to travel to each day (your college must agree with this)
- be full-time
- be '16 to 19 funded' (your college can confirm this)

What you will get

Your college will decide how much you get. It depends on your household income. You can get payments for a maximum of 3 years.

7. Care to Learn

The Care to Learn scheme can help with childcare costs while you study.

You must be aged under 20 at the start of your course.

The scheme is available for publicly funded courses in England.

You can get up to:

- £180 per child per week, if you live outside London.
- £195 per child per week, if you live in London.

What it covers

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- your childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare taster session for up to 5 days
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to their childcare provider

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider.

Before they can be paid:

- your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance
- your school or college needs to confirm that you are attending your course

Travel payments go direct to your school or college – they will either pay you or arrange travel for you.

When payments stop

Payments end when:

- you stop attending your course
- you reach the end of your course

- your child stops attending childcare

8. Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

SENDIASS Wokingham provide free, confidential and impartial advice, guidance and support for;

- Parents of children and young people up to the age of 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Children and young people up to the age of 25 with special educational needs and disabilities

For more information visit **[About us \(sendiasswokingham.org.uk\)](http://sendiasswokingham.org.uk)**

Travel Assistance Offered by Wokingham Borough Council

The Local Authority has a **discretionary** power to provide Travel Assistance to those past Year 11 or over 16 years.

Whilst there is no legal duty to provide free or subsidised transport to all post-16 students, the scheme operating under this policy recognises that the Authority needs to support all young people, including those from low-income families and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

9. Students of sixth-form age

This is defined as;

- Being a person receiving education or training at an establishment and he/she is over compulsory school age but is under the age of 19 or has begun a particular course at the establishment before attaining the age of 19 and continues to attend that course, **or**
- Is over the age of 16 and out of cohort, repeating year 11.

This definition also applies to a young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) up to age 25, if they are continuing a course started before their 19th birthday.

10. Eligibility Criteria for Local Authority Support

Students of sixth-form age: 16- to 18-year-olds attending a 6th form within a school

A young person will qualify for Travel Assistance if they are a resident of the Wokingham Borough;

And

- They have an EHCP and are attending the nearest school allocated by the Local Authority, identified in their most current EHCP as meeting their needs, or a nearer qualifying school **and** live more than 3 miles from their allocated school.

(The distance criterion will be waived for students where their learning difficulty or disability prevents them from walking to school or college or from using public transport)

Or

- They have other exceptional circumstances which impacts on their ability to use public transport arrangements and are not able to travel independently or safely **and** live more than 3 miles from their nearest school.

(The distance criterion will be waived for students where their learning difficulty or disability prevents them from walking to school or college or from using public transport)

19 - to 25-year-olds attending a further education college/free-standing sixth form college (continuing a course started before their 19th birthday)

Please note, travel assistance will not be provided under this section for young people who have left education and are returning after the age of 19. **Those re-starting education after their 19th birthday will be assessed as adults.**

A young person will qualify for Travel Assistance if they are a resident of the Wokingham Borough;

And

- Live more than 3 miles from the nearest school or college. (The distance criterion will be waived for students where their learning difficulty or disability prevents them from walking to school or college or from using public transport)
- Are going to a full-time college course (equivalent to a minimum of 12 hours per week, usually across at least 3 days per week for the duration of the course) which the Local Authority agree can make the appropriate educational/training provision and are not able to travel independently or safely.

And

- They have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are attending the nearest school or college allocated by the Local Authority, identified in their most current EHCP as meeting their needs, or a nearer qualifying school or college.

Or

- There are other exceptional circumstances which impacts on their ability to use public transport arrangements and are not able to travel independently or safely

Travel assistance will only be considered to the nearest provider with post 16 provision which, in the opinion of WBC, offers an appropriate course. An appropriate course is one that enables the young person to meet their learning and/or employment objectives or is specifically designed to meet the student's special educational needs at a:

- School,
- Further education institution,
- Council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education,
- Establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, or a
- Learning provider delivering accredited programmes of learning, which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council (for example, colleges, charities, and private learning providers).

If a young person chooses to undertake a further education course at a school or provider outside of Wokingham, travel assistance will only be considered if the school or provider attended is the nearest one providing an appropriate course and the journey is three miles or more. If a place is available on a comparable course at a nearer school or provider in Wokingham, no assistance will be provided.

11. 16 to 19 Local Authority Travel Assistance Offer

The standard offer of Travel Assistance for students aged 16-19 is a **Personal Transport Budget (PTB)**. A PTB is a direct payment to you and is designed to help you to get your child to school/college. It replaces council-organised transport (COT), although requests for traditional transport methods will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The term “Travel Assistance” is used to describe the options of EITHER a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) or Council-Organised Transport (COT).

The legislation that applies to 19+ students is slightly different and for that reason, families of this group may still be offered council-organised transport (COT) or a PTB.

For all eligible students moving into post 16 education for the first time they will need to apply for a PTB if they require Travel Assistance, as this is the standard offer. Following their application acceptance and approval of eligibility, if families feel that the only way they can get their child to school is by using traditional transport (e.g., taxi or minibus), you will be able to appeal the offer of a PTB in order that the Council can consider your individual and/or any exceptional circumstances.

