



Democratic Services

Location: Phase II

Ext: 0692

DDI: 01895 250692

CMD No: 1430

**To: COUNCILLOR SUSAN O'BRIEN
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES &
EDUCATION**

c.c. All Members of the Children, Families &
Education Select Committee

c.c. Sandra Taylor – Corporate Director of Adult
Social Care & Health

c.c. Jan Major – Direct Care & Business Delivery

Date: 21 May 2025

Non-Key Decision request

Form D

TRAVEL SUPPORT POLICY CHANGE FOR POST 16 STUDENTS

Dear Cabinet Members,

Attached is a report requesting that a decision be made by you as an individual Cabinet Member. Democratic Services confirm that this is not a key decision, as such, the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 notice period does not apply.

You should take a decision **on or after Friday 30 May 2025** in order to meet Constitutional requirements about publication of decisions that are to be made. You may wish to discuss the report with the Corporate Director before it is made. Please indicate your decision on the duplicate memo supplied and return it to me when you have made your decision. I will then arrange for the formal notice of decision to be published.

Ryan Dell
Democratic Services

Title of Report: Travel Support Policy Change for Post 16 Students

Decision made:

Reasons for your decision: (e.g. as stated in report)

Alternatives considered and rejected: (e.g. as stated in report)

Signed Date.....

Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education

TRAVEL SUPPORT POLICY CHANGE FOR POST 16 STUDENTS

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Councillor Susan O'Brien Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Responsible Officer	Sandra Taylor, Corporate Director – Adult Social Care & Health
Report Author & Directorate	Jan Major, Assistant Director – Direct Care & Business Delivery
Papers with report	App A – Proposed policy 25/26 App B – Equality impact assessment (EIA)

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>The proposal is that following consultation on the Council's Home to School Transport Post 16 Policy changes are made to the offer and service the Council makes for eligible post-16 students. The Policy and service offered will be that a personal transport budget (PTB) is the default offering rather than traditional transport such as a minibus or taxi. Exceptions will be made if alternative travel arrangements prove to be cost effective or the applicant can prove exceptional circumstances which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Adopting this policy will provide flexible and tailored support, promoting independence for those young people and their families and could also realise significant savings for the council.</p> <p>Equally by introducing a charging mechanism for the parents of sixth form age students, the Council can generate additional revenue.</p>
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Digital-Enabled, Modern, Well-Run Council</p>
Financial Cost	The policy changes are expected to yield savings of £426k per annum (£249k for 2025/26) and generate additional revenue of £73k per annum (£47k for 2025/26).
Select Committee	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Wards	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education:

- 1) Considers the outcome of the consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment attached;**
- 2) Agrees that the Council amends its policy for eligible post-16 students, to make the offer of a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) the default method of travel support for this cohort and agrees the Post 16 Transport to Education and Training - Policy Statement Academic Year 2025/26 attached; and**
- 3) Recommends that for those eligible post-16 students who remain on transport, because of exceptional circumstances or cheaper options being available, a parental contribution of £640 per annum should apply for sixth form age students and take effect from September 2025, subject to approval by Cabinet.**

Reasons for recommendations

This proposal is being made based on the Department for Education (DfE) guidance and addresses an area where the local authority has discretion in how it supports post-16 students.

DfE guidance and related objectives alongside the SEND Code of Practice emphasises the need to tailor support to the individual's needs and ensure the promotion of independence as part of preparing young people for adulthood. A personal transport budget empowers families and young people to achieve this and choose the most suitable transport method.

This Policy change has also been drafted in response to increasing costs of providing free travel to school for eligible students. Against this backdrop, the Council is looking at how it can continue to provide a high level of service and encourage independence within its service users, while making savings to the existing spend and generating additional revenue.

Alternative options considered/ risk management

The option of not implementing any of these recommendations has been considered. Unfortunately, due to the financial pressures experienced by councils across the country, difficult decisions must be made particularly in relation to non-statutory services and the level of service provided.

The Council could explore alternative methods to alleviate financial pressures without compromising the quality of transport services provided to students. These methods may include implementing cost-sharing strategies, seeking additional funding sources, and optimising current transportation routes to ensure efficiency. By doing so, the Council can continue to support post-16 students while maintaining fiscal responsibility and adhering to statutory obligations.

The Council could consider removing all post-16 transport. However, this would leave the Council open to challenge in how it is facilitating the attendance of all persons of sixth form age and post-19 students receiving education or training set out in the statutory guidance. Additionally, good attendance supports the continuation of education and promotion of independence in young people.

Having the default option of a PTB will require the Council to look at any potential exceptions to policy and how parents/ carers could show exceptional circumstances. It is expected that this is likely to be through medical need, distance to college, family circumstances, need for a specialist vehicle or low income.

