



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2025

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles
Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Commission

Councillor Batool (Chair)

Councillor Bonham (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Barnes, Clarke, Gregg, Mahesh, March and Dr Moore

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Dr Joycelin Eze-Okubuiro

Parent Governor Representative

Standing Invitees (Non-Voting)

Youth Representatives

Jennifer Day

Janet McKenna

Teaching Unions representative

UNISON Branch Secretary

Members of the Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For the Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ed Brown and Julie Bryant (Governance Services),

Tel: , e-mail: committees@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, City Hall, 3rd Floor Granby Wing, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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- ✓ to respect the right of others to view and hear debates without interruption;
- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Julie Bryant** (julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk) or **Ed Brown** (edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk), **Governance Services**. Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**.

USEFUL ACRONYMS IN RELATION TO OFSTED AND EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(updated November 2015)

Acronym	Meaning
APS	Average Point Score: the average attainment of a group of pupils; points are assigned to levels or grades attained on tests.
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
C&YP	Children and Young People
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CFST	Children and Families Support Team
CICC	Children in Care Council
CIN	Children in Need
CLA	Children Looked After
CLASS	City of Leicester Association of Special Schools
COLGA	City of Leicester Governors Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CYPF	Children Young People and Families Division (Leicester City Council)
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
CYPS Scrutiny	Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission
DAS	Duty and Advice Service
DCS	Director of Children's Services
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EHP	Early Help Partnership
EHSS	Early Help Stay Safe
EIP	Education Improvement Partnership
ELG	Early Learning Goals: aspects measured at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
EY	Early Years

EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage: (0-5); assessed at age 5.
EYFSP	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
ESFA	Education Skills and Funding Agency
FS	Foundation Stage: nursery and school Reception, ages 3-5; at start of Reception a child is assessed against the new national standard of 'expected' stage of development, then teacher assessment of Foundation Stage Profile areas of learning
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Education
GLD	Good Level of Development
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS1	Key Stage 1: National Curriculum Years (NCYs) 1 and 2, ages 5-7; assessed at age 7.
KS2	Key Stage 2: NCYs 3, 4, 5, and 6, ages 7-11; assessed at age 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3: NCYs 7, 8 and 9, ages 11-14; no statutory assessment.
KS4	Key Stage 4: NCYs 10 and 11, ages 14-16; assessed at age 16.
KTC	Knowledge Transfer Centre
LA	Local Authority
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LARP	Leicester Access to Resources Panel
LCCIB	Leicester City Council Improvement Board
LCT	Leicester Children's Trust
LDD	Learning Difficulty or Disability
LESP	Leicester Education Strategic Partnership
LLEs	Local Leaders of Education
LP	Leicester Partnership
LPP	Leicester Primary Partnership

LPS	Leicester Partnership School
LSCB	Leicester Safeguarding Children Board
LSOAs	Lower Super Output Areas
MACFA	Multi Agency Case File Audit
NCY	National Curriculum Year
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NLEs	National Leaders of Education
NLGs	National Leaders of Governance
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PEPs	Personal Education Plans
PI	Performance Indicator
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
QA	Quality Assurance
RAP	Resource Allocation Panel
RI	Requires Improvement
SA	Single Assessment
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SIMS	Schools Information Management Systems
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLEs	Specialist Leaders of Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
TBC	To be Confirmed
TFL	Tertiary Federation Leicester
TP	Teenage Pregnancy
UHL	University Hospitals Leicester
WIT	Whatever it Takes
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YPC	Young People's Council

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Governance Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

**Appendix B
(Pages 5 - 22)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People, and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 14 January 2025 have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

6. PETITIONS

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

- 7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT PROPOSED POLICIES 2025/2026 - 2027/2028** **Appendix C
(Pages 23 - 290)**

The Director of SEND and Education submits a report setting out the approach that the Council would adopt during the 2025-2026 academic year to the provision of transport assistance to certain individuals who attend schools, colleges or certain other institutions.

- 8. LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICERS (LADO) ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24** **Appendix D
(Pages 291 - 316)**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submits a report updating the Commission on the work of the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) for the year 2023-24.

- 9. KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE, HELPING FAMILIES THRIVE** **Appendix E
(Pages 317 - 324)**

Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help will give a presentation on Children's Services Reforms.

- 10. OFSTED ILACS REPORT (INSPECTING LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES) AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN** **Appendix F
(Pages 325 - 354)**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submits a report on the most recent Leicester City Council Ofsted inspection. This took place under the "inspecting local authority children's services" (ILACS) framework in September 2024.

- 11. WORK PROGRAMME** **Appendix G
(Pages 355 - 362)**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

- 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Agenda Annex



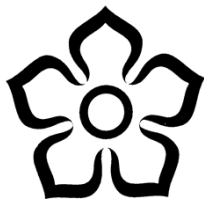
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Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool – Chair
Councillor Bonham – Vice Chair

Councillor Clarke
Councillor Dr Moore

Councillor March

Joycelin Eze-Okubuiro – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

In Attendance

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Pantling
Jennifer Day – Teaching Unions Representative
Janet McKenna – UNISON Branch Secretary
Mario Duda – Youth Representative

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109. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

It was noted that Councillor Karavadra was no longer a member of the Commission, Councillor Barnes would be joining the Commission in her place.

Apologies were received from Councillor Barnes.

It was noted that Councillor Dr Moore would need to leave the meeting early.

110. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

Councillor Dr Moore declared an interest due to being on the board for Millgate

School.

Councillor March declared an interest in the budget items regarding Council Tax support cuts.

111. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Dr Moore had a matter arising with the High Needs and Recovery Plan item, requesting that the following be recorded:

Councillor Dr Moore had met with the Assistant City Mayor for Education and the Director of SEND and Education. A subsequent meeting had taken place with the newly appointed trustee to Millgate School. It was agreed that discussions would take place regarding securing funding from sources such as The Primary Trust, or Children in Need, with the aim to extending residency for another year.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on the 29th October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

112. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was noted that the Chair had no announcements to make.

113. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Questions were presented to the commission by Mr Nizamuddin Patel regarding processes and procedures within Children's Social Care. The following responses were given by The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help:

Mr Patel asked:

Who overlooks children's social services to ensure they are following process/procedures? What internal processes are there to ensure quality is maintained and there are no service failures?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

Children's social work service delivery is inspected periodically by Ofsted. Internally case supervision between an allocated keyworker and their manager takes place monthly and will review progress on key processes and procedures. Within child protection and looked after children procedures, there are also independent chairs who review case progress at key intervals and there is an established escalation process

in place they can use if they have concerns about practice. Social Work England is the professional regulator for registered social workers, and they have the power to investigate concerns about social work practice that is not in keeping with professional standards as detailed in their codes of practice.

Mr Patel asked a supplementary question:

If a parent or professional has a complaint and has used the complaints process, is there anything else that they can do to have the complaint fully investigated?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

The complaints process is a statutory process with 3 stages, if the parents or the young person are not happy with the response after the 3 stages, they can progress the matter to the local government ombudsman.

Mr Patel asked:

The reports do not include the level of complaints raised by parents/professionals for children socials services. This will be useful to help compare to previous quarters to ensure levels of services are maintained and if any intervention or further scrutiny is required.

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

A dedicated report outlining levels of complaints and key themes comes to CYPE scrutiny twice a year.

Mr Patel asked a supplementary question:

Do you have the title of the reports please?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

The Council's website contains these reports in the committee meetings section.

Mr Patel asked:

How does the children's social services manage to ensure quality and accountability when it comes to agency social workers? If a family who are receiving help from the CIN/CPP team are having constant change in social workers, which leads to no continuity and thus a service failure, at what point will the council appoint a full time, non-agency employee to ensure no further service failures?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

Social work recruitment is a national challenge and unfortunately like most other local authorities we rely on agency workers to ensure we

have sufficient capacity to deliver our statutory services. Often, they are covering long term sick leave or maternity leave, as is the case in other roles working with children, for example supply teacher cover. Just like permanent social work staff all agency social workers receive monthly supervision with their line manager which provides an opportunity to review progress of their cases. Some changes in social worker are as a result of the progression of the case through the council's current workflows as some teams fulfil specific roles in the workflow. Turnover of social work staff is high in most local authorities due to the challenging nature of the role and the levels of trauma and challenging behaviour they experience from some families they work with who do not welcome their intervention when there are child protection concerns. It is unfortunate when a worker leaves the council, and as a result this does mean that families will experience a change of social workers. There will always been planning (when possible) to ensure that there is a planned transition between workers. We only use agency workers who are highly experienced.

Mr Patel asked a supplementary question:

What is the council's plan? There is a family we have been liaising with who have been with Social Care for 9 months with 6 social workers so there is no continuity there.

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

We always allocate cases according to best fit for the case at that time. We cannot totally control whether or not staff choose to leave us, particularly with agency staff. The government has made some attempts to deal with that. They have now extended the minimum notice period agency staff have to give before they leave. Cases first go to the Duty Team, then the Assessment Team, then to the Long-Term Team. This means that 3 Social Workers will have been involved in that first phase. Normally the Social Worker allocated will be for the long-term but people can go off sick and need to be replaced. Permanent Social Workers can also leave and need to be replaced and this is the same for temporary Social Workers.

Mr Patel asked:

Are there equality reportings conducted for those professionals who are present at Child Protection Conference to ensure there are representatives of different backgrounds, gender, race, culture etc? If not what plans do they have to start recording this to ensure conferences understand parents and children's background and culture?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

There is no requirement to undertake equality monitoring in the statutory child protection guidance. The purpose of the conference is to bring together the group of professionals working with a family to ensure that the best information is shared and informs good decision making so that

children are well protected. As a result it would not be in any child's interests to shape attendance at conferences just to ensure that those present are representative of a wide range of backgrounds and culture. Children's services have a widely diverse workforce and will always take into consideration issues of diversity when allocating a worker to a family, but it is not always possible to allocate a worker that reflects a family's background or culture. All of our staff take unconscious bias training.

Mr Patel asked a supplementary question:

The purpose of that question was that mainly independent chairs are female and so are most Social Care professionals. Does that mean that there's not much male representation, so they won't be able to understand from a male's point of view? Are there any plans for that so conferences can understand parent's and children's backgrounds more appropriately?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

When we recruit workers for vacant posts, we recruit the best workers that we can. We take diversity issues into account. We follow employment legislation. But it's true that across a wide range of social care professions, male workers are underrepresented, and this is not unique to Leicester.

Mr Patel asked:

There is a huge disproportion of male social workers in Leicester Children's social services. What plans/incentives do Children's Social Care have to recruit more male social workers?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

The council's approach to recruitment and retention is based on our ability to "Grow our Own" social work workforce due to the continuing national challenges in this area of work. This includes Social Work Apprenticeships, the national Frontline programme that looks to attract graduates with high level degrees to undertake intensive workplace learning, overseas recruitment of qualified social workers, and recruiting newly qualified social workers and providing them with learning and development opportunities so that they can complete their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment as required by Social Work England. In all of the recruitment activity we undertake we adhere to current legislation to ensure that there is no discrimination against any candidate, and current legislation would not allow us to use incentives specifically for one group of workers based on a protected characteristic. Like most caring professions the majority of workers are women. Currently 5% of our front-line social workers are male.

Mr Patel asked a supplementary question:

I am a teacher. In my profession there are flexible working arrangements for females due to pregnancy, family etc. I don't know of similar incentives for male Social Workers.

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

The local council offer support for parents allows them flexibility to take leave and work flexibly.

Mr Patel asked:

Child Protection conferences memberships should include both male and female participants to ensure an understanding and reflection of cultural and diversity needs. In my own personal experience of 2 Child protection conferences and multiple core group meetings, I have not come across one male in any of those meetings. Does Children's social care have systems in place to ensure at least 1 male is present in child protection conferences? If not, what plans do they have to ensure fair equality and diversity in child protection conferences?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

As outlined in my response to question 3, the purpose of a child protection conference is to ensure that an appropriate safety plan is put in place for the child so that the child's needs are met, based on the knowledge of those working with the family. All of our staff receive training in anti-discriminatory practice, and it is also a fundamental requirement within Social Work England's practice standards. It is not appropriate to put in place such a requirement when a male worker attending a conference may have no knowledge or involvement with the family. The focus of the conference is ensuring the child's needs are met (under the principles of the Children Act with a child's welfare being paramount), and they are safeguarded from any risks that adults may pose to them.

Mr Patel asked:

I understand there are five independent chairs for Child Protection Conferences. how many are males/females? What plans do you have to have more male independent chairs?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

We recruit on the basis of appropriate skills rather than gender, in line with current legislation. If a suitable male applicant applies for any role and has the required skills and knowledge and through the selection process they are the best candidate then they will be appointed and employed by us.

Mr Patel asked:

In the last three years how many warnings of the vexatious policy have

been given by Children's Social Care to parents who's children are under a child protection plan? Who makes this decision and how is this managed to ensure the vexatious policy is not misused by the council and the parent's views are able to be shared?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

In the last three years we have issued three warnings to families and placed restrictions on their contacts with us. The warnings have been issued due to a number of factors, including some or all of the following; the number of contacts, the tone of communication, the language used, and threats made to staff. The decisions have always been joint decisions between the service manager responsible for the case and the complaints manager, with oversight from Heads of Service and the Divisional Director. Such action is permitted under the statutory complaints guidance. This is managed by staff logging contacts both before and after the warnings are given to ensure the restrictions are proportionate. Any improvement can lead to the restrictions being lifted. Continued inappropriate contacts/communication will lead to the complainant being classed as vexatious.

The letter informing people that we are restricting their contacts always tells them that any complaints they make will be read but not necessarily responded to. This ensures that any 'legitimate' complaints are not missed as they would be put through the complaints process. It also allows parents to express their views.

Mr Patel asked a supplementary question:

If a warning of vexation is given to a parent and they have a valid complaint, how will that be responded to, and will it just get ignored?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

If the complaint is valid and has not already been made, it will be addressed and progressed through the stages of the complaints procedure.

Mr Patel asked:

According to FOI submitted in Nov 24, agency social workers are paid on average £5440/month, whereas directly employed staff in the same department are paid £3495/month. This is almost £2000/month/worker extra for agency workers and does not include agency fees etc. Just under 20% of staff in CIN, CASP and LAC are agency workers. What plans do the council have to recruit social workers to ensure public money is not overspent in agency staff?"

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

The council's approach to recruitment and retention is based on our ability to "Grow our Own" social work workforce due to the continuing national challenges in this area of work. This includes Social Work

Apprenticeships, the national Frontline programme that looks to attract graduates with high level degrees to undertake intensive workplace learning, overseas recruitment, and recruiting newly qualified social workers and providing them with learning and development opportunities so that they can complete there Assessed and Supported Year in Employment as required by Social Work England. We have also developed career progression pathways to strengthen our ability to retain staff. Agency workers are in certain circumstances necessary to cover absences through maternity leave and long-term sickness absence so that we can fulfil our statutory duties.

Mr Patel asked a supplementary question:

At what point would the agency Social Worker be offered a permanent post?

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help responded:

After a period of 20-30 weeks to ensure we are confident in their practice, we would engage any agency worker to ask if wanting to become a permanent member of staff.

114. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

115. UPDATE ON YOUTH SUMMIT

The Youth Representative presented an Update on the Youth Summit using the slides included with the reports pack. Key points to note were:

- Young people from Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland had taken part in October's Youth Summit.
- This was the first time that all of the participation groups had met together as one.
- The aim was to discuss Health and Social Care services and young people's user experiences.
- Themes were explored in group sessions and questions were formulated. The top 5 themes were:
 - Access to dentist appointments. Why weren't reminder alerts issued for regular check-ups?
 - Could there be improvements to Neurodiversity awareness?
 - Appointments with GPs, Schools and Councils left young people feeling 'unheard' and feeling were not taken into consideration.
 - There was a need to focus on 25-year-olds transitioning from SEND to provision. It was felt that this was an 'everything to nothing' situation.
 - Assistance was required in understanding information. Documents such as Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

should be easy to read.

- The young people had made pledges to go back to respective groups raising concerns in their own areas.
- Young people had signed up to plan the next summit.

The Chair welcomed questions and comments from the commission. Key points to note were:

- This could be the start of a more collaborative approach, perhaps with health care services too. Similar feedback such as feeling 'unheard' was coming back from people with health issues.
- Points raised would be useful for the Health Care Commission.
- Young people seeking safety from abroad might share the experiences raised.
- It would be useful to involve a cultural consideration when exploring issues with SEND and young people arriving in Leicester.
- Some of the points raised were being worked on currently. Dental Care, preparation for adult life and Neurodiversity awareness were all under consideration. More widely, use of language was being examined.
- There was an active project exploring use of accessible language in EHCPs.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted
- 2) That the video presented be shared to the commission
- 3) Further consideration to take place on young people from overseas arriving to live in Leicester.
- 4) To keep the commission updated with future plans
- 5) Communication tools to be examined

116. UPDATE ON CHILDREN FROM ABROAD SEEKING SAFETY

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report to provide an overview of children and young people who come to Leicester having arrived from abroad seeking safety.

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health, and Community Safety introduced the item, noting the following:

- Sensitivity of language had been considered and the young people arriving from abroad were now known as 'Children and Young People from Abroad Seeking Safety' rather than 'Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.' This was considered to be a more humanitarian term and was deemed to be more appropriate when supporting children experiencing trauma.

- Most young people arriving in Leicester were able to remain in the city. This differed to the situation for most other local authorities.
- The hard work of teams involved was acknowledged.

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help gave highlights from the report. Points to note were:

- There was a small increase in the numbers of children from abroad seeking safety. six additional children were now being looked after since the previous report came to scrutiny in June 2024.
- There was a slight increase (to 61) in the number of young adults aged 18-25 being supported by The Local Authority Leaving Care teams.
- There was an overwhelming majority of male young people being supported, with one female child within the Children Looked After Service. three female young people were supported by the leaving care team.
- The children and young people supported were largely of Afghan heritage, this was followed by those of Iranian and Syrian ethnicity, having predominantly Kurdish heritage.
- Pathways for children and young people arriving in Leicester were:
 - Spontaneous arrivals – such as those arriving on lorries.
 - The National Transfer Scheme – this had been created by central government to share responsibility for the number of children and young people across local authorities.
 - Those deemed by The Home Office to be of adult age and placed in adult accommodation (hotels) who were then referred to children's services due to concerns that they were not adults.
 - Sometimes arrangements took place with other local authorities, such as to reunite siblings who had been separated.
- Regarding placement options, children could be placed in foster care or children's residential homes. All young people under the age of 18 would have an allocated Social Worker.
- Those over the age of 18 were supported in semi-independent accommodation in the community. Assistance was given to access medical services such as dentists and opticians after an initial health assessment. Translation services were also provided.
- Support would be provided in attending Home Office appointments.
- Specialist provision provided included support from the Educational Psychology teams, support through creative arts, Leicester City in the Community football sessions, leisure passes, bus passes and support to maintain religious practices and faith.
- Considerations were made for those who were not awarded permanent asylum. Assessment time frames could impact on appeal rights for those reaching the age of 18 during decision making process.
- Support is given by the Red Cross where families had become separated.

- The Creative Journey Intervention was a safe space where adults could explore the arts. Projects were also in place with Bullfrog Arts.

The Chair invited questions and comments. Points to note were:

- There was not a set timescale for accommodating 18-year-olds in the city. The current housing crises could impact on matters. Those in dire need could receive funding for private lets but this was arranged on a need-by-need basis.
- There was constant dialogue nationally and locally to develop regional pools of Foster Carers for children from abroad seeking safety, with carers accessing additional trauma training.
- Age assessments were robust, due to the legal framework, challenges tended to be costly but there was a high level of confidence in the assessment process.
- Paragraph 3.16 of the report gave figures on age assessment outcomes, with 4 of the 7 assessments since January 2024 leading to an outcome of the young person being over the age of 18 years.
- It was vital in terms of safeguarding to ensure that placements of children and adults were done appropriately.
- The £2m received by the local authority in grant funding did not cover all expenditure. This was a matter which was petitioned for by The Local Government Association. An acceleration in claim processing times had helped matters.
- A challenge was presented with young people over the age of 18 who were unsuccessful at an age assessment appeal. They would not have the right to work in the UK and would not be able to claim housing benefit. However, under the Leaving Care Act, there was a responsibility of care, this led to strains on funding.
- Regarding Bullfrog Arts, Taiko drumming sessions were delivered as a means of stress relief.
- In terms of Ukrainian children, most were accompanied by family.
- Lessons learnt centred around incorporating local communities for trauma support. Collaboration work with other local authorities had included research on the experiences of children seeking safety on arrival in the UK and in other European countries. The voices of the children would be gathered to inform training.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) For further 6 monthly updates to come to scrutiny.
- 3) The proportions of 18+ and under 18's to be included in the next report.
- 4) For more information to come on trauma support provided by the Education Psychology service.