A young person already in receipt of post-16 COT before September 2024 will not have that COT withdrawn until an assessment has been done that shows that a PTB is suitable for the young person

12. Exceptional Circumstances

The offer and type of Post 16 transport remains at the discretion of the Council, but we will take into consideration individual circumstances and the needs of your child (including a consideration of your application form, the EHCP and any current transport risk assessment that the Council has undertaken).

The Council is aware that all children to whom this policy applies will have varying degrees of SEND. Some examples that the Council would not ordinarily see as exceptional (in their own right) are:

- Single parent families
- Parent(s) that work
- Having other children to look after and/or at other schools
- Living in a rural area with or without access to public transport
- Parents/students unable to drive or having access to a car
- Students in wheelchairs

However, it is likely that a family with a number of those circumstances listed above could be classed as exceptional. By the very nature of 'exceptions', the Council recognises that there may be many reasons why a student could only access school/college using council approved transport; so, it naturally follows that it will be for parents to demonstrate that.

The Council will consider any exceptional circumstances advised for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

13. Personal Transport Budgets

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help you to get your child to school. It is available to SEND children who have been assessed as eligible to receive Home to School transport by Wokingham Borough Council.

A PTB is granted at the discretion of the Council, therefore even if your child is assessed as being eligible to Travel Assistance, you may not be granted a PTB if it is not cost effective for the Council to do so (for example, if your child could be placed onto existing transport at no additional cost to the authority).

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment to help you to get your child to school or college. You can use the PTB in any way you wish that enables your child to get to school or college.

Why choose a personal transport budget (PTB)?

- Freedom to make your own arrangements – to suit your family
- Control over how the money is spent
- Your child may feel more secure and relaxed at school or college
- You can share the cost and save money by joining up with other parents
- You could use the money to help your child become more independent

You could use your PTB in many ways:

- You or someone in your family can drive your child to and from school/college.
- You can arrange with a friend or relative to cycle with or walk your child to school/college.
- Car share with other parents
- Pay for a bus pass for your child or get a bus pass for a friend to go with your child
- Pay for childcare for another child – so you can take your eligible child to school or college
- Work with the school or college to join up with other parents
- Use it towards the cost of a taxi or share the cost of the taxi with other parents

You must always spend the payment, or allow the payment to be spent, in a way that ensures the young person's attendance at school or college.

Applying for a PTB

An application for a PTB can be made by:

- the parent, guardian, or carer on behalf of the child.
- the student themselves if they are over 18 years old.
- a nominated person acting on behalf of the applicant if agreed by the applicant and that nominated person has capacity.

Full Terms and Conditions

You are advised to read the [Personal Transport Budget information](#).

14. Unsuccessful Applicants

If your child or young person is not eligible for the PTB, you may be able to **purchase a concessionary seat** on existing transport for their journey, if a spare seat is available.

You may also want to ask your college or sixth form for details of any bursary schemes they may have to help with expenses. If their application for home to school transport has been unsuccessful, they can **appeal the decision**.

15. Independent Travel Training

In line with the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment, Independent Travel Training (ITT) will be expanded as an option. The Council will identify young people, and those who will be transitioning from compulsory education into Post 16, and above, who could benefit from ITT and contact their families with a view to undertaking an ITT assessment.

An ITT assessment will be carried out with the support of the family and/or school, to confirm the suitability of the young person for the one-to-one ITT programme, considering the following criteria:

- The likelihood of the pupil being eligible for SEN transport under the 16 to 19 policy
- Existing level of independent travel skills
- The age of the pupil
- The distance between home and school
- The SEND of the pupil
- The route which the young person would need to undertake
- Journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey
- The frequency of the journeys required.

This assessment would take place before the pupil undertakes the ITT programme, which would last for, approximately, four to six weeks. During the programme, the pupil will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one to one ITT trainer both in the morning and afternoon from the home to the school and vice versa.

During the period when a pupil is taking part in the ITT, this will be their Travel Assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, the Council will review the pupil's progress with the family to decide if it is appropriate for the pupil to continue to travel independently. If it is not appropriate for the pupil to travel independently, their Travel Assistance offer will be reviewed.

Although the vast majority of young people are successfully supported to achieve and benefit immensely from becoming independent travellers, it is however acknowledged that for some young people, due to the nature of their SEND, ITT will not be appropriate.

16. Review of eligibility

If a young person is assessed as not eligible for Travel Assistance, the Council will not be obliged to re-assess the individual for the remainder of that academic year, unless the place of residence or education changes, except where an appeal is lodged in line with the appeals procedure.

All Travel Assistance offered is subject to annual review, in line with Education Funding Agency Guidelines, and it is at the discretion of the Council.

17. Appeals and Complaints

The Council is committed to ensuring that Travel Assistance provided is appropriate to the needs of the young person, is of a high quality and meets required safety standards.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints about the provision of Travel Assistance will be investigated in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. This does not apply to complaints about a refusal to grant transport, which will be dealt with through the Transport Appeals procedure.

The complaints policy can be found at:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/contact-us/complaints-and-compliments/>.

Appeal Procedures

Parents/guardians/carers or a young person are entitled to challenge the decision of the Council to refuse to provide assistance with transport as set out in this policy or when the parents/guardians/carers or young person consider that the Travel Assistance, offered by the Council, is unsuitable.

A decision may be challenged on the following grounds:

- eligibility

- distance measurement; and/or
- safety of the route
- suitability of transport arrangements offered.

You are advised to read the [Appeals information](#).