Any new policy statement will include details of how financial assistance available for low-income families who are affected by the parental contribution, can be accessed.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

1. Free travel to school is a valuable service for many families, but budget pressures mean that the Council often has to make difficult decisions about how to make best use of the limited resources available to them. The Council must comply with their duty to arrange free travel for eligible children, but it has some discretion in how they do this.
2. Like many councils across the country, a significant amount of the Home to School's transport budget is spent on providing transport for children and young people. As these costs are expected to continue to rise, it will adversely affect the level of service the Council is able to provide to children and their families. Therefore, changes are required to enable the Council to continue to deliver its statutory duties in a cost-effective manner.
3. Each Council is required to publish its arrangements for transport provision for young people of sixth form age and adults aged 19 and over (including those with an Education, Health and Care plan - EHCP) in education and training in an annual transport policy statement. This is a discretionary service, which means that councils can decide which offering suits their own specific local needs and so this transport provision varies across local areas.
4. The Department for Education (DfE) has published statutory guidance that local authorities must consider when making their transport policy statements.

Current arrangements for transport

5. Currently, parents/ carers of post-16 students in Hillingdon who are continuing in education or training beyond compulsory school age can apply for travel support. Most successful applicants are provided with home to school transport through a commissioned framework of transport operators.
6. Increasingly councils are looking at how they can deliver discretionary services at a lower cost, while continuing to provide support and encouraging independence. Several councils have reviewed how they deliver travel support for post-16 students.

Personal Transport Budget as default

7. A growing number of councils are choosing to only offer a personal transport budget, based on individual home to school/ college mileage, for all eligible students to enable parent/

carers to make their own travel arrangements for all but exceptional cases.

8. For one Council it took several years to implement their policy change due to a judicial review, which found in their favour and a subsequent appeal, which they also won, as they were able to demonstrate that it considered school transport provision for exceptions. This council has reduced the number of post-16 students on transport by 50%.
9. Having the default option of a PTB, it is important to look at any potential exceptions to policy and how parents/ carers could show exceptional circumstances. It is expected that this is likely to be through medical need, distance to college, family circumstances, need for a specialist vehicle or low income. A methodology will be developed to ensure that these exceptions are embedded in the application process and adopted for appeals.
10. Amendments to the policy for post-16 students could potentially have an impact on parents/ carers but could also improve the experiences of young people and also provide significant savings. A focus on changing how we deliver travel support options for this cohort is critical and the decision to amend the policy should be made explicit in the next post-16 travel support statement to be published before the end of May 2025.

Charging a parental contribution

11. Many councils across the country charge a parental contribution when transporting post-16 students. Although this is rare in London, officers are aware that it is being considered by other London boroughs. This charge only affects children of sixth form age as guidance states that for post-19 students, if transport is awarded, then this should be free of charge.
12. Charging amounts vary across the country. In a recent survey undertaken by another local authority of those areas who seek a parental contribution for post-16 transport, the average per student was £640 per annum with the highest being £1,550 per annum.
13. In Hillingdon, the average cost per student for transporting all children is £7,600 per annum – details for sixth form students only are not available. An annual charge based on the nationwide average would be less than 10% of current costs.
14. A range of payment options would clearly benefit parents, e.g. annual payment, termly payment or monthly direct debit.

Financial Implications

The proposal has a one-off cost implication for the Council of £120k which was approved in a previous paper to complete the work associated with the consultation and implementation of the Post 16 policy changes. This is included in the 2025/26 transformation capitalisation plan.

Implementation of these proposals will generate savings and provide additional revenue as set out in the business case. Summary details below:

Applying PTB as default is expected to yield a saving of £249k in 2025/26 with a full £426k in each subsequent year.

Introducing a parental contribution charge at the average national rate, £640 per annum, is expected to provide additional revenue of £47k in 2025/26 with a full £73k in following years.

The Council's approved budget for 2025/26 includes a saving of £624k, rising to £1,011k by

2026/27. Therefore, there is a savings gap of £328k in 2025/26 (£512k by 2026/27). The shortfall will need to be addressed by mitigating actions.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

These proposals will affect approximately 270 post-16 students, who are attending school/ college and receiving travel support. These students are aged 16 to 25 years old.

All eligible students receiving travel support are young people with SEND, including this cohort. The proposals only affect post-16 students; all compulsory school age students are unaffected.

Amendments to the policy for post-16 students could potentially have an impact on parents/ carers but could also improve the experiences of young people; as well as providing significant savings.

It is recognised that applying the default option of a PTB may have a bigger impact on some families and it is important to look at any potential exceptions to policy and how parents/ carers could show exceptional circumstances. It is expected that this is likely to be through medical need, distance to college, family circumstances, need for a specialist vehicle or low income. These examples were included in the consultation exercise and received positive feedback from respondents.

A robust and fair process for applying the policy and dealing with appeals will be developed. This will ensure that the transition for September 2025 will be fair, transparent and as efficient as possible.

Any new policy statement will include details of how financial assistance available for low-income families who are affected by the parental contribution, can be accessed.

Data readily available has been analysed to understand the make-up of the cohort, but data regarding the socio-economic status or ethnic backgrounds of families was not available. This data will be collected as part of the application process moving forward and will contribute to a review of the change in policy in 6 months' time.

Consultation & Engagement carried out

Between 17 January 2025 and 28 February 2025, a consultation exercise was undertaken on proposed changes to the existing policy for providing travel support for Post-16 students. The purpose of the consultation was to understand the impact these proposals may have on those who are currently eligible for free home to school travel support and other interested parties.