Councillor Dr Moore left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

117. PLACEMENT COSTS AND IMPOWER UPDATE

The Deputy City Mayor of Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the item.

It was noted that there had been a concern over the cost of bring in external consultants, so a limited time agreement had been put into place with the option to extend. It was noted that work could be developed and taken forward internally.

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education gave an overview of the work done with IMPOWER. Key points were:

- The value in care tool examined care skill requirements and associated costs.
- Appropriate placement of children relied on both elements.
- Some children were able to return to parents where cases of neglect had occurred previously, but parents had now developed necessary skills.
- The tool was utilized with two cohorts of children.
- Whilst there was a significant saving for the first cohort, the cost grew slightly for the second.
- There was an average saving of around £14k per week across the cohorts which was deemed to be a good return.
- Another advantage of the tool was having the ability to estimate costings for children first coming into social care and consider appropriate care delivery.
- The work with IMPOWER had discontinued but connections remained in place.

The Chair welcome questions and comments and the following was noted:

- The human element of the work was balanced with the financial aspect. Correct costing ensured that care needs were met.
- Functional Family Therapy care work was still in development.
- Increases in costs for children's social care were not due to increasing numbers of children. The problem came from the regulation of social care from a financial position.
- The value in care tool allowed for needs and costing to be assessed jointly. Conversations on appropriate care packages could then ensue. The goal was not to compromise on care.
- In terms of measuring success, every looked after child case was reviewed. Meetings took place with the young person to gather their views and ensure that their voice was heard.
- Checks were in place with external providers regarding both the care and cost elements.
- The Functional Family Therapy team enabled longitudinal follow up on

outcomes to take place at set ages. There was a success rate of over 90% in keeping children out of care 18 months after the end of support.

- All staff were trained in youth engagement and there was a 'child friendly' approach with reviews. Development was ongoing to increase confidence with this aspect of work.
- Each child who was not in contact with family had access to an independent visitor.

The Independent Visitor Service was recently nominated for a National Award.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted
- 2) For a 6 monthly report, including cover report, on the Family Therapy pilot.
- 3) Information on independent visitors would be sent to members.
- 4) For future reports to include more elements from the children's perspectives.

118. CHILDREN'S SERVICES: COST MITIGATION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report to provide an overview of the development and progress of the Children's Services Cost Mitigation Programme.

The Deputy City Mayor of Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the item noting the following:

- Internationally recruited staff had received a positive welcome from existing staff.
- A new children's home had opened in Aylestone, and a further home was to be completed in Braunstone by the Summer of 2025. Communications with the contractor had been highly successful, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of the children.
- The Deputy City Mayor of Social Care, Health and Community Safety recognised and commended the work of staff across the network of Leicester children's homes.

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education gave an overview of the report. Key points to note were:

- £2m had been allocated to Children's Services at the last budget. The various divisions had been successful in delivering within budget. Some surplus had been created.
- Around 3 posts had been lost, but historically these were NHS roles and

were likely best placed there. There was good rigour around vacancy management.

- Following the consultation on children's centres, information was awaited from Central Government surrounding models.
- Aspirations were to move towards more locality based social work teams. Updates would be coming to the commission regarding locality work with families.
- Multi-Systemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy had created a cost mitigation of £1.6m. Children had been able to remain at home with the support of their families.
- The numbers of children in the care of Leicester City had been reduced down from around 650 to 600. Many of these children had come from overseas.
- A Social Care Academy would be launched with Leicester universities to develop routes through education, leading to work in Social Care. More information on staffing and training would be coming to the commission.
- There was continued pressure on the High Needs Block. Demand for EHCPs was increasing. A change programme was upcoming.

The Chair invited the commission to raise questions and comments. Key points noted:

- A wide range of support was in place for Social Workers relocating from South Africa and Zimbabwe. This included a relocation allowance, assistance to secure accommodation, finding school places for dependants, training and regular catch ups with the Principal Social Worker. There had been work with local community groups and colleges to aid with the transition into the community.
- When assessing shared premises for children's services, it was vital to have an open process.
- Time frames for outcome decisions on children's centres were reliant on central government plans. Extra funding and resources would be available in the next financial year and a delivery project plan would be developed.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Commission would follow the progress of social work staffing and training.
- 3) For the Commission to be updated on work with families in the locality. A project plan would be required.

119. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26

As the reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme were related,

they were taken as one item.

The Director of Finance submitted a draft report proposing the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2025/26 and the Capital Programme for 2025/26.

Key points included:

- The medium-term financial outlook was the most severe ever known. The Council was in the same situation as many other local authorities who were facing difficulties balancing the financial budget, some of which had issued a Section 114 notice.
- The Council found itself in this position due to a period of austerity which had reduced the scope to make further savings.
- Recent cost pressures had not been matched by government funding. Additionally, cost pressures were affected by a high demand for social care and a rise in inflation.
- The Council were fortunate to have one-off monies available, however, following the Chancellor's national budget in October, more constraints were anticipated.
- The Government understood the situation that councils were in, however, it was thought that new funding would be modest and amount to a real-terms cut in 'unprotected services' including those provided by councils.
- The report showed action taken by the Council. The strategy was to balance the budget up to 2028. The strategy was based on forecasts and was aimed at maximising one-off resources.
- It was not expected that there would be any longer-term government plans until next year.
- Strand 1 of the Revenue Budget involved releasing one-off monies in order to buy time.
- Reductions in the Capital Programme involved spending less and raising funds selling property.
- The strategy was reliant on one-off money to get to the 2027/28 financial year, after which there would be a gap of £90m.
- With regard to the one-year Capital Programme, there was no certainty over government funding. The government would publish a spending review in spring.
- The Capital Programme was linked to getting to a stable revenue position.
- The budgets were balanced for the next three years. This was the best outlook at this point.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments. Key Points included:

- In response to concern raised that the detailed financial information was not adequately broken down into divisions and service areas, it was explained that since the reports went to all commissions, they focussed on the overall position. Additionally, in terms of reports focussing on children's services, it was ensured that financial implications were set out as clearly as possible. The need for a breakdown would be fed back.
- In response to a query on Personal Transport Plan, it was suggested that a lot could be saved through Personal Transport Plans as they were significantly cheaper. It was aimed to promote this option to parents by showing them the benefits.
- In response to a query about the fleet, it was not thought that there were any significant issues with the fleet at this point. It was being considered as to whether new routes could be taken by the buses in the fleet.
- In response to a further question about Personal Transport Plans and the impact on parents, it was explained that the Council had regular involvement in the parent and carer forum with SEND children. It was noted that in some cases the plans worked due to flexibility and choice. However, whilst they often worked for parents who wanted control over their time, for others it could feel like a burden.
- In response to further points raised on Personal Transport Plans, it was clarified that a basic mileage rate was provided and there could be negotiation beyond this around individual circumstances.
- Information would be sought as to whether the local safety schemes mentioned in the capital plan would include road safety schemes around schools.
- In response to a question regarding the big rise in capital expenditure on Children's Services from 2024/25 to 2025/26, it was explained that this was due to changes in government funding.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the report be brought to Overview Select Committee prior to Full Council.

120. WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Commission were invited to consider content of the work programme and were invited to make suggestions for additions as appropriate to be brought to future meetings.

It was confirmed that the issue of Children's Homes was already under consideration by the Commission.

The work programme was noted.

121. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair noted that Councillor Russell would be leaving the commission and gave thanks for her contributions.

The meeting concluded at: 20:02

Executive Decision SEND Transport

**Children and young people with SEND
Home to School / College Transport
Proposed Policies
2025/2026 – 2027/2028**

DRAFT Decision Report

Lead Member Briefing

Decision to be taken by: Cllr Pantling

Decision to be taken on: TBC

Lead director: Sophie Maltby, Director SEND and Education

Will need to be filled in for Governance Services to proceed with publishing the decision. DO NOT DELETE. Governance Services will delete once they are satisfied due diligence has been done and the report is ready to publish.

If this is a key decision has it appeared on the published forward plan	Yes
Anticipated date for decision (if required)	25 March 2025 (once scrutiny process concluded)
Date of relevant scrutiny commission – please detail name of commission(s)	Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee 25 February 2025
Date of paperwork entering public domain (note: if considered by scrutiny, this will be the scrutiny agenda publication date)	17 February 2025
Media considerations: Is a press release required? Will this be proactive or reactive?	Press release required. Proactive.
Please include details of other relevant meetings/briefings as part of decision/consultation process: This should include details of discussions with relevant stakeholders and/or ward councillors.	

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Maria Coulson, Strategic SEND Transport Lead
- Author contact details: maria.coulson@leicester.gov.uk. 0116 454 2230
- Report version number: 0.12

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Assistant City Mayor with responsibility for education is invited to approve two documents: (1) the Council's Updated Proposed SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy ("SEND Travel Policy") Appendix 1 for the academic years 2025-2026, and (2) the Council's Updated Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement ("Post-16 Statement") for the academic year 2025-2026 (Appendix 2). The Assistant City Mayor is also invited to note that the Council's Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy ("Mainstream Policy") for the academic year 2021-2022 (Appendix 3) will continue in force.
- 1.2 The documents set out the approach that the Council would adopt during the 2025-2026 academic year to the provision of transport assistance to certain individuals who attend schools, colleges or certain other institutions:
 - (1) children – i.e. children who are not yet of compulsory school age or who are of compulsory school age (broadly-speaking, children aged up to 16);
 - (2) young people – i.e. individuals who are of sixth form age (broadly-speaking, individuals aged between 16 and 18 and those aged 19 or over who are continuing on a course which they started before they turned 19);
 - (3) adults – i.e. individuals who are aged 18 or over, other than young people. This group includes young adults aged between 19 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities ("SEND") who have an Education Health and Care Plan ("an EHCP").
- 1.3 If approved, the documents would provide for a significant change to the extent to which, and the way in which, the Council provides transport assistance to young people and young adults who have SEND.
- 1.4 In this report, the phrase "transport assistance" includes actual transport (e.g. a taxi or a seat on a dedicated bus) and financial support for transport (i.e. a financial contribution towards the cost of transport by way of a personal transport budget ("a PTB")).
- 1.5 Under the current SEND Travel Policy (Appendix 4) and the current Post-16 Statement (Appendix 5), the provision for transport assistance that is currently made by the Council in practice is, generally in the 2024-2025 academic year, as follows:
 - (1) A council funded, internally provided bus journey. 574 all age passengers, 100 of those being young people and adults. Average bus route 16 miles within the City.
 - (2) A council, funded, internally arranged taxi journey. 814 all age passengers, 112 of those being young people and adults. These often travel much father distances (the furthest being 57 miles one way.
 - (3) Parents / Carers can elect to receive a PTB. A £500 annual payment and 45p/mile for 4 journeys per day. 211 all age passengers, 39 of those being young people and adults
- 1.6 As explained below, it is considered that it is no longer financially sustainable to maintain this level of provision, that it is necessary to find significant savings in the home-to-school/college transport

budget, and that it is therefore necessary significantly to reduce the nature and extent of the transport assistance provided to young people and young adults with SEND.

- 1.7 As a result, it is proposed that, during the 2025-2026 academic year (and potentially thereafter), generally young people and young adults with SEND would *not* be provided with any transport assistance, save in certain limited cases and where exceptional circumstances apply. Further, where transport assistance is provided, it would be provided in the form of a PTB only; the Council would no longer provide transport itself. It is considered that, in the circumstances facing the Council, this is the nature and extent of the provision for transport assistance that it is necessary for the Council to make.
- 1.8 It is recognised that the proposed changes are likely to be significantly disadvantageous for affected young people and young adults (and their families), and it is estimated that approximately 350 (and potentially up to 450) young people and young adults with SEND (and their families) are likely to be affected. The likely disadvantageous consequences of the proposed changes were reflected in the responses to the consultation on the proposed new SEND Travel Policy and Post-16 Statement, all of which opposed the changes.
- 1.9 Two potential alternative approaches are canvassed in section 4.8 below.
- 1.10 There is a statutory duty to publish the SEND Travel Policy and the Post-16 Statement on or before 31 May 2025. Accordingly, a decision as to what form the documents should take needs to be taken in good time to meet that deadline.

2 Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 The Assistant City Mayor is asked to consider the matters set out in this report and the Appendices. For the reasons set out, it is recommended that the Assistant City Mayor should:
 - (1) approve the SEND Travel Policy for the academic years 2025-2026 as set out in Appendix 1;
 - (2) approve the Post-16 Statement for the academic year 2025-2026 as set out in Appendix 2; and
 - (3) note that the Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy 2021-2022, as set out in Appendix 3, will continue in force.
- 2.2 By adopting the recommended policies, generally young people and young adults with SEND would *not* be provided with any transport assistance, save in certain limited cases and where exceptional circumstances apply. Further, where transport assistance is provided, it would be provided in the form of a PTB only; the Council would no longer provide transport itself.

3 Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 A citywide consultation was undertaken for eight weeks between 7 November 2024 and 2 January 2025, on citizen space. The Parent Carer Forum and a Parent Focus Group helped develop the consultation questions to support accessibility.
- 3.2 Consultation questions were shared with the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee for information, and extensive stakeholder engagement was implemented in line with

a communications plan (set out in Appendix 6). The information provided to consultees and the consultation questions are set out in Appendix 7.

- 3.3 The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee intends to scrutinise this matter on 25 February 2025.

4 Background and options with supporting evidence

4.1 The legislative background

- 4.1.1 The main relevant duties on the Council are provided for by the Education Act 1996 (“the Act”). In broad terms, the relevant duties are as follows.
- 4.1.2 Under s 15ZA of the Act, the Council is under a duty to secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of: (1) persons in its area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 (i.e. in effect, young people), and (2) persons in its area who are aged 19 or over and for whom an EHCP is maintained (i.e. in effect, young adults with SEND).
- 4.1.3 The Council’s duties in relation to children of compulsory school age are provided for by s 508B of and Schedule 35B to the Act, which impose a duty to make home-to-school travel arrangements for certain “eligible children”, including certain children with SEND, free of charge.
- 4.1.4 For completeness, it should be noted that, under s 508A of the Act, the Council has a discretionary power to make school travel arrangements in relation to a child who is not an eligible child.
- 4.1.5 In relation to young people (see paragraph 1.2(2) above), under ss 509AA and 509AB of the Act, the Council has a duty to prepare and publish for each academic year a transport policy statement which specifies the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise, and for the provision of financial assistance, that the Council considers it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of young people who are receiving education or training at: schools, an institution maintained by the Council which provides further or higher education, any further education institution, any 16-19 academy, or any other establishment at which the Council secures the provision of education or training under s 15ZA (together, “relevant institutions”). The transport policy statement must state the extent to which the arrangements specified in it include arrangements for facilitating the attendance at relevant institutions of disabled persons and persons with learning difficulties or disabilities (in effect, young people with SEND). As explained below, in this context, the key question that the Assistant City Mayor should consider is, in essence, what provision for transport assistance for young people c.
- 4.1.6 When considering this key question, the Assistant City Mayor must have regard to (amongst other things):
- (1) the needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
 - (2) the need to secure that persons in Leicester have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
 - (3) the requirements of s 15AZ in relation to persons of sixth form age;
 - (4) the distances and journey times between the homes of persons of sixth form age in Leicester and relevant institutions at which education or training suitable to their needs is provided;
 - (5) the cost of transport to the relevant institutions and of any alternative means of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education or training at them;
 - (6) the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (see Appendix 8).

Further guidance on certain of these matters is set out in paragraph 9 of the Secretary of State's guidance.

- 4.1.7 It is also necessary to consider the fact that, in considering whether or not it is necessary to make arrangements in relation to a particular young person or persons, the Council must have regard (amongst other things) to: (a) the nature of the route (or alternative routes) which the young person could reasonably be expected to take; and (b) any wish of the young person to attend a particular relevant institution on grounds of his or her religion or belief.
- 4.1.8 The Council is required to put into effect the arrangements specified in its transport policy statement for persons of sixth form age under s 509AA.
- 4.1.9 The Secretary of State's guidance explains that the overall intention of the duties in relation to young adults is to ensure that persons of sixth form age are able to access the education and training of their choice and, if support for access is requested, it will be assessed and provided where necessary (see para 6).
- 4.1.10 In relation to adults, under ss 508F and 508G of the Act, the Council has a duty to make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as it considers necessary for the purposes of:
- (1) facilitating the attendance of adults (including young adults with EHCPs) receiving education at institutions which are maintained or assisted by the Council and which provide further or higher education, or at institutions in the further education sector; and
 - (2) facilitating the attendance of young adults with EHCPs receiving education or training at institutions outside the further and higher education sector in cases in which the Council has secured the relevant education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation.
- 4.1.11 Any transport provided pursuant to such arrangements must be provided free of charge.
- 4.1.12 In considering what arrangements it is necessary to make for young adults with EHCPs, the Assistant City Mayor must have regard (amongst other things) to what the Council is required to do under s 15ZA in relation to such young adults. It is also necessary to consider the fact that, in considering whether or not it is necessary to make arrangements in relation to a particular adult, the Council must have regard (amongst other things) to the nature of the route (or alternative routes) which the person could reasonably be expected to take
- 4.1.13 In addition, the Council has a discretionary power to pay all or part of the reasonable travelling expenses of a young adult who receives education at a relevant institution but for whom no transport arrangements are made. The Council has a duty to prepare and publish for each academic year a transport policy statement which specifies the transport or other arrangements which will be made, and the travelling expenses which be paid, in relation to that year.
- 4.1.14 As explained below, in this context, the key question that the Assistant City Mayor should consider is, in essence, what provision for transport for young adults it is necessary or appropriate to make.
- 4.1.15 When deciding on what arrangements should be made, and on the contents of a transport policy statement, the Assistant City Mayor must have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (see Appendix 8). The Secretary of State's guidance explains that the overall intention of the duties in relation adults is to ensure that those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation are able to undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday, in order to help them move towards more independent living (see para 11).
- 4.1.16 The functions referred to above should be exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (see s 175 of the Education Act 2002).

4.1.17 In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must “have due regard”, when making decisions, to the need to meet the following aims of our Public Sector Equality Duty

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

4.1.1. The Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 10) surrounding this decision commenced on 28 June 2024. The rights of those with protected characteristics has been considered throughout every stage, including pre-consultation and during the drafting of the proposed policies.

4.1.2. Protected groups under the public sector equality duty are characterised by age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4.1.3. When making decisions, the Council (or decision maker, in this instance the Lead Member) must be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, it must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the recommendation; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.

4.1.4. As further reflected in the Equalities Impact Assessment, the council understands the current climate and the impact on young people with SEND. It remains in the best interests of all who can travel independently to learn to do so, and that synchronises with the Preparing for Adulthood Strategy.

4.2 Current transport and travel support for young people and young adults with SEND

4.2.1 The Council's current approach to the provision of transport and travel support, and the transport policy statements required by the Act, are set out in three documents:

- the Mainstream Policy for the academic year 2021/2022 (Appendix 1),
- the SEND Travel Policy for the academic year 2021/2022 (Appendix 4), and
- the Post-16 Statement for the academic year 2024/2025 (Appendix 5).