The consultation was published on Hillingdon's website and also targeted at parents and carers who are most likely to be affected by these proposals. Links to the consultation were shared widely with parents / carers schools and Hillingdon staff. The service also engaged with the Parent Carer Forum prior to consultation to promote responses. In summary:

- **Responses** - the exercise generated 111 consultation responses through the online link on the website. The majority, 92 responses (83%) were from students, or parents/ carers of children currently receiving school transport.
- **Post-16 travel support (PTBs)** – there was a mixed response to proposals to amend post-16 travel arrangements.

- 23% would like to see a PTB offered whereas 55% would like to see some other proposal offered.
- Of this 55%, the majority seemed satisfied with the current arrangement,
- 3% stated that travel support for post-16 students should end
- The most positive responses from the survey were around creating exceptions to the policy for post-16 travel support, where certain criteria were met. Many respondents felt that all four exceptions should be considered. Results are shown in the following table:

Criteria	Percentage agreeing should consider exception
A specialist vehicle is required for accessibility	86%
Students' medical needs require provision of passenger assistant	92%
Most suitable college/school is a long distance from home	77%
Family income is low	69%

- **Post-16 charges** – In response to post-16 charges:
 - Only 18% of respondents gave a positive response to charging, although there were a number of comments stating that they could not answer as they did not know at this stage how much the charge would be.
 - Irrespective of how they responded to the above, 21% of respondents stated that charges should be adjusted by inflation every year, but 35% of respondents stated that charges should be reviewed every 2 years.
- **Payments** – When asked about how payment for the parental contribution should be collected, responses were as follows:
 - Annual payment – 4%
 - Termly payment – 5%
 - Monthly direct debit - 29%
 - An option for any of the above – 23%

Further information relating to the respondents was collected.

Below is a breakdown of respondents

- Child or young person who uses transport – 7
- Parent/ carer of child or young person who uses transport – 79
- More than one response including above – 6
- LBH employee – 3
- On behalf of group or school – 8
- Parent of Child or young person not receiving transport – 3
- Individual, others – 5

Where respondents specified:

Sex

- Female – 80
- Male – 20
- Prefer not to say, no response – 11

Age

- 16 to 24 – 4
- 25 to 34 – 7
- 35 to 44 – 29
- 45 to 54 – 46
- 55 to 64 – 11
- 65 to 74 – 1
- Prefer not to say, no response – 13

Respondent has health problem/ disability

- Yes – 27
- No – 58
- Prefer not to say, no response – 26

The service will continue to engage with all stakeholders to monitor the effect of these policy changes, including the ongoing financial impact on parents, any impact on attendance at relevant schools/ colleges and whether mitigation or exceptions to the rules are being applied.

The option to maintain the existing arrangements has been considered, but due to rising costs this cannot continue. Equally the Council cannot simply end all support for this cohort.

Given the results of the consultation, it is imperative to look at any potential exceptions to policy and how parents/ carers could show exceptional circumstances. It is expected that this is likely to be through medical need, distance to college, family circumstances, need for a specialist vehicle or low income.

Similarly, it is important that the Council publicise how to access financial assistance available for low-income families who are affected by the parental contribution and to offer a range of options for making payment.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting the recommendation to offer a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) as the default method of travel support for eligible 16+ students as well as introducing a new fee of £640 as a parental contribution to the PTB.

Furthermore, it is noted that the change in policy is estimated to save the Council £249k in 2025/26, rising to £426k thereafter, however, it should be noted that this leaves an unfunded gap between the saving included in the service's approved budget, with 2025/26 forecast to achieve 47% of the target set in the MTFS, leaving a pressure of £328k. The ultimate saving from these proposals will marginally improve this to 49% by 2026/27 onwards, leaving an unfunded pressure in the MTFS of £512k.

Legal

In making a decision the decision maker must have regard to the outcome of the consultation, the EIA and the statutory guidance. There are no legal impediments to the recommendation within the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

LBH post-16 transport policy statement 2024-25

<https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/6501/Home-to-school-travel-assistance-policy-for-young-people-post-16/pdf/8jUpdated Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2024-25.pdf?m=1723198570513>

Statutory guidance post-16 travel support

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

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Draft Post 16 Transport Policy

Appendix B – EIA



DRAFT Post 16 Transport to Education and Training - Policy Statement

Academic Year 2025/26

1. INTRODUCTION

This statement sets out arrangements for travel assistance for all Post 16 young people who are resident in the borough and in full-time approved education or training. The raising of the participation age meant that, from summer 2015, all young people should continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday. It is recognised that young people will continue their learning in a variety of settings. This will include school, college and work-based learning.

Under the September Guarantee, every young person aged 16 or 17 must be offered a suitable place in education or training. The September Guarantee helps local authorities fulfil their duty to provide education and training to young people and find them a suitable place. It also helps them to work with their partners - particularly schools and colleges - and to agree how the process will work in their area.

2. PRINCIPLES

Students of sixth form age, in full time education, whose ability to attend or to complete a programme of learning or training may be affected by the availability of transport may apply to the local authority for support to access the education or training of their choice and this will be assessed and provided where necessary.

All young people up to the age of 18 who are in full time education have access to free travel on buses anywhere in London. In addition, there are concessionary fares and reductions available on London Underground Trains, the DLR and some national rail services. Therefore, the London Borough of Hillingdon considers that most students of this age will be able to meet their transport needs through the use of public transport.

Young people aged 16 - 24 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose ability to attend or to complete a programme of learning or training may be affected by the availability of transport may apply to the local authority for additional travel assistance.

As with students of secondary school age, there is an expectation that students of sixth form age will be able to travel independently (making use of free and concessionary schemes) or on foot to their post 16 education or training provision unless their SEND,

medical needs or disability prevents them from doing so.

The Council actively promotes the development of independent travel skills and whenever appropriate young learners will be supported through independent travel training to access local transport.

Best practice suggests that a child of secondary school age may be reasonably expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way to access learning and the London Borough of Hillingdon applies the same expectation to young people of sixth form age. In determining the mode of transport for eligible students the Council will consider which mode will best meet the need to ensure a reasonable journey time.

3. ELIGIBILITY

It is expected that most students will be able to meet their needs for transport by making use of the schemes set out at paragraph 6 below. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this will not always be possible. The local authority will consider the provision of further assistance where the student is either unable to travel on public transport independently or cannot reasonably be expected to walk to the education or training facility. The student must also be:

- enrolled on a programme of learning to attend the most appropriate school (mainstream or special), further education institution, local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, a 16 to 19 Academy, an establishment funded directly by the Education and Skills Funding Agency or a learning provider that is funded by the local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning; or
- enrolled on an apprenticeship or traineeship with a further education college or training provider (there are eligibility requirements for approved provision) for a minimum of 12 months.

If these criteria are met the student may be eligible for subsidised travel assistance up to the age of 19 (aged 25 for learners with SEN). Applications for travel assistance can be made by completing the online application form. If eligible, a range of options will be considered that will take into account the availability of suitable public transport and the level of assistance the student may require. When necessary, the Council will work with other local authorities to support students educated in areas other than Hillingdon.

The Council recognises that needs and personal/local circumstances can change, therefore applications for post 16 school/college travel assistance may be required on an annual basis.

As part of a young person's transition to adulthood, the Council encourages as many

young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) as possible to have started to travel independently by the time they reach college age. Independent Travel Training may be available for those who may benefit, to support transition.

The council understands that there will be Post-16 students with SEND who will not be able to travel independently to their place of learning and, in such cases, the Council will provide assistance primarily in the form of a Personal Travel Budget (PTB).

A PTB provides families with the flexibility to make travel arrangements to suit their needs, for example:

- pay for the costs of driving your child to school / college
- give to a family member or friend to pay for the costs involved so they can take your child to school/college
- arrange shared travel arrangements with other parents
- provide childcare facilities, such as breakfast/after school clubs for siblings to enable parents/carers to take their child to school/college
- pay for anything else that works for your family

In certain circumstances, transport may be provided by the Council. In determining eligibility for additional assistance, individual factors including (but not limited to) the following will be considered:

- An assessment of the applicant's individual needs and ability to use the various methods of public transport that are available
- Parental circumstances and general legal responsibilities
- Distance from home to learning establishment
- Availability of alternative, more local, resources
- The suitability of the place of learning and course in relation to the student's needs
- Preferences based on the student's religion or belief
- Family income
- The Council's responsibility to ensure efficient use of resources

If the council provide transport, then for students aged 16–18-year-old and those aged 19 who are continuing learners, a financial contribution of £640 per annum is payable.

4. APPLICATION, APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Applications

Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and eligible students may

need to re-apply on an annual basis for subsidised travel assistance. Applications should be made as soon as learning options have been confirmed and no later than the 31st July. Young learners must reapply for travel assistance if their personal circumstances change eg move house, change college or change course.

An online application form can be found on the following link:

[https:// School transport for children and young people with SEND - Hillingdon Council](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/school-transport-for-children-and-young-people-with-send)

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against a decision regarding travel support, you should contact the Passenger Services team at the address below, who will arrange for your appeal to be considered. Alternatively, please contact travelassistance@hillingdon.gov.uk via email.

Passenger Services. Harlington Road Depot, 128 Harlington Road, Uxbridge, UB8 3EU. 01895 250008.

Complaints

If you have a complaint regarding the application process, please follow the Council's Complaints Procedure. Details can be found on the Council website as follows:

www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints

If you are not happy with the final response from the Council, you can then ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to further investigate the complaint. The LGO is responsible for conducting investigations of complaints about service failure and maladministration that cannot be resolved by the Council. Any complaint must be in writing and addressed to the LGO at P O Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH. They can also be contacted by telephone on 0300 061 0614.

5. AGE GROUPS COVERED BY THE POLICY

The statement applies to young people engaged in full time learning or training:

- aged 16-18. This includes continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday
- aged 16-25 with learning difficulties, special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes learners aged 25, who started their programme of learning before their 25th birthday

6. CONCESSIONARY FARES, DISCOUNTS, SUBSIDIES, PASSES OR

TRAVEL CARDS

Transport for London (TfL) concessions

The following is a summary of travel concessions for young people aged 16+. Full information on TfL concessions, eligibility and how to apply can be found on the TfL website, www.tfl.gov.uk. You can apply online or via a paper application.