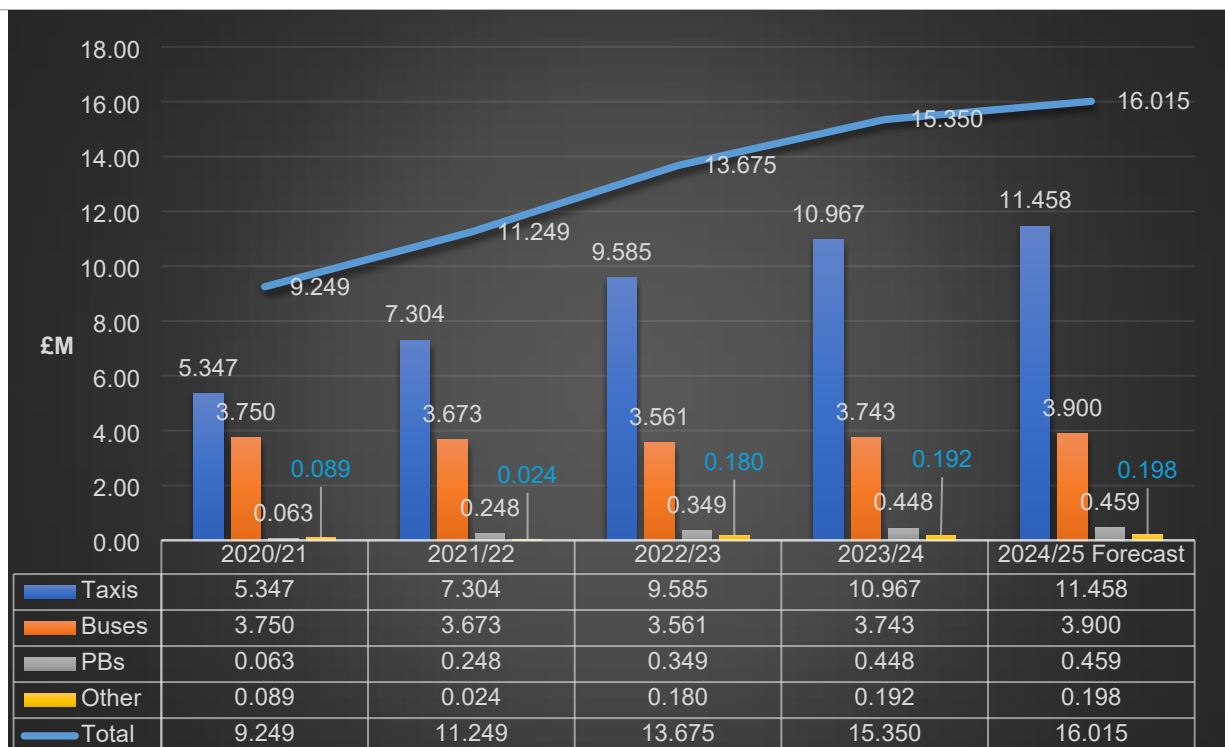
4.2.2 In relation to children of compulsory school age who do not have SEND, the Mainstream Policy sets out what the Council provides by way of travel assistance. Under that policy, eligible children are provided with bus passes at no cost to them or their families. This is supported by the [‘Choose how you move’](#) travel planning resources.

4.2.3 In relation to children of compulsory school age who have SEND, the Council's current approach is set out in the SEND Travel Policy for the academic year 2021-2022 (which has been rolled over to the current academic year) and involves an analysis of individual needs to decide what transport assistance should be provided. Such transport assistance might for example take the form of the provision of a bus pass, a taxi, a seat on a dedicated bus (which might be specially adapted), or the provision of a PTB. A PTB is a cash payment to a parent or carer comprising a fixed sum of £500 per annum plus a rate of 45 pence per mile, on the basis of four journeys (i.e. two journeys each way to and from school) per day.

- 4.2.4 The SEND Travel Policy for the academic year 2021-2022 also sets out the provision that will be made for young persons with SEND (see pages 7-9) and the provision that will be made for young adults with SEND (see page 9).
- 4.2.5 In relation to young persons with SEND, the SEND Travel Policy explains that the Council may provide travel assistance to a young person who (a) is resident in Leicester, (b) started his or her course prior to his or her 19th birthday, (c) attends the nearest appropriate institution, (d) attends an institution which is more than 3 miles' walking distance from the young person's home (unless the route is unsafe or the young person has a disability which impacts on his or her ability to walk it), and (e) attends a full-time, publicly-funded course. The SEND Travel Policy also specifies certain factors which the Council takes into account when assessing whether a young person is eligible for travel assistance: (a) whether the young person has additional needs or a disability which gives rise to a serious risk of danger to the young person or others, (b) whether the young person has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised facilities (such as a wheelchair-accessible vehicle), (c) whether the young person might require medical or personal care during the journey, (d) the complexity of the journey, and (e) whether travel is an essential requirement to fulfil the learning outcomes identified in the young person's EHC Plan.
- 4.2.6 In practice, this means that young persons with SEND receive the same support as section 4.2.3.
- 4.2.7 In relation to young adults with SEND, the SEND Travel Policy explains that the Council will consider providing travel assistance for young adults with SEND only where: (a) the Council considers it necessary to facilitate the attendance of a young adult at an institution which provides further education and which is maintained or assisted by a local authority, or other institutions within the further education sector; or (b) where the Council has secured the provision of education or training outside the further education sector and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training, and the Council considers that the provision of travel assistance is necessary to facilitate the learner's attendance.
- 4.2.8 The Post-16 Statement for the 2024-2025 academic year states as follows (see page 10):
 "For those young people with special educational needs, who have an ECHP, which indicates a transport need, they will continue to receive assistance with transport between the ages of 16 and 25. The local authority has a discretionary power to provide transport assistance to those over compulsory school age."
- 4.2.9 In practice, young adults with SEND receive the same support as compulsory school age children with SEND in section 4.2.3.
- 4.2.10 The recommended policies don't make any changes to the provision for transport assistance which is made for children or young people of compulsory schools age who do not have SEND.
- 4.2.11 The recommended policies do mean that young adults with SEND would be treated the same as young adults of post 16 education age, namely they would be impacted by the change to reduce transport assistance available to them.

4.3 The cost of current and future travel assistance

- 4.3.1 Over recent years, the total cost to the Council of providing transport assistance to all children, young people and young adults with SEND has grown year-on-year, as illustrated by the following chart.



- 4.3.2 The cost for post-16 the 2023-2024 financial year was in the region of £1.94 million (approximately 13% of the total), and the cost for the current financial year is projected to be in the region of £2.34 million (approximately 15% of the total), an increase of £400,000 (approximately 21%).
- 4.3.3 It should be noted that the projected cost for the current academic year is substantially below that which was originally projected; in January 2024, it was projected that the cost for the current year would be in the region of £4 million. It is understood that the difference between the original and the current projected costs is attributable to: (a) a reduction in the costs of taxis that resulted from a new procurement exercise and a contract re-design; (b) a fall in applications for transport assistance, which might have been caused by confusion over who would be eligible for transport assistance; (c) improvements in the processing of applications and appeals; and (d) improvements in the quality of the data. However, it is not expected that any similar diminution in projected costs will or could be achieved in future years.
- 4.3.4 Due to the changes in projections consultees may have been provided with what are now thought to be overly pessimistic figures. It should be noted that projections do not factor in demand and are based on those children and young people within the system who currently receive transport assistance.
- 4.3.5 During the current financial year, it is projected that the transport assistance which is being provided to young persons with SEND and young adults with SEND will break down as follows:
 (1) 100 young people and young adults were provided with a seat on a dedicated bus, at a cost of approximately £0.68 million.
 (2) 112 young people and young adults were provided with a taxi, at a cost of approximately £1.57 million.
 (3) 39 young persons and young adults were provided with a personal transport budget, at a cost of approximately £0.09 million.
- 4.3.6 On current projections (which are predicated on a conservative assumption that there will be no additional demand beyond that currently in the system), if there is no change in the Council's approach, it is anticipated that in the 2025-2026 academic year the cost of the provision of transport assistance to young people with SEND and young adults with SEND will increase by

£1.13 million (approximately 48%) to approximately £3.47 million (representing approximately 22% of the total cost of transport assistance for individuals with SEND). It is anticipated that this cost would break down as follows:

(1) 157 young people and young adults would be provided with a seat on a dedicated bus, at a cost of approximately £1.07 million.

(2) 151 young people and young adults would be provided with a taxi, at a cost of approximately £2.28 million.

(3) 55 young persons and young adults would be provided with a personal transport budget, at a cost of approximately £0.12 million.

- 4.3.7 The position in relation to funding transport support for all individuals with SEND (i.e. children, young people and young adults) during the 2024-2025 financial year is projected to be as follows:

Funding source	2024/25 cost
Total projected service cost	£16,015,000
Dedicated schools grant (DSG) contribution	£360,000
Income from external clients	£46,000
Net cost	£15,609,000

- 4.3.8 Accordingly, the net cost of transport support for all individuals with SEND for the 2024-2025 financial year is projected to be £1 million over budget.

- 4.3.9 Work has taken place to reduce pressure on budgets for transport of children with education, health and care plans, including proposals to change the policy for post 16 children (subject to consultation) and to encourage the use of personal transport plans. Demand for transport is already falling for post 16 children, but costs and demand continues to rise for other children. A pressure of £0.8m is built into the 2025/26 budget.

4.4 The proposed policy – post 16 and above

- 4.4.1. It is proposed to make significant changes to the provision for travel assistance which is made for young persons and young adults with SEND. The proposal is that the Council would during the 2025-2026 academic year (and potentially thereafter) adopt the same approach to both young people and young adults with SEND. In summary:

- (1) only a very limited category of young persons and young adults with SEND would be potentially eligible for travel assistance, i.e. only young persons and young adults who have “complex” SEND needs (as defined);
 - (2) potentially eligible young persons and young adults would be provided with travel assistance only in very limited “exceptional circumstances”; and
 - (3) travel assistance would be provided in the form of a PTB only.
- Each of these points is explained in more detail below.

- 4.4.2. As also explained below, the proposed changes are likely significantly to reduce the numbers of young persons and young adults with SEND who receive travel assistance from the Council. In effect, the changes would involve the withdrawal of travel assistance from the vast majority of

young persons and young adults with SEND who currently receive it, and significantly reduced numbers receiving travel assistance in the future. Further, in those few cases in which travel assistance would continue to be provided, the proposed changes would involve the withdrawal of transport (in the form of, for example, taxis or seats on a dedicated bus) and the provision of a PTB instead.

4.4.3. As to the categories of young people and young adults with SEND who would potentially be eligible for transport assistance, it is proposed that they would be limited to young people and young adults who meet each of the following criteria:

- (1) he or she is resident in Leicester;
- (2) he or she started his or her current programme of education or training proper to his or her 19th birthday;
- (3) he or she has “complex SEND needs” (see below);
- (4) his or her placement is specified in his or her EHC Plan;
- (5) he or she is attending the nearest appropriate education or training provider;
- (6) either:
 - (a) he or she lives more than 3 miles’ walking distance from the education or training provider, or
 - (b) if he or she does live 3 miles’ walking distance or less from the education or training provider, he or she is unable to walk too and from the education or training provider because of he or she has a disability or because the walking route is unsafe; and
- (7) his or her course is full-time (i.e. at least 540 study hours per year) and publicly-funded.

4.4.4. The rationale for each of the above is:

- (1) so that Leicester resources benefit Leicester residents.
- (2) the law states this must be factored into consideration;
- (3) and (4) are because the council must ensure that limited financial resources support those most in need;
- (5) if a third party chose another setting to meet need it is deemed to be reasonable that they would be accountable for transport;
- (6) mirrors statutory guidance for all ages
- (7) ensures that resources are appropriately targeted to support progression

4.4.5. It is proposed that a young person or young adult would be treated as having “complex SEND needs” only where one or more of the following apply:

- (1) the young person/adult has a diagnosed terminal illness which has a severe impact on his or her current physical and/or mental health and which is likely to significantly reduce his life expectancy; and/or
- (2) when accompanied, the young person/adult’s additional needs or disability places him or her or others at a severe and serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school; and/or
- (3) the young person/adult has a mobility difficulty which requires the provision of specialised seating or a specialised vehicle (e.g. a vehicle with tail-lift access) which is not available to him or her (including on public transport where that has to be relied upon); and/or
- (4) the young person/adult is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school.

4.4.6. As stated in the Draft Revenue Budget Report for 2025/2026 (page 2, section 2.1):

“As members will be aware, the medium-term financial outlook is the most severe we have ever known. Like many authorities, we face increasing difficulties in being able to balance our budget. Some authorities have already reached this position and been forced to issue a formal report under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. In previous years, we have used a “managed reserves policy”, by which specific reserves have been set aside to support budgets and buy us time to make cuts. The available resources for this are rapidly running out.”

- 4.4.7. With further reference to the financial reasons for necessary change the report continues (s4.9 on page 6):

“We have reached a stage where any further cuts are bound to be painful and leave discretionary services stretched to the limit. This is what we are now compelled to contemplate.”

- 4.4.8. Post 16 SEND transport is a discretionary service. It may be asked whether this service could be subsidised from another fund elsewhere in the council, the answer is that there is no other money available to do that.
- 4.4.9. The council has a reported financial shortfall of £47m in 25/26 rising to £90m in 2027/2028. Statutory services cannot be cut, and all discretionary services are being looked at. The council has a discretion surrounding how it delivers post 16 and above SEND transport support.

- (1) the needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
- (2) the need to secure that persons in Leicester have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
- (3) the requirements of s 15AZ in relation to persons of sixth form age;
- (4) the distances and journey times between the homes of persons of sixth form age in Leicester and relevant institutions at which education or training suitable to their needs is provided;
- (5) the cost of transport to the relevant institutions and of any alternative means of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education or training at them;
- (6) the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (see Appendix 8).

- 4.4.10. It is well documented that the council planned to implement the post 16 changes to transport assistance in the 2024-2025 academic year. It was intended to adopt a need based, holistic analysis to each case rather than be prescriptive. Because that was the approach, parents / carers were invited to provide information to explain why transport should be retained. A panel of officers analysed cross service information and expertise to determine the level of difficulty for young people and families. Following analysis of those situations the definition in section 4.4.11 was developed.

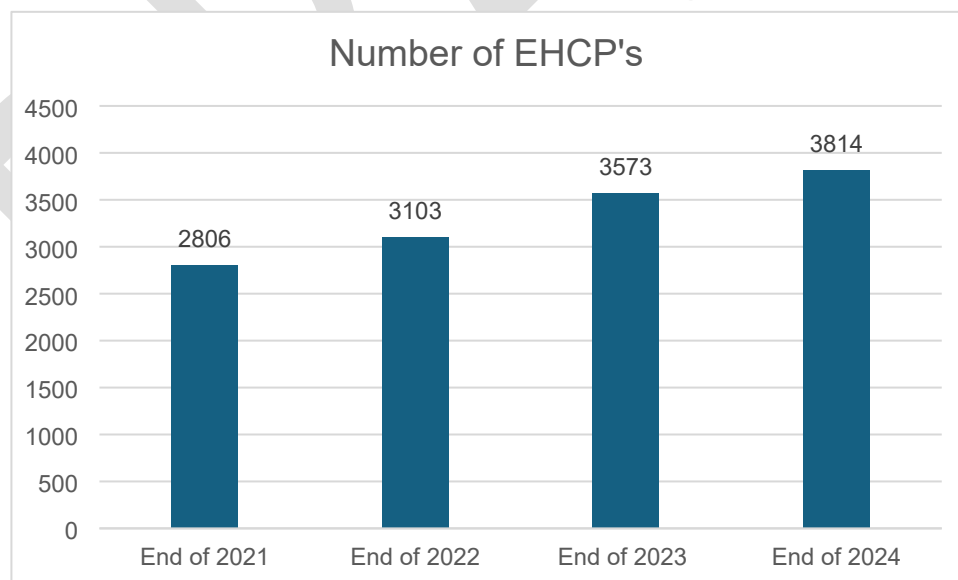
- 4.4.11. As to the “exceptional circumstances” in which a potentially eligible young person or young adult would be provided with transport assistance, it is not proposed to set out an exhaustive definition of exceptional circumstances. However, the following examples of what are likely to constitute exceptional circumstances are proposed.

(1) The young person/adult missed a significant majority of year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that he or she will repeat that year in full.

(2) The placement named by the Council is a “considerable distance” from the young person/adult’s home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a parental preference; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person/adult’s needs; and, taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person/adult’s parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

(3) The young person/adult's parents or carers have at least one other child (i.e. aged under 18) who has an EHC Plan and who attends an institution which is different to that attended by the young/person adult, and that child (or children)

- 4.4.12. For the same reason as 4.4.10 above the first 2 exceptional circumstances criteria were developed.
- 4.4.13. The third example of an exceptional circumstance has been added as a result of responses received during the consultation exercise.
- 4.4.14. The proposed policies detail the arrangements that the council consider it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of young people and young adults in education and training. In particular the following considerations have been made:
- 4.4.15. "the needs for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made".
- There is a good range of provision for children, young people and adult learners in Leicester City.
 - Our aspiration is to reduce travel and for young people and adult learners to be connected to their local communities, the council recognises that friendships developed in education settings plays a significant part in developing those community ties. The proposed policies may mean that young people/adults choose settings more locally to them and succeed in making those vital human connections.
 - Leicester was arguably impacted more severely than any other City by Covid. It cannot be determined with certainty that has had a correlation on children with SEND but the council's Special Education Service has recorded the following data:



- The rise is attributed to an increase in Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs, speech, language and communication needs including autism.
- These figures do not factor in those who are supported by reasonable adjustments at the SEND support level within schools.

- Building confidence in the community is not just about preparing for adulthood (which is critical for success and happiness in the future) but enjoying childhood. It is vital for the future of the City that it's children and young people feel confident and able to enjoy and navigate their surroundings.
- d) Travelling to school is part of developing independence, for young people usually develops around Year 7 when they move into Secondary School.
- e) The council aims for children, young people and adults with SEND, to maximise independence. For this reason it considers it necessary to divert limited non-discretionary resources to ensure as much support as possible is available to promoting the above aims.
- f) Currently 55 young people and adults travel out of Leicester City by council funded taxi for education, 4 of them travel beyond Leicestershire. They may be able to find educational placements locally that would be more beneficial to them.
- g) The council has to ensure it can sufficiently meet the likely increasing travel assistance needs of children, who have to attend school and it cannot afford to do that with the current levels of discretionary spend on young person/adult travel assistance.
- h) The council has continued providing an increased level of transport assistance to young people and adults when compared to many other local authorities
- i) The definition has been drafted deliberately narrow to ensure the support is targeted to those with the most complex needs - e.g the group of young people and adults who would not be able to attend without support.

4.4.16. The council needs to secure that persons in Leicester have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;

- a) There is a range of provision within Leicester to support choices that are available to meet needs. It may be that some young people may not be able to attend a course/an institution specified on their EHCP in order to meet their educational needs. Where this happens, EHCP reviews can take place to ensure alternate options are found.
- b) The farthest distance that a child travels is 57 miles one way, for young people/ adults it is 33 miles.
- c) There are good travel resources in Leicester, such as concessionary travel, school buses, 16 to 19 bursaries. Leicester has a good network of cycle lanes that young people and adults who are able can use.

4.4.17. The council needs to consider the distances and journey times between the homes of persons of sixth form age in Leicester.

- a) For these purposes, the policy proposes that "considerable distance" is defined as a journey time of 75 minutes or more (including time to walk to any pickup point), calculated using the most effective means of transport available (provided that, if the most effective means of transport is public transport, no more than two changes are required).
- b) This is in line with reasonable journey time within the statutory guidance for younger children.

4.4.18. How the council has considered the cost of transport to the relevant institutions and of any alternative means of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education or training at them, for this reason a personal transport budget is available in exceptional circumstances to support those journeys where there is a potentially, unavoidable high cost.

- a) Of the young people/ adults impacted by the proposed policy 55 attend education settings within Leicester City
- b) In some instances the public transport options provide affordable solutions
- c) The PTB has been developed to provide financial support in the most complex cases. It may not be the case that a PTB will fully cover the cost of travel but it is intended to contribute

towards it. There may be other financial support available as detailed in the Post 16 Statement.

4.4.19. It is proposed that the following examples of what (taken in isolation) are unlikely to constitute exceptional circumstances:

- (1) The young person/adult is has a single parent/carer.
- (2) The young person/adult's parent(s) or carer(s) work.
- (3) The young person/adult's parent(s) or carer(s) have another child or young person for whom they are or who attends a different school (subject to point (3) under paragraph 4.4.11 above)
- (4) The young person/adult attends an independent school which is outside the Council's area.
- (5) The young person/adult's parent(s) or carer(s) are unable to drive or do not have access to a car.
- (6) The young person/adult uses a wheelchair.

4.4.20. The reason for the above in 4.4.19 is because, in isolation they do not mean that a young person cannot travel independently, and other options may be available which mean that it is reasonable to parents/carers to provide support.

4.4.21. It is proposed that, where it is decided that a young person or young adult with SEND is eligible for transport assistance, a PTB will be offered. It is proposed to be provided to parents / carers, legal guardians and young adults themselves where they have capacity to manage finances.

4.4.22. A PTB is deemed necessary to provide affordable support to mitigate hardship. It also enables young people and families to make choices about how it is spent.