1. 16+ Oyster Photocard. This costs £10 and gives you free bus and tram travel in the London area and half adult rate on other TfL services (e.g. underground). To be eligible, you must:
2. Section 509AC Education Act 1996 defines persons of VI Form age for the purposes of the VI form duty
 - Live in a London borough
 - Be in full-time education (must be confirmed by your learning provider)
 - Be aged 18 or under on 31 August before the start of your studies 'Full-time' means enrolled for a minimum of 12 hours of guided learning per week between 09:00 and 17:00 Monday-Friday for a minimum of ten weeks, on further education courses at Level 3 or below in a school sixth form, sixth form college, academy, further education college or other training provider.
3. 18+ Student Oyster Photocard. This costs £10 and can be used to obtain 30% off adult rate Travelcards and bus and tram passes. To be eligible, you need to be:
 - Enrolled at a participating education establishment registered on the TfL scheme, or on mandatory work placement in London Borough of Hillingdon
 - Enrolled on an eligible full or part-time course
 - Living at a London address during term-time
4. Disabled Persons Freedom Pass. In order to be eligible for a disabled person Freedom Pass you must:
 - Have your sole or principle residence in London and;
 - Have any of the statutory disabilities listed in the Transport act 2000.

The statutory disabilities which make someone eligible for a disabled person Freedom Pass are:

- a. People who are blind or partially sighted
- b. People who are profoundly or severely deaf
- c. People without speech
- d. People who have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has left them with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to walk
- e. People who do not have arms or have a long-term loss of the use of both arms

- f. People who have a learning disability that is defined as 'a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning'
- g. People who, if they applied for the grant of a licence to drive a motor vehicle under Part III of the Road Traffic Act 1988, would have their application refused pursuant to section 92 of the Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the ground of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol For more information on this scheme and to apply please visit: <http://www.freedompass.org/disabled-persons-freedom-pass/eligibility>

5. London Taxi Card. Taxicard is a scheme that provides subsidised transport for people who have serious mobility impairment and difficulty in using public transport. Taxicard holders make journeys in licensed London taxis and private hire vehicles, and the subsidy applies directly to each trip.

The London Taxicard Scheme is funded by the participating London boroughs and the Mayor of London. London Councils Transport and Environment Committee manage the London Taxicard Scheme on their behalf.

Your Taxicard can be used anytime, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, subject to taxi and private hire vehicle availability.

For more information on the London Taxicard scheme, please follow this link: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/taxicard

6. Apprentice Oyster Photocard. This costs £10 and can be used to obtain 30% off adult rate Travelcards and bus and tram passes. To be eligible, you need to be:
- Aged 18 or over
 - Living in a London borough
 - Enrolled on an Apprenticeship with a further education college or training (there are eligibility requirements for approved provision) for a minimum of 12 months
 - In the first 12 months of your Apprenticeship
7. Young Person's Railcard. This costs £30 and full-time students aged 16-25 can apply. It gives discounts of 1/3 on a range of tickets. For more information, please visit [16-25 Railcard | Only £30 | National Rail](#)

7. SUPPORT WITH TRANSPORT COSTS OR TRANSPORT PROVISION MADE BY LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS

Information about financial assistance that may be available from Uxbridge College can be found here: www.uxbridge.ac.uk/financial-support-general.html

For information about financial assistance that may be available from school and colleges please contact the school directly.

General information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund, which may be used for the payment contribution towards travel costs, can be found on the following link: <http://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

8. CONSULTATION

Between 17 January 2025 and 28 February 2025, a consultation exercise was undertaken on proposed changes to the previous policy for providing travel support for Post 16 students. The purpose of the consultation was to understand the impact these proposals may have on those who are currently eligible for home to school travel support and other interested parties.

Changes have been made to the policy in relation to the type of travel assistance offered and charging a parental contribution for sixth form students.

APPENDIX 1

OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-19

Financial support - The 16-19 Bursary Fund The Department for Education has made funding available to educational institutions to support the most financially disadvantaged 16 to 19 year-olds and those young people who most need help with the costs of staying in education.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is distributed in 2 distinct ways:

1. Central allocation to eligible young people 2. A yearly bursary of up to £1,200 is available to young people in one of the four defined vulnerable groups:

- Young people in care
- Care leavers
- Those on Income Support or Universal Credit
- Disabled young people (in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payment))

Institutions are responsible for verifying that young people meet the criteria for vulnerable student bursaries. Institutions must complete a 16 to 19 Bursary Fund vulnerable students funding claim form in order to request funding to be released to them for vulnerable students.

Discretionary awards made by institutions

Educational institutions are also allocated funding from which they can make discretionary awards to young people. Discretionary awards are for any students who are facing genuine financial barriers to participating. Individual institutions determine eligibility criteria and the frequency and conditions of payments. More detailed information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk

1. How to Apply Learning providers should provide information on bursaries to post- 16 students and it should be on their websites (please see section 9 for details from Uxbridge College). Learning providers are responsible for identifying young people who are eligible for a Vulnerable Student Bursary. If you think that you qualify but your school, college etc has not told you, you should contact them. If you think that you might qualify for a Discretionary Bursary, you will also need to apply direct to your learning provider.
2. Apprenticeships Most apprentices should receive a wage. Learning providers are responsible for ensuring that non-employed Programme-led Apprentices have reasonable expenses met in full where support is needed – this may

include travelling costs (e.g. to work placements). You may be able to apply for a 16-19 bursary (see above) if you meet the eligibility criteria and if you are an unwaged apprentice or on an access to apprenticeship programme.

3. **Residential Support Scheme** If you are aged 16-18 and need to study away from home because your course is not available locally, you may get help with the cost of term-time accommodation. There are eligibility criteria and whether you qualify also depends on your household income. Full information is available here: www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/overview
4. **Care to Learn (C2L)** If you are under 20 at the start of your course and are the main carer for your child, you may qualify for help with childcare costs. This can include travelling expenses to get your child to and from the childcare provider. The learning provider may also help with the student's home-to-school/college travelling expenses. For more information on this scheme please visit www.gov.uk/care-to-learn

What you need to know

You must choose your learning provider and childcare provider before you apply. Your childcare provider is paid from the beginning of your course if you apply either:

- before your course starts
- within 28 days of starting your course

If you apply after that, your childcare provider will only be paid from the beginning of the week that your application was received.

5. **Discretionary Learner Support** This is support for learners in further education (this must be provision funded by the Skills Funding Agency), who are aged 19 or over and who are facing financial hardship. You apply direct to your learning provider (e.g. your college).

APPENDIX 2

USEFUL CONTACT POINTS & WEBSITES

The Transport for London (TfL) website contains full information about travel concessions and how to apply: [Free and discounted travel - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://tfl.gov.uk/free-and-discounted-travel)

The UK Government website contains information about all of the financial support available to learners as follows: www.gov.uk/further-education-courses/financial-help
This also contains information about the Learner Support Helpline 0800 121 8989 (information about Care to Learn, Bursaries, Residential Support Scheme & Discretionary Learner Support)

The London Borough of Hillingdon website. This contains links to information about how you can get support if you are finding it difficult to find education and training opportunities. This also includes details of local providers offering training and employment support programmes, including apprenticeships: [Education, employment and training support for young people - Hillingdon Council](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/education-employment-training-support)

The Uxbridge College website contains information about learning programmes for young people aged 14-19 <https://www.uxbridge.ac.uk/>
financial support for learners: www.uxbridge.ac.uk/college-information/16-19/fees-and-costs.html

Telephone 01895 853333.

Schools and Academies All schools and academies that offer courses for post-16 students should make available details of their 16-19 bursary policy and of any other financial support available. It is good practice for this information to be provided on their websites. Should you have difficulty locating this information, you will need to contact the school or academy concerned and ask them for a copy of their policy. General information about 16-19 bursaries can be found on the UK Government website - see above. Contact details for all Hillingdon schools are available on the Council website as follows:

[Schools directory - Hillingdon Council](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schools-directory)

This section of the Hillingdon Council website contains general information about apprenticeships and information about local apprenticeship providers:

DRAFT



Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

STEP A) Description of what is to be assessed and its relevance to equality

What is being assessed? Please tick ✓

Review of a service ☐ Staff restructure ☐ Decommissioning a service ☐

Changing a policy ✓ Tendering for a new service ☐ A strategy or plan ☐

Currently, parents/carers of post-16 students (those aged 16-25 who are in full time education) in Hillingdon who are continuing in education or training beyond compulsory school age can apply for travel support.

Unlike compulsory school age children, this is a discretionary service, which means that councils can decide which offering suits their own specific local needs.

87% of successful applicants are provided with expensive transport in the shape of taxis and minibuses with 13% receiving a personal travel budget to enable parents/carers to make their own transport arrangements.

A personal travel budget (PTB) is a more cost-effective solution for the council.

The proposed changes are:

- To provide a Personal Travel Budget as the default offer for travel support, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- That a contribution of £640 per annum will be required towards the cost of transport for those students who are of sixth form age, and where a PTB is not suitable.

The current policy gives details of how travel support may be provided e.g. independent travel training, personal travel budget (PTB) or council provided transport.

The change in policy would be make it clear to parents/carers that the default offer will be a PTB other than in exceptional circumstances.

These exceptional circumstances are: medical need, distance to college, family circumstances, need for a specialist vehicle, or low income.

It is hoped that this change in policy will promote and encourage independence, support flexibility in how the council offers travel support and provide savings in an area that has seen costs increase significantly in recent years.

The changes in policy will be included in the next post-16 travel support statement to be published before the end of May 2025.

Who is accountable? E.g. Head of Service or Corporate Director

Sandra Taylor Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Date assessment completed and approved by accountable person

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Names and job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Richard Dawson – Edge Public Solutions – Passenger Transport
Vicky Trott, Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager

A.1) What are the main aims and intended benefits of what you are assessing?