4.4.23. Should the changes set out above be implemented as per the recommended policy, it is projected that in the 2025-2026 academic year the cost of the provision of transport assistance to young people with SEND and young adults with SEND would reduce by £3.01 million to approximately £0.46 million (representing approximately 3% of the total projected budget of transport assistance for individuals with SEND). It is anticipated that no young people or young adults with SEND would be provided with a seat on a dedicated bus or a taxi, reducing the costs of that transport assistance to zero. It has been assumed that 196 young people/young adults would be provided with a PTB, at a total cost of some £0.46 million.

4.4.24. The assumed figure of 196 young people/young adults is based on a broad, anecdotal assessment based on insights from complaints and appeals in advance of the 2024/2025 changes, that approximately 50% of young people/young adults who would, if the current approach were maintained, qualify for transport assistance would be eligible for transport assistance under the new approach. The cost was calculated on the basis that cost for each eligible young person/young adult would be equivalent to the current average cost per learner regardless of age, it is acknowledged that data quality has been and remains a risk.

4.4.25. Although the SEND Travel policy is for longer than the next academic year it doesn't mean that the Post 16 Statement is pre-determined because the Post 16 Statement element of the SEND Travel Policy is deemed to be a separate component reviewed annually. This is made clear by an additional statement in the SEND Travel policy to that effect

4.5 The proposed policy – compulsory school age

- 4.4.26. As with those in post 16 and above education, the requirement to review transport arrangements during Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) reviews is removed unless travel is a learning outcome. This is to reflect the fact that the travel support application process is generally separate from EHCP reviews. The following wording is omitted from the proposed draft policies under this option:

Annual Review

When a Personal Travel Budget or SEND travel is agreed for a child with a statement of special educational needs or an EHCP, travel arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis at the statement/plan review meeting. Parents / carers will be expected to sign a declaration agreeing to the terms and conditions of the agreement.

- 4.4.27. There is an amendment to the wording around travel training. Before it said that if unsuccessful, travel support would continue. It has now been amended to say that will only happen if the child/young person is eligible.
- 4.4.28. Appendix 1, page 14, section 8.2 includes the italicised words below
- “If they are not ready or suitable for training, a future review date will be set, and they will continue to be provided with travel assistance if they remain eligible.”*
- 4.4.29. In some instances, young people who are over 16 may not be able to travel independently but they may not be eligible for council funded SEND transport support. In many of these more complex cases, there is likely to be entitlement to other support due to the level of need.
- 4.4.30. It is proposed that for all ages, where children and young people are eligible and it would meet the need, free travel may be by bus pass and a parent may be offered a bus pass to accompany their child. Appendix 1, page 14, section 8.3.
- 4.4.31. The logic is that this helps get the young person used to the journey with the parent, it is more cost effective and more environmentally friendly.
- 4.4.32. It is proposed that, for all ages in the travel policy there is improved clarity about multiple addresses. The proposed policy (Appendix 1, page 17, section 9.4) explains that:

If a pupil has more than one place that may be considered a home address, parents/carers must nominate a primary address for travel purposes.

Home addresses should be for primary carers and travel to the homes of extended family members will not usually be considered a home address.

The council acknowledges that families need flexible arrangements and will support travel to multiple addresses where it is specifically highlighted and agreed at the point of application. In year arrangements for changes will require a new application.

Where there are multiple home addresses being requested the home address closest to the child or young person's school or college will be considered the primary home address. That primary home address will be used to determine eligibility.

The council will not generally support applications which mean that travel to multiple addresses will result in increased journey time or cost of provision. Personal Transport Budgets may be the best option to meet need in these situations.

- 4.4.33. In the past the council has not consistently withdrawn support due to challenging behaviours. It is intended that this is adopted going forward as failure to do so enables poor behaviours and is harmful to children, young people and those providing transport.
- 4.4.34. In some cases, the council may investigate whether transport is being correctly provided, this could be mid-year. If a claim is proven to be ineligible transport could be withdrawn with 4 weeks' notice.
- 4.4.35. If travel is temporarily or permanently withdrawn for behavioural reasons parents would be responsible for getting their children to school and for any costs incurred.
- 4.4.36. It is proposed that travel to or from pick up points may take place rather than a door-to-door service.

4.6 Impact of the proposed policies

- 4.6.1 The decision to implement the proposed policies results in the significant change to post 16 and above SEND Transport provision detailed previously.
- 4.6.2 It should be clearly highlighted that, based on projected estimates 151 young people with SEND who currently receive council funded taxis to take them to school and college, would not receive that service in 2025/2026. Additionally, 157 of the young people now supported by journeys using the in-house council bus service would also not receive those journeys next academic year. 55 of those students currently receiving personal transport budget support are also likely to be impacted.
- 4.6.3 However, based on projected estimates, 196 young people might be eligible to receive personal transport budget support. This assumes that 50% of the post 16 and above cohort would be eligible, plus those assumed to be eligible previously under option 2.
- 4.6.4 The respondents to the consultation told the council that if this option were decided upon, families would be impacted severely. 88% of adults felt the proposed policies were a bad idea and 81% of children and young people thought the same.
- 4.6.5 29% of adults said their child will not be able to continue in education.
- 4.6.6 If this change is implemented there is a risk that some young people may stop attending education and possibly become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). This is proven to affect their future life chances.
- 4.6.7 If any change is implemented, the timeframe surrounding the proposed policies means that young people could have started courses and may now need to find alternate transport arrangements in some circumstances.
- 4.6.8 If this change is implemented there is a risk that there will be increased pressure on parents / carers and an adverse impact on family's lives. 29% of adults and 25% of children and young people said 'there would be too much pressure on me'.
- 4.6.9 The council has tried to mitigate these risks by offering Independent Travel Training and has a good track record of providing this valuable training to schools / colleges and parents / carers. For those who can travel independently it is a significant positive within the draft policies that services continue to encourage that.

4.6.10 Due to this, in addition to general eligibility criteria greater clarity surrounding 'exceptional circumstances' has been developed. However, it remains the case that in the vast majority of cases under the proposed policy, post 16 SEND transport will not be provided for the 2025/2026 academic year onward.

4.6.11 Summary financial analysis of deciding upon the consulted upon policies and reducing the service as per the proposed policies that were consulted upon is as below:

2025/26 Projected P16 Taxi costs	2025/26 Projected P16 Internal bus costs	2025/26 Projected PTB costs	Potential cost	Projected cost control
£0	£0	£40,497	£40,497	£3,428,131

4.6.12 For the purposes of this calculation the top 5% of the most expensive, post 16 taxi journeys were assumed to most likely be representative of journeys that would meet the very limited exceptional circumstances criteria. Average costs per pupil per annum were used for calculation purposes.

4.6.13 The highest cost journeys are typically those where young people have to travel farthest, this is often also due to the level of need that they have.

4.7 The consultation response to the proposed policies

4.4.37. The policies that were consulted upon are contained in Appendix 10 (Travel policy) and Appendix 11 (Post 16 Statement)

4.4.38. The consultation exercise was carried out by means of online survey that was publicised as per the communications plan (Appendix 6). Paper copies of the survey were available but were not requested.

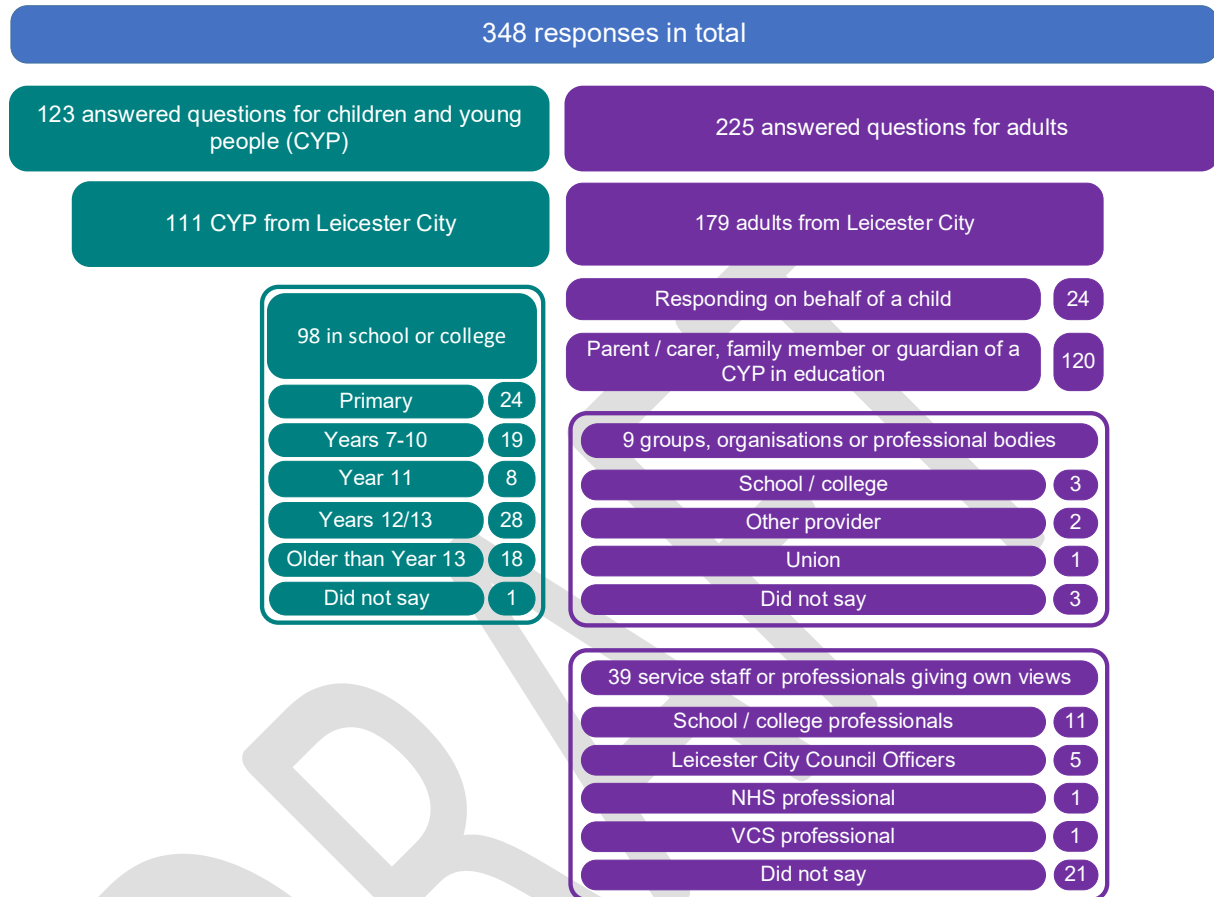
4.4.39. Appendix 12 contains a quantitative data summary of the consultation responses. Appendix 13 contains comments received by Leicester Children and Young People. Appendix 14 contains comments received by adults who may be from Leicester

4.4.40. The Assistant City Mayor is asked to read Appendices 12 – 14.

4.4.41. A summary of the responses received is set out below. The summary focuses on the themes that emerged from comments from respondents who are resident in Leicester, but materially similar themes emerged from the comments from respondents who are resident elsewhere.

4.4.42. Figure 1. sets out a breakdown of the respondents to the consultation:

Figure 1.



4.4.43. The following is a summary of the comments made by young people with SEND from Leicester City.

- The statements describe the challenges faced by students with disabilities, particularly concerning transport to school and college. Many of the students depend on special transport services because of their disabilities, which include autism, anxiety, and other severe conditions, making it unsafe or impossible for them to travel independently. The loss of this transport support would severely impact their education, mental health, and overall well-being.
- Parents of these students are also under significant strain, as they often cannot take on the responsibility of transporting their children, because of work commitments, financial limitations, or physical disabilities. The financial burden of alternative transport options, such as taxis, would be difficult to bear. These changes would affect the whole family, increasing stress and creating barriers to education.
- The individuals express feelings of abandonment by local authorities, frustration with government policies, and concern about the future if transport

support is cut. They emphasise the importance of this assistance for students' safety, education, and mental health, calling for continued support and for more funding to be allocated to education and transport services for special needs students. They also highlight that not having transport could lead to isolation, worsened mental health, and a loss of educational opportunities.

- The main call is to continue providing accessible transport services for students with special needs, to ensure they can access education and maintain their safety, independence, and social connections.

4.4.44. The following is a summary of the comments made by parents of young people with SEND (Year 11 upward), from Leicester City who say that they will be affected by the proposed policy.

The responses reflect widespread concern over proposed changes to transport services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The key issues include:

1. **Education Access:** Reliable transport is crucial for children with SEND to attend school or college. Without it, they may face barriers to education, missing school / college or essential services.
2. **Financial and Emotional Stress:** Many families already struggle financially and emotionally to care for their disabled children. Removing transport services would add to this burden, potentially forcing parents to reduce work hours, lose / change jobs, or incur high costs for private transport.
3. **Safety and Independence:** Public transport can be unsafe for children with disabilities, including physical disabilities, autism, or anxiety. Parents highlight the importance of safe, structured transport options to help children build independence while minimising anxiety.
4. **Legal and Human Rights:** Some responses argue that removing transport services could violate children's rights to education and protection from discrimination, especially for those who cannot travel independently.
5. **Requests for Continued Support:** Parents urge local councils to continue providing tailored transport services for SEND students, considering each child's unique needs and the serious consequences families face without this support.
6. **Specific Needs of Children with Complex Disabilities:** For children with autism or severe learning disabilities, public transport is often not an option. The removal of transport services could increase anxiety, disrupt education, and put children at risk.
7. **Inadequate Alternatives:** Many families report a lack of suitable alternatives, particularly for children with complex needs. Without local authority transport, children may miss out on education, requiring more care and support.
8. **Financial Burden on Low-Income Families:** The policy could disproportionately affect low-income families who cannot afford alternative transport. Some families face the prospect of losing jobs or incurring high costs to arrange suitable transport.
9. **Concerns Over Fairness and Discrimination:** The policy is criticised for failing to consider neurodiverse children or those with mental health challenges, potentially leading to discrimination and unequal access to education.

10. Long-Term Consequences: The removal of transport services could have long-term negative effects, including limited education and employment opportunities, and increased reliance on social care and benefits.

Overall, parents are calling for a more flexible, individualised approach to transport support, ensuring that children with SEND have equal opportunities for education, safety, and social development. They argue that the proposed changes could lead to further financial strain on families and increased costs for public services in the long run.

4.4.45. The comments from these parents / carers most affected are representative of the significant majority of adults comments. Respondents generally did not support the policy changes, although 56% of adults felt that the policies were clear.

4.8 Alternatives to the proposed approach

4.8.1 If the decision was taken to continue with the current arrangements, it would mean that the council may continue to achieve its statutory equality objectives set out in s 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty) at the same level. There would be no change to provision or costs of delivery.

4.8.2 Under this option, as in the past, the local authority discharges its statutory duty by adopting the same approach for all children and young people with SEND regardless of age, including those who are young adults between 19 and 25 years old. Transport support has been provided by the council.

4.8.3 A decision could be made to implement the exact policies that were consulted upon. This is essentially the same as the proposed policy in this report for the same reasons in s 4.4 but excluding the additional exceptional criteria that was developed in response to the consultation.

4.8.4 This would result in a projected 196 young people not receiving PTB support.

4.8.5 Summary financial analysis of deciding upon the policies that were consulted upon is as below:

2025/26 Projected P16 Taxi costs	2025/26 Projected P16 Internal Bus costs	2025/26 Projected PTB costs	Potential cost	Projected cost control
£0	£0	£40,497	£40,497	£3,428,131

4.8.6 For the purposes of this calculation the top 5% of the most expensive, post 16 taxi journeys were assumed to most likely be representative of journeys that would meet the very limited exceptional circumstances criteria. Average costs per pupil per annum were used for calculation purposes.

4.8.7 Adopting the proposed policies which were consulted upon results in a projected cost control in the region of £3.4m for the 2025/2026 academic year. This does not factor in any change in demand and is based solely on calculations around the support to the children and young people that the council currently supports.

4.8.8 Figure 2 (next page due to formatting requirements) contains a decision summary matrix.

Figure 2 – Post 16 SEND Transport Options Summary Matrix

	Description	2025/26 Projected P16 Taxi costs	2025/26 Projected P16 PATS costs	2025/26 Projected PTB costs	Potential cost	Cost control	Main benefit	Main risk
Recommended policy	Withdraw Post 16 and above SEND transport support from in the region of a projected 360 young people, unless amended, limited exceptional circumstances apply (and then PTB support is to be provided). Projected estimate that 196 young people retain PTB**	£0	£0	£462,231**	£462,231	£3,006,397	Retains an additional level of support for families with more than one SEND child in different schools	There remain service reductions and affordability issues
Adopt the policy consulted upon	Withdraw Post 16 and above SEND transport support from in the region of a projected 360 young people, unless very limited exceptional circumstances apply and then Personal transport budget (PTB) support is to be provided). Assumed that 17 young people retain PTB.	£0	£0	£40,497*	£40,497	£3,428,131	Affordability	Significant service reduction
Don't change policy	Do nothing – in the region of a projected 360 young people with SEND continue to receive SEND transport, where eligible, as they have done before	£2,281,383	£1,067,600	£119,645	£3,468,628	£0	Higher level of provision continues	Affordability

* For the purposes of this calculation the top 5% (16 journeys) of the most expensive, post 16 taxi journeys were assumed to most likely be representative of journeys that would meet the very limited exceptional circumstances criteria. Average costs per pupil per annum were used for calculation purposes.

**For the purposes of this estimate is assumed that 50% of the total post 16 cohort (363 / 2 is 182) who currently receive SEND transport and will be in post 16 and above in the 2025/2026 academic year are multiple siblings with SEND attending different schools that may be eligible under option 3. In addition, those eligible under option 2 are also added (16). Totalling 196. Calculations are based on the same average journey cost developed with Finance and not actual journey data.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The latest projections show the SEND transport service is £1m above budget. If there is an increase in under 16 service provision the overspend will increase further. Like all services across the council, this service needs to keep within budget.

Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance

17 February 2025

5.2 Legal implications

The statutory provisions in relation to transport obligations are contained in the Education Act 1996. The relevant parts are set out in the body of the report. In summary, the council has a duty to make home to school travel arrangements, free of charge, to any child who is eligible. The eligible children are defined within the Education Act, and all categories relate to those who are of compulsory school age.

In contrast, there are separate provisions for those who are not of compulsory school age. The report sets out the proposed changes to the relevant local policies and details the arrangements that the council consider are necessary to facilitate the attendance of young people and relevant young adults in education and training post the age of 16. In particular the decision maker should have regard to the specific matters set out in paragraphs 4.1.5 to 4.1.15 above.

The Public Sector Equality Duty also requires the council in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The statutory guidance requires the local authority to consult widely on any proposed changes with all interested parties. Consultations should last for at least 28 working days during term time. In compliance with these requirements, the proposed policies have been subject to the consultation exercise set out in the body of this report.

The results of the consultation should be analysed, prior to any final decision being made, to ensure that any decision making is lawful, follows a fair process and is reasonable.

The Post-16 Transport Policy Statement is required to be published on or before 31 May for the following academic year.

A party may seek to challenge a decision by way of an application for judicial review, where there is scope to challenge the reasonableness and fairness of, or the process followed in reaching, a decision in accordance with the judicial review principles.

Julia Slipper, Principal Lawyer (Education & Employment); Tel ext 6855

17 February 2025

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010 (including the local authority and schools), have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

SEND children and young people and young adults are likely to face challenges when integrating into some aspects of social life and whilst independence can be beneficial, without support it may also be detrimental to their growth. Suitable school transport is often crucial for children who have additional needs, it is a key part of enabling them to attend school regularly and benefit from their educational experience. Local authorities must comply with the public sector equality duty. They must consider the potential effect of their transport policy on disabled people, both disabled children and disabled parents.

The report seeks a decision regarding which version of the Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Home to School and College Travel Policy 2025/2026 to 2027/2028 - and Post 16 Travel Policy Statement 2025/2026 should be adopted. These proposed policies include the effect of a withdrawal of post 16 SEND Transport provision from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year unless there are very limited 'exceptional circumstances'. Families will have the right to appeal, and cases would be considered on an individual basis.

The report considers the following:

Option 1: do nothing/retain the current service

Under this option there will be no equality implications as the service will continue as at present.

To ensure that equality implications of the following options have been taken into account, an EIA has been carried out and has been updated to include findings from the consultation, students with Special Educational Needs, particularly those with an EHCP are likely to be adversely affected by the proposal.

Option 2: Change the service as per the consulted upon draft proposed procedures, including the general withdrawal of Post 16 SEND transport support unless limited 'exceptional circumstances' exist.

This option broadly removes post 16 SEND transport unless there were very limited 'exceptional circumstances', this will impact on children and young people with SEND, most relevant would be the protected characteristics of age and disability.

Option 3: As Option 2 but with extended 'exceptional circumstances' to families with multiple children with SEND at different schools

Feedback from the consultation has led to an additional option 3 being developed. The consultation was on a proposed policy which broadly removed post 16 SEND transport unless there were very limited 'exceptional circumstances'. The newly developed option still reduces support significantly but provides some increased support in certain circumstances. It is not possible to entirely mitigate the impact of this proposal for all young people, most relevant would be the protected characteristics of age and disability.

Equalities Team

6 February 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are substantial carbon emissions (and air pollution emissions) generated by home to school transport overall in the city and in broad terms the 'carbon intensity' (the quantity of carbon emissions per student-mile) for different modes of transport will go up according to the following hierarchy:

Walking and cycling (non e-bike)	Zero emissions
E-bike	Very low emissions
Public bus	Moderate emissions due to multiple passengers per bus (and reducing, on average, as electric buses introduced)
School bus	Moderate emissions (Likely higher than public bus as most school-organised services use older, more polluting vehicles.)
Minibus	Somewhat higher emissions – due to fewer passengers per vehicle and, where applicable, door-to-door service. Electric minibuses not yet widely available/affordable.
Taxi/private hire or private family car	Likely to be highest emissions. However, emissions lower if the vehicle is a smaller model a hybrid or fully electric. Also lower if the journey is shared.

Currently, SEND transport provision contributes to the council's carbon footprint through:

- emissions from fleet vehicles i.e. the minibuses referred to in the report. Emissions from these are estimated to be in the region of 200-250t per year, and
- emissions from taxi journeys arranged and funded through Passenger Transport, for which it hasn't been possible to reliably estimate the carbon emissions, due to mileage and vehicle data not being available.

The carbon emissions impact of the options presented in the report will depend on any alternative travel arrangements put in place by affected families. All of the options would lead to a reduction

in the council's own carbon footprint, due to journeys shifting from council-arranged travel, which is counted as part of the council footprint, to privately organised travel.

In terms of the impact on the city-wide carbon footprint, which includes council services and all other activity in the city, the changes are unlikely to have a significant impact assuming that journeys continue to be made either by taxi/private hire or private family car.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249

22.01.25

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None applicable

6. Background information and other papers:

- [Preparing for adulthood strategy 2021-2025](#)
- ['Choose how you move'](#) resources
- ['Connecting Leicester' vision](#)

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Updated Proposed DRAFT SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy 2025/2026 to 2027/2028

Appendix 2 - Updated Proposed DRAFT Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/2026

Appendix 3 - Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy 2021/2022

Appendix 4 - Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Home to School and College Travel Policy 2021/2022

Appendix 5 - Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2024/2025

Appendix 6 - Communications plan

Appendix 7 - Consultation questions

Appendix 8 - Statutory guidance

Appendix 9 - Equalities impact assessment

Appendix 10 - Proposed DRAFT SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy (The Travel Policy) 2025/2026 to 2027/2028

Appendix 11 - Proposed DRAFT Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/2026

Appendix 12 - Leicester adult consultation comments.

Appendix 13 - Leicester young people consultation comments.

Appendix 14 - Consultation response quantitative data analysis

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

8.1 No. Consultation responses in Appendices 12 and 13 are redacted as, although pertinent to the decision maker, those who made comments did not consent to publication.

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

9.1 Yes. Due to all wards being affected and the size of the budgetary implications.

DRAFT



Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

DRAFT Home to School and College Travel Policy

January 2025

Option 3 v0.1

This policy is applicable from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year to the end of the 2027/2028 academic year.

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DRAFT

1. Introduction

It is parents and carers responsibility to ensure their child or young person attends the education provision identified for them. Within this policy we aim to promote and support parental duties further through offering different travel options (where eligible).

Local authorities have a responsibility to encourage, enable, support and assist young people with learning difficulties/ disabilities to participate in education and training. This policy looks to promote and encourage the independence and social inclusion for children and young people. It also promotes the council's commitment to support children and young people to develop their independence, enabling them to prepare for adulthood.

This policy sets out how Leicester City Council will meet its obligations to provide home to school and college travel to children and young people with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities, living in Leicester who are eligible to receive it. The policy also gives advice on the support available and the commitment to encourage independent travel to and from school or college.

When considering whether to provide home to school travel assistance, Local Authorities (LA's) are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Education Act 1996 and Schedule 35B of the Act which was inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 508B and 508C of the Act makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. Leicester City Council has developed its travel policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty.

It is important that families understand the eligibility criteria and whether their child is likely to meet this before taking the time to make an application. In most instances, children will not meet the statutory conditions for travel assistance.

It is strongly recommended that all parents read this guidance carefully along with the information on our website at [Travel to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/travel-to-school-and-college/)

2. Travel principles and policy

Leicester City Council is committed to working together with young people, families, schools and colleges to ensure that:

- Children and young people are safe and supported to access education.
- Young people and families have confidence in the travel offer.

Parents and carers have a duty to:

- Ensure their child(ren) receive an education via ensuring they attend school or college.
- Make the necessary travel arrangements for their child(ren) to attend regularly.
- Ensure their child attends the educational establishment identified for them.

The council recognises that:

- The travel offer should respond to and be based on the needs of children and young people as they develop and progress and should promote and encourage their independence and social inclusion.
- Any travel assistance provided by the council is based on the needs of the child or young person and is provided to support young people and children to follow an appropriate educational course. The needs of the child and the travel provision will be periodically reviewed to ensure the child or young person is still accessing the most appropriate travel method.
- The council has a duty to support and enable young people to develop and achieve independence to enable them to prepare for adulthood.
- Encouraging young people's independence will develop their skills for better experience in adult life, their confidence and social skills, and increase their opportunities for continuing education, training and social inclusion.

The council also has a duty to:

- Manage public money responsibly.
- Provide value for money services.
- Promote the use of sustainable transport and travel.

If eligible for travel assistance, this will only be provided from the child's home to the school or college at which they are on roll at the beginning and end of the normal school day (as published on the school or college's website).

If the child attends another school or establishment that is arranged through their school as off-site provision, it will be the school/parent's responsibility to arrange travel to and from that school or establishment, for their off-site learning.

The child's address will normally be the one that they spend the most school nights at, and any travel arrangements to or from an alternative address will be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.

Parents regular work commitments or domestic arrangements will not normally be taken into account when deciding the eligibility of a child or young person or the type of assistance offered.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child is prepared and ready to travel, at their pickup points at the right time, and that any behavioural concerns whilst travelling are positively managed. In very rare instances where there are serious safeguarding concerns travel will be denied.

Travel assistance will not be provided for any medical appointments or domestic arrangements, or for the child to go to or from a different address other than their main residence. Travel assistance is not provided for breakfast or after school clubs or activities.

Eligibility criteria

3. Pre-school children with SEND

Travel assistance for children under the age of five is discretionary as council's have no legal duty to provide or arrange travel for children who have not yet reached the statutory school age. However, travel applications will be considered for children below statutory school age in exceptional circumstances.

In considering these circumstances, the council will need to be satisfied that, without such assistance, the child would be prevented from attending an appropriate nursery or early years' education setting.

In considering assistance for pre-school children, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The age of the child.
- The distance between home and nursery.
- The SEN and disabilities of the child.
- The reasons for the pre-school placement.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form to demonstrate that the child has a special educational need, disability or mobility need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

4. Compulsory school-aged children aged 5-16 with SEND

Compulsory school age begins at the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June of the school year in which a child or young person turns 16.

There are four factors which may determine if children and young people aged 5-16 are eligible for travel assistance:

- Statutory walking distance eligibility.
- SEND or significant mobility problems eligibility.
- Unsafe route eligibility.
- Extended rights eligibility.

4.1 Eligibility Review

Eligibility will be reviewed each academic year and the type of travel will be reviewed annually. This review will determine whether a child or young person continues to be eligible for travel assistance, and where eligible, that the type and level of assistance is most appropriate to their needs as they develop independence and transition into adulthood.

Set out in law/legislation and with our Mainstream Travel Policy children are eligible for travel in the following circumstances.

4.2 Statutory Walking Distance

The council is required to provide free travel assistance options for all children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16). This will be assessed using the distance to the nearest qualifying school to their home when they are unable to walk the statutory distance to school safely, even when accompanied by an adult, if their nearest suitable school is:

- Beyond 2 miles, if below the age of 8; or
- Beyond 3 miles, if aged between 8 and 16.

The nearest suitable school is defined as the nearest school with places available and which the council deems to provide education appropriate to the age, aptitude and

ability of the young person, and any special educational needs or disability they may have.

When establishing whether the nearest suitable school is within walking distance, the distance between home and school will be measured by the shortest available safe walking route, accompanied as necessary. The route may include footpaths and other pathways as long as it is safe to walk along them.

4.3 SEND or mobility difficulties

In circumstances where a child with a special educational need, disability or mobility need is able to use public travel, even when accompanied, they will be assessed using the same criteria as all other children.

The council is required to provide travel assistance for children and young people unable to walk to school by reason of their special educational needs, disability or significant mobility difficulty.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form in order to demonstrate that the child has a special travel need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

4.4 Unsafe walking route

The council is required to make travel assistance arrangements for children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk even when accompanied by an adult.

4.5 Extended rights eligibility (for low-income families)

For low-income families i.e. for children entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, eligibility for free travel assistance is extended as follows:

- For children aged between 8 and 11, the walking distance is reduced from 3 to 2 miles.

- Secondary age children (11 – 16) can receive free travel assistance to any of their three nearest suitable schools but only where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles but less than 6 (Note: schools below 2 miles are included when assessing which are the 3 nearest).
- For secondary age children (11 – 16), the council will provide free travel assistance to the nearest suitable school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief (including any single sex school in the city), If it is over 2 miles and under 15 miles from the home address. The council will normally seek documentary evidence of faith or belief e.g. a minister's letter.

The council will review travel assistance under the extended rights eligibility rules on an annual basis. Free travel may be withdrawn in subsequent years if a child ceases to qualify under low income extended rights.

Travel will not be provided where suitable arrangements have been made by the council to enable the child to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to the child's home.

4.6 Preparing for Travel arrangements once your child reaches age 14

When your child reaches the age of 14 / during academic year 9, the council will write to parents and carers who have a child currently receiving a form of council travel assistance. We will reiterate the responsibility of the parent and carer to arrange travel from home to school, and provide the date that travel provided by the council will stop. The council does not have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18. This two-year transition period will give parents and carers the opportunity to make suitable arrangements for transporting their child to their chosen educational establishment once they reach age 16.

Due to the timeframes involved, for the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 academic years it will not be possible to provide this two-year notice period. As soon as practicably possible families will be notified and as much notice as is reasonably possible will be provided going forward. At a minimum general notice of 4 weeks will be provided in line with the standard, all age notice period in section 10 below. Where this causes hardship to individuals who have already commenced courses this can be highlighted as part of the holistic review of exceptional circumstances but will not in its own right constitute an exceptional circumstance.

The following sections 5 and 6 that explain support for young people and adults with SEND are the council's Post 16 Statement. These are reviewed annually.

5. Post 16 (young people 16-19) with SEND

The council does not have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18.

Schools with sixth form provision and colleges of further education have some funding known as bursary funding available to help students age 16-19 with expenses connected with their study, including travel costs.

As it is not a statutory requirement to provide Post 16-year-olds travel assistance, the council expect all eligible students to apply for a bursary fund.

Bursary funding is paid to schools and colleges who decide how they allocate their funds. Enquiries about support for school or college travel expenses should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned.

Students who are in one or more of the groups below can apply for a vulnerable student bursary of up to £1,200 (if they are participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more - institutions should pay a pro-rata amount for students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks). This reflects that students in these groups may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- getting [Income Support](#) (IS), or [Universal Credit](#) (UC) in place of Income Support, in their own right
- getting [Employment and Support Allowance](#) (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or [Personal Independence Payments](#) in their own right

Enquiries about applying for a vulnerable student bursary should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned. For further details see: [Guidance: 16 to 19 education: financial support for students \(GOV.UK\)](#).

Further details of Post 16 travel support are available in the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement that the Council publishes annually. This includes more detail of the range of support available beyond that which the council provides for all learners including those

with SEND. It is available on the information on our website at [Travel to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/travel-to-school-and-college)

5.1 Council support for young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

Many young people in Post 16 Education and older with SEND are able to travel independently or accompanied by a parent, carer, or guardian, using public transport, and the council cannot offer services to replace parental responsibility.

Many young people with a special educational need (SEND) may also be able to travel with a parent or guardian accompanying them.

For those with a diagnosed SEND or as part of Preparing for Adulthood, as detailed on our [Local Offer \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/local-offer), we also support Young People with Independent Travel Training.

5.2 Young people aged 16 - 19 with SEND

In exceptional circumstances, the council may provide travel assistance (in the form of a personal transport budget) for certain Post 16-year-old students. To be considered for travel assistance, a young person must meet each of the following conditions:

- i) the young person must be resident in Leicester City; and
- ii) the young person must have started their current programme of education/training prior to their 19th birthday; and
- iii) the young person must have a complex SEND need and a placement specified in an Education Health and Care Plan. A complex SEND need for the purposes of this policy is where a young person has:
 - a) A diagnosed terminal illness that has severe impact on their current physical and / or mental health and that is likely to significantly reduce their life expectancy and/or;
 - b) When accompanied, the young person's additional needs or disability places them or others at a severe and serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school and/or;
 - c) The student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle e.g. tail-lift access that is not available to them (including on public transport where that has to be relied upon) and / or
 - d) The learner is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school;

- iv) the young person must be attending the nearest appropriate education or training provider; and
- v) either:
 - a) the education or training provider is more than 3 miles walking distance from the young person's home, or
 - b) if the walking distance is 3 miles or less, the young person is unable to walk to and from the education or training provider because of a disability or because the walking route is unsafe; and
- vi) the young person must be attending a full-time, publicly funded course (a full-time course is a programme of at least 540 study hours per year).

A young person who satisfies each of the conditions above will be eligible for travel assistance only if there are exceptional circumstances. Whether there are exceptional circumstances in a particular case will be determined by the Strategic Director of Social Care (or another officer exercising delegated authority) in the light of the specific circumstances of that case. In each case, the Council will require appropriate evidence as to any claimed exceptional circumstances. Each of the following is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- The young person missed a significant majority of year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
- The placement named by the local authority is a considerable distance from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs; and, taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.
- **Parents / carers have more than one child with an EHCP attending different schools.**

'Considerable distance' is defined for the purposes of this policy as 75 minutes each way including time to walk to any pickup point.

- Journey time is calculated using the most effective means of transport available. For example, if it is more efficient to travel by car than by bus then the journey time in a car will be used as the foundation of the calculation or, if it is more effective to travel by train than car then the journey time by train will be used as the foundation for the calculation.

- For journey calculation purposes two changes on public transport is considered reasonable.

None of the following is (taken in isolation) likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- Single parent families.
- Parent(s)/ carers who work.
- Having other children to look after and/or at other schools.
- Travelling to an independent school out of area.
- Parents/carers/students unable to drive or having access to a car.
- Students in wheelchairs.

The fact that transport or travel assistance may have been provided in previous years does not indicate that the young person will be provided with travel assistance, under this policy. Accordingly, any planning that a young person and/or their family makes for future arrangements should take this into account.

Where it is decided that a young person is to be provided with travel assistance, that assistance will be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget only.

6. Young people aged 19 - 25 with SEND

The same arrangements for young adults aged 19-25 with SEND apply to young people with SEND aged between 16 and 19 years old.

Section 5 applies to young adults with SEND aged between 19-25 years old.

7. Assessments

As part of the statutory assessment process, which may lead to an EHCP the council receives written reports from a range of professionals, such as a school, educational psychologist and medical or clinical professionals. When an application for travel support is received, if they are available the local authority will consider the information contained in these reports to determine whether pupils meet the SEND Travel / Personal Travel Budget eligibility criteria.

Further evidence may be requested and the council reserves the right to make reasonable enquiries of the council's electoral services and other teams, and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority to investigate applications.

8. Type of travel assistance available

8.1 Personal travel budget (PTB)

Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) are designed to give families the freedom and to flexibility to make travel arrangements that best meet their family's needs. They enable parents to retain responsibility for ensuring their child attends school whilst providing the means to do so when the child is eligible.

For further information and to apply please see [Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/family-information/personal-travel-budget/)

Those young people over compulsory school age who are determined to meet the exceptional circumstance criteria will be provided with a personal transport budget as part of the discretionary support available.

8.2 Independent travel training (ITT)

Independent travel training provides young people with tailored and practical assistance to travel safely by public travel, on foot or by bicycle to their school, college and placement. It also supports young people socially, to access other key services and connect with friends and family.

Independent travel is an essential life skill, and helps to better prepare young people for adulthood, and for accessing further education and employment by raising their confidence in their abilities.

The council's Independent Travel Trainer's will work with schools and colleges to be able to deliver travel training to their students.

If a young person is identified as potentially suitable for travel training, their parent/carer will be contacted by the council or their school to arrange a consultation with the nominated travel trainer.

Following the consultation, the young person and family (where appropriate) will then be supported to undertake the training programme. If they are not ready or suitable for training, a future review date will be set, and they will continue to be provided with travel assistance if they remain eligible.

Further information about [Independent Travel Training](#) can be found on our Local Offer page.

8.3 Public transport bus pass

Some 5–16-year-olds will qualify for free home to school travel assistance to their primary or secondary school. Where children and young people are eligible and the

method of transport is determined to be appropriate to offer but the child or young person requires accompanying, the council may offer a public transport bus pass to a parent / carer to meet its obligation to provide free home to school travel assistance [View details of eligibility and how to apply \(leicester.gov.uk website\)](http://leicester.gov.uk).

8.4 Contracted minibus, private hire vehicle or taxi

This includes but may not be limited to:

- Pick up and drop off from/to a collection point or central location locally
- Shared or individual, private hire vehicle or minibus for groups of young people
- Individual taxi, private hire vehicle or minibus for solo travellers (exceptional circumstances only)

9. Travel service provision

Leicester City Council aims to make travel arrangements that allow eligible pupils to travel in safety and reasonable comfort, without the journey being unreasonably long or complicated, and to arrive at school without such stress, strain, or difficulty that they are prevented from benefitting from the education provided.

It is the council's policy to review travel assistance arrangements annually or at times of transition, in consultation with service providers, to minimise surplus places on vehicles and the total number of vehicles used. The council will endeavour to coordinate dedicated school travel journeys and local public bus services to ensure that best value for money and efficiency of service is achieved.

The council is committed to minimising disruption to children and young people but retains the right to review eligibility at any time, if ineligibility is determined the council may withdraw travel assistance during an academic year.

The council will determine the overall level of service, the number and type of vehicles, and the seating capacity requirements to meet the travel needs of pupils and students, taking the following into account:

- the regulations relating to the provision of passenger travel services.
- that a single journey to or from school should ideally not exceed 75 minutes including the time taken for a change of bus – though this is not always possible where services operate to more than one school or site.
- that pupils should not be expected to change buses more than once within a single journey to or from school.

- that it is desirable in the interests of safety and comfort to provide a seat for each pupil/student – though this is not always possible when local public travel services are used.
- that services coordinate with school or college session times (provided that the appropriate notice and procedures required by education legislation have been followed). Head Teachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are requested to consult with the council as soon as possible on proposed changes to session times, so that the effect of any change can be assessed.
- that Head Teachers, parents and other interested parties must be consulted regarding proposed changes to the SEND Home to School Travel policy.
- that service delivery must be monitored, and complaints dealt with as soon as possible to ensure quality, efficiency and reliability.
- the promotion of the use of sustainable travel and travel modes.
- the promotion of equal opportunities.

9.1 Passenger Assistants

The council will determine whether it is necessary to provide a passenger assistant, supervisor or other facilities (e.g., on-bus communication facilities) on any of the vehicles used based on individual needs.

Some pupils with special travel needs may require a passenger assistant for the home to school journey. The council will decide if a passenger assistant is necessary, taking individual circumstances into consideration:

Under these circumstances, the parent/carer may be required to act as the escort for their child. If the journey is beyond the maximum walking distance, the parent would be provided with transport support home from the morning school drop off journey and picked up in the afternoon for the return journey. If the journey is less than the maximum walking distance, the parent would be expected to walk home after the morning drop and walk back to the school for the afternoon pick-up.