The provision of travel support for post-16 students is an area where the council has discretion in how it provides this support. The key aims of these proposals are:

- To maintain a high level of service across all aspects of travel support despite rising costs. By focusing on this area, the council can ensure that high levels of satisfaction are sustained throughout the service.
- Provide alternative travel options which may help to promote independence. This aligns with the broader goal of supporting young people in becoming more self-sufficient.
- To manage increasing costs effectively. This aspect is important to ensure the sustainability of the service.

A.2) Who are the service users or staff affected by what you are assessing? What is their equality profile?

Service Users affected by this policy change are all post-16 students with SEND. As

at April 2025, 270 students were in receipt of travel support.

The following shows the equality profile of those student.

It is acknowledged that the cohort will change each academic year but it remains broadly the same year on year.

Age

School years 12 and 13 would be considered sixth form age students who are also affected by parental contribution charging proposal.

School Year	%
Year 12	24%
Year 13	23%
Year 14	18%
Year 15	13%
Year 16	8%
Year 17	6%
Year 18	5%
Year 19	3%

The split between sixth form age students and adult learners is broadly comparable.

Sex

There are 66% male students compared to 34% female.

In comparison, across all age groups the percentage split of those to whom all transport is provided is 70% male and 30% female.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity data for this cohort is not recorded.

Disability

All young people within this cohort are SEND students.
12% are wheelchair users

A.3) Who are the stakeholders in this assessment and what is their interest in it?

Stakeholders	Interest
Students eligible for travel support and their parents and carers	To ensure that the student can travel safely and cost effectively to school/college.
Schools and colleges	Colleges may see a change in how eligible students travel to school.

	Parents will be signposted to colleges who may be able to provide bursaries.
Assistant Director Direct Care & Business Delivery	To ensure that the provision of transport support is cost effective, efficient and meets the needs of the young people who require it.
Director Adult Social Care & Health	To ensure that the provision of transport support is cost effective, efficient and meets the needs of the young people who require it.
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and Council Cabinet	To ensure that the provision of transport support is cost effective, efficient and meets the needs of the young people who require it.

A.4) Which protected characteristics or community issues are relevant to the assessment? ✓ in the box.

Age	✓	Sex	✓
Disability	✓	Sexual Orientation	
Gender reassignment		Socio-economic status	
Marriage or civil partnership		Carers	✓
Pregnancy or maternity		Community Cohesion	
Race/Ethnicity		Community Safety	
Religion or belief		Human Rights	

STEP B) Consideration of information; data, research, consultation, engagement

B.1) Consideration of information and data - what have you got and what is it telling you?

These proposals will affect approximately 270 Post-16 students, who are attending school / college and receiving travel support.

These students are aged 16 to 25 years old and are proportionately more male than female.

These students all have SEND.

Data regarding the socio-economic status or ethnic backgrounds of families is not collected for this cohort. This data will be collected as part of the application process and will contribute to a review of the change in policy in 6 months time.

Consultation

B.2) Did you carry out any consultation or engagement as part of this assessment?

Please tick ✓

NO ☐

YES ✓

The service engaged with the Parent Carer Forum (PCF), school / colleges and internal stakeholders e.g. SENDIASS prior to going out to consultation.

Between 17 January 2025 and 28 February 2025, a consultation exercise was undertaken on proposed changes to the existing policy for providing travel support for Post 16 students.

The purpose of the consultation was to understand the impact these proposals may have on those who are currently eligible for free home to school travel support and other interested parties.

The consultation was targeted at parents and carers who are most likely to be affected by these proposals.

Links to the consultation were shared widely with parents / carers schools and Hillingdon staff.

The parents / carers of all existing eligible Post 16 students and secondary age students receiving transport were contacted and invited to participate in the.

It was also advertised in school bulletins.

A number of Q&A sessions were organised through the PCF to give further information and hear concerns.

In summary:

Responses - the exercise generated 111 consultation responses through the

online link on the website. The majority, 92 responses (83%) were from students, or parents / carers of children currently receiving school transport.

Post-16 travel support (Personal Transport Budget) – there was a mixed response to proposals to amend post-16 travel arrangements.

23% would like to see a PTB offered whereas 55% would like to see some other proposal offered.

Of this 55%, the majority seemed satisfied with the current arrangement.

3% stated that travel support for post-16 students should end.

The most positive responses from the survey were around creating exceptions to the policy for post-16 travel support, where certain criteria were met.

A large number of respondents felt that all four exceptions should be considered.