9.2 Travel to and from pick-up / drop-off points

In most cases parents/carers will be expected to accompany their child to a pick-up point identified by the council. Pick-up points will be safe and appropriate places for vehicles to pull up and wait. Every effort will be made to minimise the distance to and from pick-up and drop off points but the nearest pick-up point may be up to half a mile away from home for primary age pupils and up to 1 mile away from home for secondary age pupils.

The pick-up points and times may change throughout the year, as routes will be regularly reviewed following changes to passenger lists. The council will endeavour to give reasonable notice (4 weeks) of any such changes.

Parents/carers must ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place for their child's walk between home and the pick-up point at the beginning and end of the school day.

9.3 Travel to and from home addresses

The duty placed on the council does not extend to the provision of a "door to door" service, however, for a very few applicants, exceptional circumstances may result in travel arrangements being made to and from the home address.

9.4 Multiple home addresses

If a pupil has more than one place that may be considered a home address, parents/carers must nominate a primary address for travel purposes. Home addresses should be for primary carers and travel to the homes of extended family members will not usually be considered a home address.

The council acknowledges that families need flexible arrangements and will support travel to multiple addresses where it is specifically highlighted and agreed at the point of application. In year arrangements for changes will require a new application.

Where there are multiple home addresses being requested the home address closest to the child or young person's school or college will be considered the primary home address. That primary home address will be used to determine eligibility.

The council will not generally support applications which mean that travel to multiple addresses will result in increased journey time or cost of provision. Personal Transport Budgets may be the best option to meet need in these situations.

10. Review of travel Arrangements

All travel arrangements will be reviewed annually or at times of transition to assess whether the basis for entitlement has changed or whether the mode of travel assistance provided remains appropriate. Travel assistance entitlement will be re-assessed if the home address, pupil needs, educational establishment or course details change.

Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students will be given reasonable notice (4 weeks) if it is decided to withdraw or significantly alter the means of travel assistance.

If parents/carers and/or Post-16 students request a variation to the current travel arrangements, the council will require reasonable notice (3 weeks) of the change and

will apply the relevant assessment criteria. Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students may be required to make and pay for their own interim travel arrangements in the period between application and, if approved, the receipt of any travel assistance provided under this policy.

Post-16 students will be expected to maintain both satisfactory attendance and progress, and these factors will be taken into account when reviewing entitlement to travel assistance.

Any amendment to, or withdrawal of, travel assistance does not excuse a child of compulsory school age from attending school and it will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child's continued attendance at school.

11. Behaviour whilst travelling

The health and safety of drivers and passengers is dependent on good pupil behaviour, alongside positive management of behaviours from drivers and passenger assistants, in line with legislation and the council's safeguarding policies. The council takes a serious view of incidents of poor conduct.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers head teachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises. Persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school can be grounds for exclusion.

In some cases, if either the council or a travel operator refuses to allow a pupil to continue to access a particular vehicle due to the pupil's poor conduct, an alternative arrangement may be offered, but only after an assessment of the nature and seriousness of the case. In the event of a serious incident of indiscipline, vandalism, or anti-social behaviour, or persistent offences of this nature, travel provision may be permanently withdrawn. In these cases the LA would not be implying that travel arrangements were not necessary and should not be provided, but rather that travel arrangements were necessary and had been made but the pupil's behaviour was such that they were unable to take advantage of them. If these circumstances arise, no alternative travel assistance arrangements will be made.

If travel is temporarily or permanently withdrawn parents would be responsible for getting their children to school and for any costs incurred.

12. Our commitment to promoting independence and choice

Alongside the existing schemes detailed in this policy, Leicester City Council will continue to explore and promote additional ways of promoting independence and choice for children in the City with home to school travel. We will work with families and schools to develop and promote new ideas and pilot schemes where appropriate.

13. How to apply

Applications for travel for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities should be made via the website:

[Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/family-information/personal-travel-budget)

Applications for travel assistance for students age 16 and above in colleges of further education to commence at the start of the Autumn Term should be made wherever possible by the last day of the summer term prior to the start of the new academic year. The LA cannot guarantee to provide travel assistance from the first day of the Autumn Term if applications are received after this date. Where late applications are submitted, parents/carers and/or sixth form students may have to make their own interim travel arrangements, the cost of which cannot normally be reimbursed.

Young people attending Further Education establishments will need to re-apply annually, providing evidence of both satisfactory attendance and progress.

14. How decisions are Made

For all children and young people with SEN and disabilities, a travel eligibility assessment will be undertaken by the Special Educational Needs Service at the point of application, and reviewed yearly or when circumstances change, e.g. a change of educational establishment, change of home address.

The information used for the assessment is gathered from various sources including:

- School reports
- Parents
- The young person
- Medical reports (including CAMHs)
- Social care
- Education, health and care plans

The travel assistance eligibility assessment or review will consider the individual needs of the child or young person in 6 key areas:

- Mobility
- Medical needs
- Behavioural issues
- Vulnerability
- Practicality
- Independence and Independent Travel Training suitability

When the assessment is completed, the SEN Service will decide whether or not a child or young person is eligible as a result of their SEN and disability to travel assistance, the type of travel assistance to be offered, and whether or not it is appropriate to offer Independent Travel Training.

15. How to appeal if you are unhappy with a decision

Appeals Process for pupils with a special educational need or disability

Should parents/carers wish to appeal against the council's decision not to provide travel or against the mode of travel provided they should email SEND.approvals@Leicester.gov.uk or write to:

Transport Appeals
Special Education Needs Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

The council has a 2-stage review and appeals process as recommended by the Department for Education. The timings for responses may be extended if additional time is required to gather supporting information or delayed by school/college holidays.

Please note that whilst the review and appeal process takes place the parent/carer will remain responsible for arranging and funding for any travel arrangements that a parent/carer may feel is necessary. Throughout the appeals process parents may wish to seek independent advocacy support and advice

The appeals procedure is in two stages:

Stage 1: Review by a Senior Officer of the council.

- A parent/carer has 20 working days from the date of the travel decision letter, to make a formal written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent/carer or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances, including medical evidence, they believe should be considered when making the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of a written request, a Senior Officer will review the original decision and send a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, including information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate)

Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel:

- If a parent/carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their case, they have 20 working days from the receipt of their decision letter to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer's written request an Independent Appeal Panel will be arranged to consider both written and (if the parent /carer wishes to attend the panel hearing) verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in their case.

The Independent Appeal Panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process (but not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced, to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of the parent/carers and the local authority.

If a parent/carer or student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, there is no further right of appeal to the council. However, there is still the right to appeal to the Secretary of State or to take independent legal action.

If a parent/carer or young person feels that their appeal has not been treated fairly or in accordance with the LA's policy, the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted for help and advice on:

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: lgo.org.uk

16. The legal framework

S508B and 508C of the Education Act (the “Act”) make provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child’s attendance at school. The provisions apply to home to school travel arrangements and vice versa.

Under s444 of the same Act, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

S508B of the Act deals with the duty on local authority to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5 – 16) in an authority’s area for whom free travel arrangements will be required.

The categories of eligible children include those who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special education needs or disability. Eligibility, for such children, should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular travel arrangements.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk the local authority will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied, and if so, whether the child’s parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.

The council has a statutory duty under Section 10 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to exercise its functions so as to promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area with a view to ensuring that those persons participate in appropriate full-time education or training, an apprenticeship, or are in full time occupation and participate in sufficient relevant training, all pursuant to section 2 of the 2008 Act.

The council also has a statutory duty to publish a Post 16 Travel Policy Statement every year. This statement should set out the arrangements for the provision of travel or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age at:

- schools,
- institutions maintained or assisted by the authority which provides further education or higher education or both

- institutions within the further education sector, any 16-19 academy or any other establishment at which the authority secures the provision of education or training.

Post 16 travel to education and training statutory guidance dated February 2014 requires the council, in planning travel provision to take into account its duty to promote effective participation under the 2008 act and the duty under section 2 of that act on young people to participate in education or training up to age 18.

16.1 SEND Code of Practice 2015

The Code of Practice (Special Educational Needs and Disability 2015) indicates that transport should be recorded in an Education, Health Care Plan only in exceptional cases where the child has very specific travel needs.

16.2 Equality Act 2010

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: Equality Act 2010 section 149(1).

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7)

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

- Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

DRAFT



Leicester
City Council

DRAFT Post-16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2025 – 2026

Option 3 v0.1

January 2025

The council's travel policy statement for young people aged 16 - 18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19 – 24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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1. Introduction

Local authorities (LAs) **do not** have to provide free or subsidised Post 16 travel support.

The council does have a duty to prepare and publish an annual travel policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of travel or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make, to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support via the council's local offer pages. These will only be approved under exceptional circumstances. This is significantly different practice to previous years and is likely to affect rights to travel support even where currently being received on existing courses.

'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 Leicester City 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 can lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

2. Aims and Objectives

This document describes the support available to young people of Leicester entering or continuing with full-time Post 16 Education. It 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 support available from various sources to encourage participation and prevent travel being a barrier to young learners.

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

3. Travel and travel support

Concessionary tickets for young people 16 – 25 from public transport providers

Many local operators have student season tickets available offering discounts compared to normal adult fares and/or at cheaper rates when bought on a termly or academic year basis. It is advised students contact the bus-operators directly as below:

Bus Operators

- Arriva website: arrivabus.co.uk
- Kinchbus website: kinchbus.co.uk
- First Bus website: firstbus.co.uk
- Centrebus website: centrebus.info

Train Services

Train services are available throughout Leicester and Leicestershire, with the option to purchase either a 16 - 17 saver railcard or 16 - 25 railcard to receive up to 1/3 off the price of eligible train tickets.

Website: eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk

Dedicated school buses

Similarly, some of Leicester and Leicestershire's mainstream schools have commercial school special services operating to them. More information can be found directly from your school and the main operators of such services are:

- Confidence buses: confidencebus.co.uk/school-bus-routes
- Beaver Buses: beaver-bus.co.uk/school-buses
- Roberts Coaches: buspass.robertstravelgroup.co.uk
- G.H. Watts Coaches: ghwatts.co.uk/school_buses

4. Transport support from schools and colleges

Some of Leicester's secondary schools, academies and 6th Form/FE colleges have additional bus contract arrangements on which learners or their parents can purchase places. Some FE colleges also offer direct support to students. Arrangements vary between schools and colleges, so it is always best to check directly with the individual schools/colleges for details.

You can find details of all Leicester schools on the council's website (this will also give you a link to the school's individual website): [Schools Directory \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)

Contact details and websites for all the Leicester and Leicestershire FE Colleges are shown below:

Brooksby Melton College (Leicestershire):

Contact the Travel Department on:

Telephone: 0166 485 5211

E-Mail: travel@brooksbymelton.ac.uk

Information available at interview and in 16-18 Travel Guide by visiting:

brooksbymelton.ac.uk

Gateway Sixth Form College (Leicester):

Telephone: 0116 274 4500

(Student services)

E-Mail: studentservices@gateway.ac.uk

Website: gateway.ac.uk

Leicester College (Leicester):

To discuss any travel queries with a member of the Student Advice and Guidance Team:

Telephone: 0116 224 2240 or 0116 224 4048

For information regarding travel provision for students with learning difficulties contact the Travel Coordinator: Telephone: 0116 224 2240 extension 2098

For any other travel queries:

Website: leicestercollege.ac.uk

E-Mail: info@leicestercollege.ac.uk

Loughborough College (Leicestershire):

Telephone: 01509 517 140

E-Mail: dez.gentlemen@loucoll.ac.uk

Website: loucoll.ac.uk

North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College (Leicestershire):

Customer Service Team:

Telephone: 0330 058 3000

Email: enquiries@nwslc.ac.uk

Website: nwslc.ac.uk

Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College (Leicester):

Divisional administrators 'The Hub'

Telephone: 0116 255 4629

Email: enquiries@wqe.ac.uk

Website: wqe.ac.uk

Stephenson College (Leicestershire):

Telephone: 01530 836 136

Email: services@stephensoncoll.ac.uk

Website: stephensoncoll.ac.uk

5. Travel support from the government

As it is not a statutory requirement to provide Post 16 travel the Council expect all eligible students to apply for a bursary fund. Details of funds are noted below:

5.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - in care
 - care leavers
 - in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
 - discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, books and equipment
2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2022 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2022 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2022 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a government funding agency or the local authority

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information: [16 to 19 Bursary Fund \(GOV.UK website\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund)

5.2 Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

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

Types of childcare

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child, they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

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

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 – 25 card.

For more information, please visit [Care to learn how to claim \(GOV.UK website\)](#)

6. Council support for young people without special educational needs or disabilities

Please note that there are **no free bus passes available for learners aged 16-19 through the city council**. However, a flexi-ticket bus ticket is available to purchase for Leicester resident pupils over statutory school age if the student is aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of the college year.

The pass allows travel on multiple bus companies to get to school/college. Details of the pass are available on the [Choose How you Move website](#)

There are alternatives to the flexi-ticket. If you only need to use a bus from one operator, you could get better value in terms of price and flexibility by purchasing a season ticket directly from a commercial bus operator. Before you apply for any bus pass or ticket, we strongly urge you to consider all the commercially available alternatives.

7. Council support for young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

Many young people in Post 16 Education and older with SEND are able to travel independently or accompanied by a parent, carer, or guardian, using public transport, and the council cannot offer services to replace parental responsibility.

Many young people with a special educational need (SEND) may also be able to travel with a parent or guardian accompanying them.

For those with a diagnosed SEND or as part of Preparing for Adulthood, as detailed on our [Local Offer \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#), we also support Young People with Independent Travel Training.

7.1 Young people aged 16 - 19 with SEND

In exceptional circumstances, the council may provide travel assistance (in the form of a personal transport budget) for certain Post 16-year-old students. To be considered for travel assistance, a young person must meet each of the following conditions:

- i) the young person must be resident in Leicester City; and
- ii) the young person must have started their current programme of education/training prior to their 19th birthday; and
- iii) the young person must have a complex SEND need and a placement specified in an Education Health and Care Plan. A complex SEND need for the purposes of this policy is where a young person has:
 - a) A diagnosed terminal illness that has severe impact on their current physical and / or mental health and that is likely to significantly reduce their life expectancy and/or;
 - b) When accompanied, the young person's additional needs or disability places them or others at a severe and serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school and/or;
 - c) The student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle e.g. tail-lift access that is not available to them (including on public transport where that has to be relied upon) and / or
 - d) The learner is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school;
- iv) the young person must be attending the nearest appropriate education or training provider; and
- v) either:
 - a) the education or training provider is more than 3 miles walking distance from the young person's home, or
 - b) if the walking distance is 3 miles or less, the young person is unable to walk to and from the education or training provider because of a disability or because the walking route is unsafe; and
- vi) the young person must be attending a full-time, publicly funded course (a full-time course is a programme of at least 540 study hours per year).

A young person who satisfies each of the conditions above will be eligible for travel assistance only if there are exceptional circumstances. Whether there are exceptional circumstances in a particular case will be determined by the Strategic Director of Social Care (or another officer exercising delegated authority) in the light

of the specific circumstances of that case. In each case, the Council will require appropriate evidence as to any claimed exceptional circumstances. Each of the following is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- The young person missed a significant majority of year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
- The placement named by the local authority is a 'considerable distance' from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs; and, taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.
- Parents / carers have more than one child with an EHCP attending different schools.

'Considerable distance' is defined for the purposes of this policy as 75 minutes each way including time to walk to any pickup point.

- Journey time is calculated using the most effective means of transport available.

For example, if it is more efficient to travel by car than by bus then the journey time in a car will be used as the foundation of the calculation or, if it is more effective to travel by train than car then the journey time by train will be used as the foundation for the calculation.

- For journey calculation purposes two changes on public transport is considered reasonable.

None of the following is (taken in isolation) likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- Single parent families.
- Parent(s)/ carers who work.
- Having other children to look after and/or at other schools.
- Travelling to an independent school out of area.
- Parents/carers/students unable to drive or having access to a car.
- Students in wheelchairs.

The fact that transport or travel assistance may have been provided in previous years does not indicate that the young person will be provided with travel assistance, under this policy. Accordingly, any planning that a young person and/or their family makes for future arrangements should take this into account.

Where it is decided that a young person is to be provided with travel assistance, that assistance will be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget only.

7.2 Young people aged 19 - 25 with SEND

The same arrangements for young adults aged 19-25 with SEND apply to young people with SEND aged between 16 and 19 years old.

Section 7.1 applies to young adults with SEND aged between 19-25 years old.

8. Apprenticeships

For students on traineeships or apprenticeships, the learning provider is responsible for ensuring that reasonable expenses are met in full where they are needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the cost of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Please contact your learning provider for more information. Students may also be eligible for a bursary (see Bursary Fund section above).

9. Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Connexions Leicester is a careers service for young people who live in Leicester City and are aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Connexions also have specialist personal advisers who are trained to work with young people with SEND to help them make decisions about their future. Please contact

Telephone: 0116 454 1770

Email: connexions@leicester.gov.uk

Website: leicesteremploymenthub.co.uk

Address:
Connexions,
2 Wellington Street,
Leicester,
LE1 6HL

10. Useful contact details

10.1 Leicester City Council

If you want information about the assistance that is provided by Leicester City Council for mainstream pupils, call Education Travel on:

Telephone: 0116 454 1009 (Option 2)

Website: [School travel \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://School travel (leicester.gov.uk))

If you need individual special needs travel assistance, call the Special Education Service on 0116 454 2050 or email ses@leicester.gov.uk

If you have any comments on this document that would assist in the policy making, including in-year changes, please contact us as follows:

SEND Transport
Special Education Needs Service
Pinder Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

10.2 Department for Education

Website: [Subsidised college travel 16 to 19 \(GOV.UK website\)](#)

10.3 Bus routes and timetable information

Telephone: 0871 200 2233 (calls cost 12p per minute plus your phone company's access charge)

Telephone: 0145 563 2719

Website: traveline.info

10.4 Learner Support Service

Residential Support Scheme

Website: [Residential support scheme \(GOV.UK website\)](#)

11. Applying for council travel support

Applications for travel support for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities should be made via the website.

Website: [Transport to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk/transport-to-school-and-college)

Applications for travel assistance for students age 16 and above in colleges of further education to commence at the start of the Autumn Term, should be made wherever possible by the last day of the summer term prior to the start of the new academic year. The LA cannot guarantee to provide travel assistance from the first day of the Autumn Term if applications are received after this date. Where late applications are submitted, parents/carers and/or sixth form students may have to make their own interim travel arrangements, the cost of which cannot normally be reimbursed.

Website: [Personal Transport Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk/personal-transport-budget)

Young people attending further education establishments will need to re-apply annually, providing evidence of both satisfactory attendance and progress.

12. Appeals

12.1 Appeals Process for pupils with a special educational need or disability

Should parents/carers wish to appeal against the council's decision not to provide travel or against the mode of travel provided they should email SEND.approvals@Leicester.gov.uk or write to:

Transport Appeals
Special Education Needs Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

The council has a 2-stage review and appeals process as recommended by the Department for Education. The timings for responses may be extended if additional time is required to gather supporting information or delayed by school/college holidays.

Please note that whilst the review and appeal process takes place the parent/carer will remain responsible for arranging and funding for any travel arrangements that a parent/carer may feel is necessary. Throughout the appeals process parents may wish to seek independent advocacy support and advice

The appeals procedure is in two stages:

Stage 1: Review by a Senior Officer of the council.

- A parent/carer has 20 working days from the date of the travel decision letter, to make a formal written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent/carer or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances, including medical evidence, they believe should be considered when making the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of a written request, a Senior Officer will review the original decision and send a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, including information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate)

Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel:

- If a parent/carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their case, they have 20 working days from the receipt of their decision letter to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer's written request an Independent Appeal Panel will be arranged to consider both written and (if the parent /carer wishes to attend the panel hearing) verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in their case.

The Independent Appeal Panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process (but not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced, to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of the parent/carers and the local authority.

If a parent/carer or student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, there is no further right of appeal to the council. However, there is still the right to appeal to the Secretary of State or to take independent legal action.

If a parent/carer or young person feels that their appeal has not been treated fairly or in accordance with the LA's policy, the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted for help and advice on:

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: lgo.org.uk



Leicester City Council

Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy

General Enquiries

Enquiries and specific requests should initially be addressed to:

Email: education.transport@leicester.gov.uk

Telephone: 0116 4541009, Option 2

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Introduction

The Education Act 1996 sets out the categories of compulsory school age pupils who are eligible for free school transport. The council's policy is to provide free school transport (referred to in the Act as "travel assistance") to these categories of eligible pupils in accordance with its legal obligations, but not otherwise. An application must be made to the council on behalf of the child for eligibility to be assessed.

Free transport is usually provided through the issue of a bus pass to be used on commercial routes.

In circumstances where a parent/carer chooses to send their child to a school that is not the nearest qualifying school, the parent/carer will be responsible for the full cost of transport.

Issuing a bus pass does not remove the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child arrives at school safely and on time. Even where transport is provided by the council, the parent/carer remains responsible for the behaviour of their child when travelling to and from school.

Parents/carers & pupils covered by this policy

This policy applies to pupils of compulsory school age and their parents or carers who are resident within Leicester City.

A separate policy applies to pupils with special educational needs, as set out in their Education Health and Care Plans.

Eligibility criteria for pupils of compulsory school age

Free transport will be provided to a pupil if he or she attends the nearest qualifying school (see definitions) to their home address, where the distance from home to school is more than two miles for children aged under eight years old or three miles for those aged eight years old and over. The two mile and three-mile distances are measured using the shortest safe walking route.

Where a pupil chooses a school place more than the shortest safe walking distance because of parental choice, then no assistance will be provided.

Unsafe walking route

In circumstances where pupils are attending their catchment area or nearest qualifying school and where the walking route to school is less than the distances set out above but is assessed by the council as unsafe to walk (see definitions), the council will provide free transport.

Change of address – students in Year 11 only

For a pupil who changes address while in Year 11, transport will be provided free of charge to allow continued attendance at the same school if the following criteria apply:

- The student has already begun an examination course; and
- The walking distance from the new home to the school boundary is more than 3 miles but less than 15 miles; and
- The pupil is attending their catchment area school or the nearest available school to their old address.

Eligibility criteria for low income families

In addition to the eligibility criteria set out in Section 3 above, pupils from low income families may qualify for free transport as follows:

Primary school low income criteria

Pupils aged 8 to 11 years inclusive who are entitled to free school meals, or whose parent/carer is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, will receive free transport to their nearest qualifying school if they live more than two miles from that school, measured by the shortest safe walking route.

You can check your entitlement for free school meals here: [Free school meals \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/free-school-meals/)

Secondary school low income criteria

Pupils aged 11 to 16 inclusive who are entitled to free school meals, or whose parent/carer is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, or income related universal credit will receive free transport to one of the three nearest qualifying schools to their home address which are over two miles (measured by the shortest safe walking route) and less than six miles (measured by the shortest road route).

Transport under grounds of religion or belief

The council does not provide any discretionary transport to voluntary aided or faith schools. Free transport is only provided to pupils aged 11-16 who meet the low income criteria and who are attending the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief with a place available, provided they live between 2 miles (measured by the shortest safe walking route) and 15 miles (measured by the shortest road route) from the school.

Evidence of low-income criteria

Parents/carers applying under the low-income criteria may be required to produce evidence that they receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit to support their application.

Annual checks of entitlement will be made, so proof may be requested each year. If acceptable proof of benefit is not received upon request, then the transport assistance will be withdrawn with immediate effect.

Medical cases & temporary disability

In circumstances where the child is not able to walk to school or use public transport (when allocated with a free bus pass) as a result of an accident, planned surgery or an illness which results in a temporary disability, the council will consider a request for assistance with transport.

The parent/carer will be required to complete an application to explain why their child has a special transport need. This should be submitted to the Special Education Service by emailing SES-Admin@leicester.gov.uk They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional to support their application.

Specialist transport will be provided for a limited period based on the medical information available. The need for transport should be reviewed every six weeks and any request to continue transport will need to be supported by updated medical information.

Further information on transport on these grounds can be found in the document, "Home to School Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs, Disability or Mobility needs."

Parent or carer with a disability

The following criterion applies to children of statutory school age who have a parent or carer with a permanent or temporary disability. Where the council relies on a parent/carer accompanying a pupil along a walking route for it to be considered safe or to accompany a pupil between home and a picking up or setting down point but the parent or carers disability prevents them from doing so, then the council may provide free transport as a "reasonable adjustment" under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

The parent/carer will be required to complete an application to explain why their child has a special transport need. This should be submitted to the Special Education Service by emailing SES-Admin@leicester.gov.uk They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional to support their application.

Pupils living in temporary accommodation

Pupils from families which have to move into temporary accommodation for reasons outside their control will be able to apply for discretionary travel assistance to any city school which is over 2 miles from home, within Leicester City and accessible using the public transport network.

Reasons outside of parental control may include moving during emergency housing repair or movement to a women's refuge. Assistance is not provided where parents/carers go abroad for extended periods.

Transport to work experience and linked school/college placements

It is the responsibility of the pupil's parent/carer or their school to plan for any transport required for work experience placements and to enable pupils to attend a part-time placement at another school or college.

When free transport is provided by the council, it is only provided to and from the school at which the young person is in attendance.

Transport for transition days

It is the responsibility of the pupil's parent/carer or their existing school to plan for any transport required to support attendance at transition days.

Retrospective claims

The council will only meet the cost of transport that has been authorised in advance according to the published criteria. Retrospective applications to meet the cost of transport arranged by the parent/carer will be refused.

Errors

Where a pupil has been assessed as eligible for free or assisted transport in error, the provision will be withdrawn at the end of the term in which the error is brought to the attention of the parent/carer

Exceptional circumstances

In exceptional unforeseen circumstances (e.g. a house fire) and for a short period, consideration may be given to individual exceptional requests for transport assistance. Requests should be made in writing and supported with appropriate professional documentation. Each case will be considered on its merits by the Head of Service, School Organisation and Assets.

The following circumstances are not on their own likely to be regarded as exceptional:

- Single parent families.
- Temporary fragmentation of the family.
- Families in receipt of state benefit or re-housed families.
- Children in the same family attending different schools.
- Families moving to a new house who wish for their child to remain at their existing school.

Any temporary assistance that is provided will be subject to a review every 6 weeks to establish if support is still required.

How to apply for transport

Parents/carers should complete the 'under 16 free transport' form. This can be found online at [Free bus pass to school \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/free-bus-pass-to-school/)

All applications will be processed as quickly as possible. However, no travel costs incurred whilst waiting for a decision on Home to School Transport will be reimbursed.

Replacement passes

If a pass has been lost, stolen, damaged or confiscated, please contact the team to arrange a replacement:

Telephone: 0116 454 1009 (option 2)

Email:

Please note a replacement fee will be required. Any costs incurred whilst waiting for a replacement pass are non-refundable.

Appeals

An appeal process is available to parents who wish to challenge a decision about:

- The transport arrangements offered
- Their child's eligibility
- The distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances
- The safety of the route

Stage one: review by a senior officer

A parent/carer has 20 working days from the receipt of the local authority's home to school transport decision to make an appeal. The parent/carer should outline in writing the reason for their appeal and send this to the education transport team.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal, a senior officer will review the original decision and send the parents/carer notification of the outcome of their review.

Appeals can be emailed to: education.transport@leicester.gov.uk

Or posted to:

Mainstream School Transport,
Halford House,
91 Charles Street,
Leicester,
LE1 1HL

Stage two: review by an independent appeal panel

A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent's request, an independent appeal panel will consider representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and give a detailed written notification of the outcome within a further 5 working days.

The appeal panel members will be independent of the original decision making process (but are not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced (at the discretion of the local authority), to ensure a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parents and the local authority, and that road safety requirements are complied with and no child is placed at unnecessary risk.

Parents/carers are not required to attend the appeal in person, as their written representation will be considered by the panel.

Successful appeals

If an appeal for transport is successful at either stage, or a decision is taken to provide transport as an exception to the home to school transport policy, the decision will only apply to the student in question.

Transport costs incurred by the family between the initial decision and the outcome of the appeal will not be reimbursed.

Unsuccessful stage two appeals

Where a parent believes the local authority has failed to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled, they have the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman, the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted for help and advice on or 0300 061 0614.

Travel arrangements for students aged 16-19

The council does not provide discretionary transport to young people over statutory school age i.e. in school years 12, 13 or 14. When available, students may choose to purchase a bus pass via the Local Authority if they wish, subject to any published qualifying criteria. Further details are available in the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, which is published annually on the council's website.

Definitions

Compulsory school age

For the purpose of this policy, pupils will be assessed for free transport if an application has been made to the council and they are attending a primary school in the reception year (foundation two) through to the end of Year 11 in a secondary school. The council does not provide transport to enable children to attend a nursery school/early year setting in foundation one- or lower-year groups as this is not compulsory education.

Nearest Qualifying School

The "nearest qualifying school" is defined as a school that:

- Is maintained by the council (“state schools”), a pupil referral unit, or a non-maintained special school, an Academy, or a Free School. This includes community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, foundation and trust schools.
- Had a space available at the time the Admissions application was originally made.
- Is appropriate for the pupil’s age, ability and aptitude (including any special needs) and takes into account the impact upon parents on low income i.e. who are receiving the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, universal credit or whose children qualify for free school meals who have expressed a preference for a particular school because of their religious or philosophical beliefs.
- Represents an efficient use of the local authority’s resources.

Home address

This is the address where the pupil resides with their parent or carer during the school week. In circumstances where the pupil resides at more than one address during the week, the address that must be used in the application for free transport is the address of the person who receives the child benefit. A bus pass issued by the council will allow the pupil to travel on a designated route at the start and end of the school day during term time only.

Shortest safe walking route

When considering if a route is a safe walking route, it is assumed that the pupil is accompanied by a responsible adult where necessary. Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route, which can include the use of public footpaths.



Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Home to School and College Travel Policy April 2022

Policy statement update

This policy remains applicable until the end 2023/2024 academic year.

A decision notice, dated 25 March 2022, was issued to discontinue travel support for young people over the age of 16 years. The formal implementation of this decision commenced on 1 April 2022.

However, at the time it was agreed that two-year transitional arrangements would be put in place. The two-year transitional period is due to end in March 2024, but the council has agreed to withdraw the travel support at the end of the current academic school year on the 12 July 2024. This is to give parents / carers as much time as possible to make alternative arrangements.

An updated [post-16 transport policy statement for the academic year 2024/2025](#) is now available.

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1. Introduction

It is parents and carers responsibility to ensure their child or young person attends the education provision identified for them. Within this policy we aim to promote and support parental duties further through offering different travel options (where eligible).

Local authorities have a responsibility to encourage, enable, support and assist young people with learning difficulties/ disabilities to participate in education and training. This policy looks to promote and encourage the independence and social inclusion for children and young people. It also promotes the council's commitment to support children and young people to develop their independence, enabling them to prepare for adulthood.

This policy sets out how Leicester City Council will meet its obligations to provide home to school and college travel to children and young people with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities, living in Leicester who are eligible to receive it. The policy also gives advice on the support available and the commitment to encourage independent travel to and from school or college.

When considering whether to provide home to school travel assistance, Local Authorities (LA's) are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Education Act 1996 and Schedule 35B of the Act which was inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 508B and 508C of the Act makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. Leicester City Council has developed its travel policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty.

It is important that families understand the eligibility criteria and whether their child is likely to meet this before taking the time to make an application. In most instances, children will not meet the statutory conditions for travel assistance.

It is strongly recommended that all parents read this guidance carefully along with the information on our website at [Travel to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/travel-to-school-and-college/)

2. Travel principles and policy

Leicester City Council is committed to working together with young people, families, schools and colleges to ensure that:

- Children and young people are safe and supported to access education.
- Young people and families have confidence in the travel offer.

Parents and carers have a duty to:

- Ensure their child(ren) receive an education via ensuring they attend school or college.
- Make the necessary travel arrangements for their child(ren) to attend regularly.
- Ensure their child attends the educational establishment identified for them.

The council recognises that:

- The travel offer should respond to and be based on the needs of children and young people as they develop and progress and should promote and encourage their independence and social inclusion.
- Any travel assistance provided by the council is based on the needs of the child or young person and is provided to support young people and children to follow an appropriate educational course. The needs of the child and the travel provision will be periodically reviewed to ensure the child or young person is still accessing the most appropriate travel method.
- The council has a duty to support and enable young people to develop and achieve independence to enable them to prepare for adulthood.
- Encouraging young people's independence will develop their skills for better experience in adult life, their confidence and social skills, and increase their opportunities for continuing education, training and social inclusion.

The council also has a duty to:

- Manage public money responsibly.
- Provide value for money services.
- Promote the use of sustainable transport and travel.

If eligible for travel assistance, this will only be provided from the child's home to the school or college at which they are on roll at the beginning and end of the normal school day.

If the child attends another school or establishment that is arranged through their school as off-site provision, it will be the school/parent's responsibility to arrange travel to and from that school or establishment, for their off-site learning.

The child's address will normally be the one that they spend the most school nights at, and any travel arrangements to or from an alternative address will be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.

Parents regular work commitments or domestic arrangements will not normally be taken into account when deciding the eligibility of a child or young person or the type of assistance offered.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child is prepared and ready to travel, at their pickup points at the right time, and that any behavioural concerns whilst travelling are positively managed. In very rare instances where there are serious safeguarding concerns travel will be denied.

Travel assistance will not be provided for any medical appointments or domestic arrangements, or for the child to go to or from a different address other than their main residence. Travel assistance is not provided for breakfast or after school clubs or activities.

3. Eligibility criteria

3.1 Pre-school children with SEND

Travel assistance for children under the age of five is **discretionary** as council's have no legal duty to provide or arrange travel for children who have not yet reached the statutory school age. However, travel applications will be considered for children below statutory school age in exceptional circumstances.

In considering these circumstances, the council will need to be satisfied that, without such assistance, the child would be prevented from attending an appropriate nursery or early years' education setting.

In considering assistance for pre-school children, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The age of the child.
- The distance between home and nursery.
- The SEN and disabilities of the child.
- The reasons for the pre-school placement.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form to demonstrate that the child has a special educational need, disability or mobility need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

3.2 Compulsory school-aged children aged 5-16 with SEND

Compulsory school age begins at the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June of the school year in which a child or young person turns 16.

There are four factors which may determine if children and young people aged 5-16 are eligible for travel assistance:

- Statutory walking distance eligibility.
- SEND or significant mobility problems eligibility.
- Unsafe route eligibility.
- Extended rights eligibility.

Eligibility Review

Eligibility will be reviewed each academic year and the type of travel will be reviewed annually. This review will determine whether a child or young person continues to be eligible for travel assistance, and where eligible, that the type and level of assistance is most appropriate to their needs as they develop independence and transition into adulthood.

Set out in law/legislation and with our Mainstream Travel Policy children are eligible for travel in the following circumstances.

Statutory Walking Distance

The council is required to provide free travel assistance options for all children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16). This will be assessed using the distance to the nearest qualifying school to their home when they are unable to walk the statutory distance to safely even when accompanied by an adult, if their nearest suitable school is:

- Beyond 2 miles, if below the age of 8; or
- Beyond 3 miles, if aged between 8 and 16.

The nearest suitable school is defined as the nearest school with places available and which the council deems to provide education appropriate to the age, aptitude and ability of the young person, and any special educational needs or disability they may have.

When establishing whether the nearest suitable school is within walking distance, the distance between home and school will be measured by the shortest available safe walking route, accompanied as necessary. The route may include footpaths and other pathways as long as it is safe to walk along them.

SEND or mobility difficulties

In circumstances where a child with a special educational need, disability or mobility need is able to use public travel, even when accompanied, they will be assessed using the same criteria as all other children.

The council is required to provide travel assistance for children and young people unable to walk to school by reason of their special educational needs, disability or significant mobility difficulty.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form in order to demonstrate that the child has a special travel need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

Unsafe walking route

The council is required to make travel assistance arrangements for children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk even when accompanied by an adult.

Extended rights eligibility (for low-income families)

For low-income families i.e. for children entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, eligibility for free travel assistance is extended as follows:

- For children aged between 8 and 11, the walking distance is reduced from 3 to 2 miles.
- secondary age children (11 – 16) can receive free travel assistance to any of their three nearest suitable schools but only where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles but less than 6 (**Note:** schools below 2 miles are included when assessing which are the 3 nearest).
- for secondary age children (11 – 16), the council will provide free travel assistance to the nearest suitable school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief (including any single sex school in the city), if it is over 2 miles and under 15 miles from the home address. The council will normally seek documentary evidence of faith or belief e.g. a minister's letter.

The council will review travel assistance under the extended rights eligibility rules on an annual basis. Free travel may be withdrawn in subsequent years if a child ceases to qualify under low income extended rights.

Travel will not be provided where suitable arrangements have been made by the council to enable the child to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to the child's home.

In addition to the above, those children with Special Education Needs and/or disabilities Annual Review

When a Personal Travel Budget or SEND travel is agreed for a child with a statement of special educational needs or an EHCP, travel arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis at the statement/plan review meeting. Parents / carers will be expected to sign a declaration agreeing to the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Preparing for Travel arrangements once your child reaches age 14

When your child reaches the age of 14, the council will write to parents and carers who have a child currently receiving a form of council travel assistance. We will reiterate the responsibility of the parent and carer to arrange travel from home to school, and provide the date that travel provided by the council will stop. The council **does not** have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18.

This two-year transition period will give parents and carers the opportunity to make suitable arrangements for transporting their child to their chosen educational establishment once they reach age 16.

3.3 Post 16 (young people 16-19) with SEND

The council **does not** have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18.

Schools with sixth form provision and colleges of further education have some funding known as bursary funding available to help students age 16-19 with expenses connected with their study, including travel costs.

As it is not a statutory requirement to provide Post 16-year-olds travel assistance, the council expect all eligible students to apply for a bursary fund.

Bursary funding is paid to schools and colleges who decide how they allocate their funds. Enquiries about support for school or college travel expenses should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned.

Students who are in one or more of the groups below can apply for a vulnerable student bursary of up to £1,200 (if they are participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more - institutions should pay a pro-rata amount for students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks). This reflects that students in these groups may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- getting [Income Support \(IS\)](#), or [Universal Credit \(UC\)](#) in place of Income Support, in their own right
- getting [Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\)](#) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or [Personal Independence Payments](#) in their own right

Enquiries about applying for a vulnerable student bursary should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned. For further details see: [Guidance: 16 to 19 education: financial support for students \(GOV.UK\)](#).

Many young people with SEND are able to travel independently using public travel, and the council encourages parents and carers to work with us to support young people to do so. As part of Preparing for Adulthood, as detailed on our [Local Offer Page](#), we also support Young People with Independent Travel Training.

However, The council may provide travel assistance for Post 16-year-old students who have complex SEND which affect their ability to travel or use public travel independently. To be considered for travel assistance, a young person needs to:

- be resident in Leicester City
- have started their current programme of education/training prior to their 19th birthday
- be attending the nearest appropriate education or training provider that is more than 3 miles walking distance from their home unless the young person's disability impacts on their ability to walk this distance or the walking route is deemed unsafe
- be attending a full-time, publicly funded course (a full-time course is a programme of at least 540 study hours per year)

Eligibility decisions will also take into account the following factors:

- Whether the student has additional needs or a disability that places them or others at a serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school;
- Whether the student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle, e.g. tail-lift access;
- Whether the student is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school;
- The complexity of the journey.

- Travel must be an essential requirement to fulfil the learning outcomes identified in the EHCP.

3.4 Young people aged 19-25 with SEND

Travel arrangements made for a young person aged under 19 may continue to be provided up to the end of the academic year in which a young person turns 19 years of age. However, the council recognises that that a learner with significant special educational needs and disabilities may take longer to complete a programme of learning and training, therefore the council **may** extend the travel assistance arrangements until a learner has completed their programme, even if that is after they have reached the age of 19.

The council will consider providing travel assistance for young people aged 19 to 25 (who are subject to an EHC plan) in the following circumstances only:

- Where the council considers it necessary to facilitate the attendance of a learner receiving education at institutions which are maintained or assisted by a local authority and are providing further education, or other institutions within the further education sector.
- sector.

Or

- Where the council has secured the provision of education or training outside the further education sector **and** the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training, and the council considers that the provision of travel assistance is necessary to facilitate the learner's attendance.

Assessments

As part of the statutory assessment process, which may lead to an EHCP the council receives written reports from a range of professionals, such as a school, educational psychologist and medical or clinical professionals. When an application for travel support is received the local authority will consider the information contained in these reports to determine whether pupils meet the SEND Travel / Personal Travel Budget eligibility criteria.