Results are shown in the following table:

Criteria	Percentage agreeing should consider exception
A specialist vehicle is required for accessibility	86%
Students' medical needs require provision of passenger assistant	92%
Most suitable college/school is a long distance from home	77%
Family income is low	69%

Post-16 charges – In response to post-16 charges:

- 18% of respondents gave a positive response to charging, although there were a number of comments stating that they could not answer as they did not know at this stage how much the charge would be.
- Irrespective of how they responded to the above, 21% of respondents stated that charges should be adjusted by inflation every year, but 35% of respondents stated that charges should be reviewed every 2 years.
- **Payments** – When asked about how payment for the parental contribution should be collected, responses were as follows:
 - Annual payment – 4%
 - Termly payment – 5%
 - Monthly direct debit - 29%
 - An option for any of the above – 23%

Further information collected about respondents

Below is a breakdown of respondents

- Child or young person who uses transport – 7
- Parent / carer of Child or young person who uses transport – 79

- More than one response including above – 6
- LBH employee – 3
- On behalf of group or school – 8
- Parent of Child or young person not receiving transport – 3
- Individual, others – 5

Where respondents specified:

Sex

Female – 80

Male – 20

Prefer not to say, no response - 11

Age

16 to 24 – 4

25 to 34 – 7

35 to 44 – 29

45 to 54 – 46

55 to 64 – 11

65 to 74 – 1

Prefer not to say, no response – 13

Disability/Health condition

Yes – 27

No – 58

Prefer not to say, no response – 26

Given the results of the consultation, exceptions to the policy and how parents / carers could show exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration.

It is expected that this is likely to be through medical need, distance to college, family circumstances, need for a specialist vehicle, or low income.

B.3) Provide any other information to consider as part of the assessment

Service context

Many councils nationwide impose a parental contribution for transporting post-16 students. This fee applies exclusively to children of sixth form age, as Department for Education guidelines stipulate that transport awarded to post-19 students should be provided free of charge.

The amounts vary across the country, with a recent survey indicating that the average annual cost is £640, while the highest recorded amount was £1,550 per annum. Currently all transport provided by Hillingdon is *free of charge*.

Legal context

The council has a public duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations (Equality Act 2010)

Financial context

Since 2010, the council has driven a transformation programme across all services aimed at reducing costs and improving efficiency to ensure that in an environment of increased expenditure from population growth and inflationary uplifts we continue to deliver high quality services that put residents first.

The council continues to prioritise the delivery of its rigorous savings programme maintaining high standards of resident services, however the latest projections indicate that further savings of £34m will be required during 2025-26 to bridge the budget gap as a result of reducing government funding and the increasing cost of service delivery.

C) Assessment

What did you find in B1? Who is affected? Is there, or likely to be, an impact on certain groups?

C.1) Describe any **NEGATIVE** impacts (actual or potential):

Equality Group	Impact on this group and actions you need to take
Children and young people aged 16-25 with SEND	<p>The proposed changes in policy may directly affect children and young people aged 16-25 with SEND as their method of transport to school or college may change.</p> <p>For example, their transport routine or method of transport may be disrupted which may have an impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>To mitigate against this, each application will be assessed on an individual basis according to need and circumstance in line with the policy.</p>
Parents/Carers of the children and young people aged 16-25 with SEND	<p>The proposed changes to the policy may have a negative financial and administrative impact on parents / carers having to arrange transport for their children.</p> <p>Parents/carers of sixth form age children who continue to</p>

	<p>receive transport from the council will be expected to make a financial contribution.</p> <p>To mitigate against this, signposting information will be provided to families who are affected by the changes including how to access financial assistance and payment options.</p> <p>The service will continue to engage with all stakeholders to monitor the effect of these policy changes; including the ongoing financial impact on parents/carers, any impact on attendance at relevant schools / colleges and whether mitigation or exceptions to the rules are being applied.</p>
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C.2) Describe any **POSITIVE** impacts

Equality Group	Impact on this group and actions you need to take
Children and young people aged 16-25 with SEND	The proposed changes in policy to provide alternative transport options for this cohort will help to promote independence and support young people in becoming more self-sufficient.

D) Conclusions

Amendments to the policy for post-16 students may have a negative impact on parents/carers but could also improve the experiences of young people.

A focus on changing how we deliver travel support options for this cohort is critical and the decision to amend the policy should be made explicit in the next post-16 travel support statement to be published before the end of May 2025.

It is recognised that applying the default option of a PTB may have a bigger impact on some families and it is important to look at any potential exceptions to policy and how parents / carers could show exceptional circumstances.

It is expected that this is likely to be through medical need, distance to college, family circumstances, need for a specialist vehicle or low income. These examples were included in the consultation exercise and received positive feedback from respondents.

A robust and fair process for applying the policy and dealing with appeals will be developed. This will ensure that the transition for September 2025 will be fair,

transparent and as efficient as possible.

Charging parents / carers for a contribution towards travel costs may have a negative effect on some families. The charges are in line with the amounts other local authorities charge and the proposed amount is less than 10% of the average cost to transport children / young people in the borough.

Any new policy statement will include details of how financial assistance available for low-income families who are affected by the parental contribution, can be accessed.

The changes will also result in providing significant financial savings for the council.

Data regarding the socio-economic status or ethnic backgrounds of families has not been analysed as part of this assessment as the data was not available. This data will be collected as part of the application process moving forward and will contribute to a review of the change in policy in 6 month's time.

The service will continue to engage with all stakeholders to monitor the effect of these policy changes; including the ongoing financial impact on parents, any impact on attendance at relevant schools / colleges and whether mitigation or exceptions to the rules are being applied.

Signed and dated:.....

Name and position:.....