4. Type of travel assistance available

Personal travel budget (PTB)

Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) are designed to give families the freedom and to flexibility to make travel arrangements that best meet their family's needs. They enable parents to retain responsibility for ensuring their child attends school whilst providing the means to do so when the child is eligible.

For further information and to apply please see [Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/family-information/personal-travel-budget/)

Independent travel training (ITT)

Independent travel training provides young people with tailored and practical assistance to travel safely by public travel, on foot or by bicycle to their school, college and placement. It also supports young people socially, to access other key services and connect with friends and family.

Independent travel is an essential life skill, and helps to better prepare young people for adulthood, and for accessing further education and employment by raising their confidence in their abilities.

The council's Independent Travel Trainer's will work with schools and colleges to be able to deliver travel training to their students.

If a young person is identified as potentially suitable for travel training, their parent/carer will be contacted by the council or their school to arrange a consultation with the nominated travel trainer.

Following the consultation, the young person and family (where appropriate) will then be supported to undertake the training programme. If they are not ready or suitable for training, a future review date will be set, and they will continue to be provided with travel assistance.

Further information about [Independent Travel Training can be found on our Local Offer page](#).

Public transport bus pass

Some 5–16-year-olds will qualify for free home to school travel assistance to their primary or secondary school. [View details of eligibility and how to apply \(leicester.gov.uk website\)](#).

Contracted minibus, private hire vehicle or taxi, including:

- Pick up and drop off from/to a collection point or central location locally
- Shared or individual, private hire vehicle or minibus for groups of young people
- Individual taxi, private hire vehicle or minibus for solo travellers (exceptional circumstances only)

4.1 Travel service provision

Leicester City Council aims to make travel arrangements that allow eligible pupils to travel in safety and reasonable comfort, without the journey being unreasonably long or complicated, and

arrive at school without such stress, strain, or difficulty that they are prevented from benefitting from the education provided.

It is the council's policy to review travel assistance arrangements annually or at times of transition, in consultation with service providers, to minimise surplus places on vehicles and the total number of vehicles used. The council will endeavour to coordinate dedicated school travel journeys and local public bus services to ensure that best value for money and efficiency of service is achieved.

The council will determine the overall level of service, the number and type of vehicles, and the seating capacity requirements to meet the travel needs of pupils and students, taking the following into account:

- the regulations relating to the provision of passenger travel services.
- that a single journey to or from school should ideally not exceed 75 minutes including the time taken for a change of bus – though this is not always possible where services operate to more than one school or site.
- that pupils should not be expected to change buses more than once within a single journey to or from school.
- that it is desirable in the interests of safety and comfort to provide a seat for each pupil/student – though this is not always possible when local public travel services are used.
- that services coordinate with school or college session times (provided that the appropriate notice and procedures required by education legislation have been followed). Head Teachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are requested to consult with the council as soon as possible on proposed changes to session times, so that the effect of any change can be assessed.
- that Head Teachers, parents and other interested parties must be consulted regarding proposed changes to the SEND Home to School Travel policy.
- that service delivery must be monitored, and complaints dealt with as soon as possible to ensure quality, efficiency and reliability.
- the promotion of the use of sustainable travel and travel modes.
- the promotion of equal opportunities.

Passenger Assistants

The council will determine whether it is necessary to provide a passenger assistant, supervisor or other facilities (e.g., on-bus communication facilities) on any of the vehicles used based on individual needs.

Some pupils with special travel needs may require a passenger assistant for the home to school journey. The SEN Officer will decide if a passenger assistant is necessary, taking individual circumstances into consideration:

Under these circumstances, the parent/carer may be required to act as the escort for their child. If the journey is beyond the maximum walking distance, the parent would be driven home from the morning school drop and picked up in the afternoon for the return journey. If the journey is less than the maximum walking distance, the parent would be expected to walk home after the morning drop and walk back to the school for the afternoon pick-up.

Travel to and from pick-up / drop-off points

In most cases parents/carers will be expected to accompany their child to a pick-up point identified by the Passenger Travel Team. Pick-up points will be safe and appropriate places for vehicles to pull up and wait. Every effort will be made to minimise the distance to and from pick-up and drop off points but the nearest pick-up point may be up to half a mile away from home for primary age pupils and up to 1 mile away from home for secondary age pupils and Post-16 students.

The pick-up points and times may change throughout the year, as routes will be regularly reviewed following changes to passenger lists. The council will endeavour to give reasonable notice (4 weeks) of any such changes.

Parents/carers must ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place for their child's walk between home and the pick-up point at the beginning and end of the school day.

Travel to and from home addresses

The duty placed on the council does not extend to the provision of a "door to door" service, however, for a very few applicants, exceptional circumstances may result in travel arrangements being made to and from the home address. If a pupil has more than one place that may be considered a home address, parents/carers must nominate a single address for travel purposes. Arrangements cannot be made for multiple addresses.

Review of Travel Arrangements

All travel arrangements will be reviewed annually or at times of transition to assess whether the basis for entitlement has changed or whether the mode of travel assistance provided remains appropriate. Travel assistance entitlement will be re-assessed if the home address, pupil needs, educational establishment or course details change.

Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students will be given reasonable notice (4 weeks) if it is decided to withdraw or significantly alter the means of travel assistance.

If parents/carers and/or Post-16 students request a variation to the current travel arrangements, the council will require reasonable notice (3 weeks) of the change and will apply the relevant assessment criteria. Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students may be required to make and pay for their own interim travel arrangements in the period between application and, if approved, the receipt of any travel assistance provided under this policy.

Post-16 students will be expected to maintain both satisfactory attendance and progress, and these factors will be taken into account when reviewing entitlement to travel assistance.

Any amendment to, or withdrawal of, travel assistance does not excuse a child of compulsory school age from attending school and it will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child's continued attendance at school.

Behaviour Whilst Travelling

The health and safety of drivers and passengers is dependent on good pupil behaviour, alongside positive management of behaviours from drivers and passenger assistants, in line with legislation and the council's safeguarding policies. The council takes a serious view of incidents of poor conduct.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers head teachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises. Persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school can be grounds for exclusion.

In some cases, if either the council or a travel operator refuses to allow a pupil to continue to access a particular vehicle due to the pupil's poor conduct, an alternative arrangement may be offered, but only after an assessment of the nature and seriousness of the case.

In the event of a serious incident of indiscipline, vandalism, or anti-social behaviour, or persistent offences of this nature, travel provision may be permanently withdrawn. In these cases the LA would not be implying that travel arrangements were not necessary and should not be provided, but rather that travel arrangements were necessary and had been made but the pupil's behaviour was such that they were unable to take advantage of them. If these circumstances arise, no alternative travel assistance arrangements will be made.

If travel is temporarily or permanently withdrawn parents would be responsible for getting their children to school and for any costs incurred.

Our commitment to promoting independence and choice

Alongside the existing schemes detailed in this policy, Leicester City Council will continue to explore and promote additional ways of promoting independence and choice for children in the City with home to school travel. We will work with families and schools to develop and promote new ideas and pilot schemes where appropriate.

5. How to apply

Applications for travel for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (excluding those attending a college of further education) should be made via the website:

[Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/family-information/personal-travel-budget)

Applications for travel assistance for students age 16 and above in colleges of further education to commence at the start of the Autumn Term should be made wherever possible by the last day of the summer term prior to the start of the new academic year. The LA cannot guarantee to provide travel assistance from the first day of the Autumn Term if applications are received after this date. Where late applications are submitted, parents/carers and/or sixth form students may have to make their own interim travel arrangements, the cost of which cannot normally be reimbursed.

Young people attending Further Education establishments will need to re-apply annually, providing evidence of both satisfactory attendance and progress.

6. How decisions are Made

For all children and young people with SEN and disabilities, a travel eligibility assessment will be undertaken by the Special Educational Needs Service at the point of application, and reviewed yearly or when circumstances change, e.g. a change of educational establishment, change of home address.

The information used for the assessment is gathered from various sources including:

- School reports
- Parents
- The young person
- Medical reports (including CAMHs)
- Social care
- Education, health and care plans

The travel assistance eligibility assessment or review will consider the individual needs of the child or young person in 6 key areas:

- Mobility
- Medical needs
- Behavioural issues
- Vulnerability
- Practicality
- Independence and Independent Travel Training suitability

When the assessment is completed, the SEN Service will decide whether or not a child or young person is eligible as a result of their SEN and disability to travel assistance, the type of travel assistance to be offered, and whether or not it is appropriate to offer Independent Travel Training.

7. How to appeal if you are unhappy with a decision

Appeals Process for pupils with a special educational need or disability

Should parents/carers wish to appeal against the council's decision not to provide travel or against the mode of travel provided they should write to

Transport Appeals
Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

The council has a 2-stage review and appeals process as recommended by the Department for Education. The timings for responses may be extended if additional time is required to gather supporting information or delayed by school/college holidays.

Please note that whilst the review and appeal process takes place the parent/carer will remain responsible for arranging and funding for any travel arrangements that a parent/carer may feel is necessary. Throughout the appeals process parents make wish to seek independent advocacy support and advice.

The appeals procedure is in two stages:

Stage 1: Review by a Senior Officer of the council.

- A parent/carer has 20 working days from the date of the travel decision letter, to make a formal written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent/carer or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances, including medical evidence, they believe should be considered when making the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of a written request, a Senior Officer will review the original decision and send a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, including information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate)

Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel:

- If a parent/carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their case, they have 20 working days from the receipt of their decision letter to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer's written request an Independent Appeal Panel will be arranged to consider both written and (if the parent /carer wishes to attend the panel hearing) verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in their case.

The Independent Appeal Panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process (but not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced, to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of the parent/carers and the local authority.

If a parent/carers or student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, there is no further right of appeal to the council. However, there is still the right to appeal to the Secretary of State or to take independent legal action.

If a parent/carers or young person feels that their appeal has not been treated fairly or in accordance with the LA's policy, the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted for help and advice on 0300 061 0614 or via their website: lgo.org.uk.

8. The legal framework

S508B and 508C of the Education Act (the "Act") make provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. The provisions apply to home to school travel arrangements and vice versa.

Under s444 of the same Act, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

S508B of the Act deals with the duty on local authority to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5 – 16) in an authority's area for whom free travel arrangements will be required.

The categories of eligible children include those who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special education needs or disability. Eligibility, for such children, should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular travel arrangements.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk the local authority will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied, and if so, whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.

The council has a statutory duty under Section 10 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to exercise its functions so as to promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area with a view to ensuring that those persons participate in appropriate full-time education or training, an apprenticeship, or are in full time occupation and participate in sufficient relevant training, all pursuant to section 2 of the 2008 Act.

The council also has a statutory duty to publish a Post 16 Travel Policy Statement every year. This statement should set out the arrangements for the provision of travel or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age at:

- schools,
- institutions maintained or assisted by the authority which provides further education or higher education or both
- institutions within the further education sector, any 16-19 academy or any other establishment at which the authority secures the provision of education or training.

Post 16 travel to education and training statutory guidance dated February 2014 requires the council, in planning travel provision to take into account its duty to promote effective participation under the 2008 act and the duty under section 2 of that act on young people to participate in education or training up to age 18.

SEND Code of Practice 2015.

The Code of Practice (Special Educational Needs and Disability 2015) indicates that transport should be recorded in an Education, Health Care Plan only in exceptional cases where the child has very specific travel needs.

Equality Act 2010

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: Equality Act 2010 section 149(1).

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7)

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
- The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.
- Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.



Post-16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2024-2025

The council's transport policy statement for young people aged 16-18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19-24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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1. Introduction

Local authorities (LAs) **do not** have to provide free or subsidised Post-16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of travel or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

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

‘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 (Year 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 Leicester City 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, and learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which can lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

2. Aims and objectives

This document describes the support available to young people of Leicester entering or continuing with full-time Post-16 Education. It gives information from the local authority, schools, academies, and further education colleges and other relevant sources.

The aim is to provide the most up to date details of the support available from various sources to encourage participation and prevent travel being a barrier to young learners.

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

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

3. Transport and travel support

Concessionary tickets for young people 16 – 25 from public transport providers

Many local operators have student season tickets available offering discounts compared to normal adult fares and/or at cheaper rates when bought on a termly or academic year basis. It is advised students contact the bus-operators directly as below:

Bus Operators

- [Arriva website](#)
- [Centrebus website](#)
- [First Leicester website](#)
- [Kinchbus website](#)
- [Stagecoach website](#)
- [Vectare website](#)

Train Services

Train services are available throughout Leicester and Leicestershire, with the option to purchase either a 16 - 17 saver railcard or 16 - 25 railcard to receive up to 1/3 off the price of eligible train tickets.

- [East Midlands Railway website](#)

Dedicated school buses

Similarly, some of Leicester and Leicestershire's mainstream schools have commercial school special services operating to them. More information can be found directly from your school and the main operators of such services are:

- [Confidence Bus & Coach Hire – home to school bus routes website](#)
- [Beaver Bus – school buses website](#)
- [Roberts Travel Group - school transport website](#)
- [G.H.Watts – school buses website](#)

4. Travel support from schools and colleges

Some of Leicester's secondary schools, academies and sixth form/FE colleges have additional bus contract arrangements on which learners or their parents can purchase places. Some FE colleges also offer direct support to students. Arrangements vary between schools and colleges, so it is always best to check directly with the individual schools/colleges for details.

You can find details of all Leicester schools on the council's website (this will also give you a link to the school's individual website): [Schools Directory \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/schools-directory/)

Contact details and websites for all the Leicester and Leicestershire further education colleges are shown below:

Brooksby Melton College (Leicestershire):

Contact the Travel Department on:

Telephone: 0166 485 5211

Email: travel@brooksbymelton.ac.uk

Information available at interview and in 16-18 Travel Guide by visiting: brooksbymelton.ac.uk

Gateway Sixth Form College (Leicester):

Telephone: 0116 274 4500

(Student services)

Email: studentservices@gateway.ac.uk

Website: gateway.ac.uk

Leicester College (Leicester):

To discuss any travel queries with a member of the Student Advice and Guidance Team: Telephone: 0116 224 2240 or 0116 224 4048

For information regarding travel provision for students with learning difficulties contact the Travel Coordinator:

Telephone: 0116 224 2240 extension 2098

For any other travel queries:

Website: leicestercollege.ac.uk

Email: info@leicestercollege.ac.uk

Loughborough College (Leicestershire):

Telephone: 0150 951 7140

Email: support@loucoll.ac.uk

Website: loucoll.ac.uk

North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College (Leicestershire):

Customer Service Team:

Telephone: 0330 058 3000

Email: enquiries@nwslc.ac.uk

Website: nwslc.ac.uk

Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College (Leicester):

Divisional administrators 'The Hub'

Telephone: 0116 255 4629

Email: enquiries@wqe.ac.uk

Website: wqe.ac.uk

Stephenson College (Leicestershire):

Telephone: 0153 083 6136

Email: services@stephensoncoll.ac.uk

Website: stephensoncoll.ac.uk

5. Travel support from the government

5.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - in care
 - care leavers
 - in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
 - discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, books and equipment
2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2024 or

- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2024 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2024 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a government funding agency or the local authority

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information: [16 to 19 Bursary Fund webpage \(GOV.UK\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund)

5.2 Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn support can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £180 per child per week, while you're learning.

Care to Learn support can help with the cost of:

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

Types of childcare

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn support for looking after your child, they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

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

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn support if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn support is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19-25 card.

For more information, please visit [Care to Learn scheme webpage \(GOV.UK\)](#)

6. Council support for young people without special educational needs or disabilities

Please note that there are **no free bus passes available for learners aged 16-19 through the city council**. However, a joint operator bus pass is available to purchase for Leicester resident pupils over statutory school age if the student is aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of the college year.

The pass allows travel on multiple bus operators (including First and Arriva buses) to get to school/college within the Leicester flexi-area. Full details can be found on the [Choose How You Move website](#). Choose How You Move is a partnership project between Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council, funded by the Department for Transport.

If you only need to use a bus from one operator, you can purchase a season ticket directly from a commercial bus operator. You could get better value in terms of price and flexibility by purchasing a season ticket directly from a commercial bus operator. Before you apply for any bus pass, we strongly urge you to consider all the commercially available alternatives.

Most commercially available season tickets allow you to travel at any time and on any day including weekends.

Please visit the websites listed below for more information on commercial bus services in your area and the range of student season tickets and multi-trip tickets that are currently available. Please check these websites regularly for any special offers.

- [Arriva student tickets](#)
- [Centrebus student tickets](#)
- [First Leicester student tickets](#)
- [Kinchbus student tickets](#)
- [Stagecoach student tickets](#)
- [Vectare student tickets](#)

7. Council support for young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

The government requires young people to continue in education or training until at least the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. The government has been clear that raising the participation age is not about increasing the statutory school leaving age as young people will be able to participate through a range of options.

For those young people with special educational needs, who have an EHCP, which indicates a transport need, they will continue to receive assistance with transport between the ages of 16 and 25. The local authority has a discretionary power to provide transport assistance to those over compulsory school age.

You can contact the SES team on:

Email ses-admin@leicester.gov.uk

Website: [SEND Local Offer \(Family Information website\)](#)

Many young people with SEND are able to travel independently or accompanied by a parent, carer, or guardian, using public transport, and the council cannot offer services to replace parental responsibility.

Our policy, in line with national statutory guidance, is to expect parents to carry out their responsibilities.

As part of the Preparing for Adulthood strategy, as detailed on our [Local Offer website](#), we support Young People with SEND with Independent Travel Training.

8. Apprenticeships

For students on traineeships or apprenticeships, the learning provider is responsible for ensuring that reasonable expenses are met in full where they are needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the cost of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Please contact your learning provider for more information. Students may also be eligible for a bursary (see 5.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund section above).

9. Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Connexions Leicester is a careers service for young people who live in Leicester City and are aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Connexions also have specialist personal advisers who are trained to work with young people with SEND to help them make decisions about their future.

Please contact:

Telephone: 0116 454 1770

Email: connexions@leicester.gov.uk

Address:

Connexions,

2 Wellington Street,
Leicester,
LE1 6HL
[Leicester Employment Hub website](#)

10. Useful contact details

10.1 Leicester City Council

If you want information about the assistance that is provided by Leicester City Council for mainstream pupils, call Education Travel by:

Telephone: 0116 454 1009 (Option 2)

Or visit the [School travel website \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk/school-travel)

If you need individual special needs travel assistance, call the Special Education Service on 0116 454 2050 or email ses-admin@leicester.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can write to us at:

SEND Transport
SEND Support Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

10.2 Department for Education

[Subsidised college travel 16 to 19 website \(GOV.UK\)](http://gov.uk/guidance/subsidised-college-travel-16-to-19)

10.3 Bus routes and timetable information

Telephone: 0871 200 2233 (calls cost 12p per minute plus your phone company's access charge)

Telephone: 0145 563 2719

[Traveline website](#)

10.4 Learner Support Service

Residential Support Scheme

[Residential support scheme website \(GOV.UK\)](http://gov.uk/guidance/residential-support-scheme)

11. Applying for council travel support

Please note that there are **no free bus passes available for learners aged 16-19 through the city council**. However, a joint operator bus pass is available to purchase for Leicester resident pupils over statutory school age if the student is aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of the college year. See Section 6 for further details around the joint operator pass.

To be sure of obtaining a pass from the start of the autumn term, students should apply as soon as possible after 1 July. If your application is received shortly before the start of term, students may not receive their pass in time for the start of their course. If a course depends on GCSE results, students should apply anyway and return the bus pass if the course is not taken up.

For SEND Transport requests, this will be addressed within the statutory assessment process for an Education, Health and Care Plan, for further information contact:

Telephone: 0116 454 2050

Email: ses-admin@leicester.gov.uk

12. Mainstream transport appeals and complaints

The process to appeal against a decision or to complain may be made on behalf of a learner or by their families who wish to challenge a decision about the support available from the local authority.

Telephone: 0116 454 1009 (option 2)

Email: education.transport@leicester.gov.uk

Write to us at:

Transport Appeals
Special Education Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

Draft Policy Communications Plan

Project Details	
Policy	Draft SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy for the academic years 2025/2026 to 2027/2028 / Draft 2025/2026 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement
Communications Lead	Sarah Bywater / Alexandra Barker
Lead Commissioner	Maria Coulson

Version	Date	Author	Amendment Details
v0.1	09.07.2024	Maria Coulson	Initial draft communications plan
v0.2	21.08.2024	Maria Coulson	Questions developed following Childrens Strategic Commissioning team development work with Director of SEND and Education and Communications team
V0.3	19.09.2024	Maria Coulson	Updated following LCC legal advice
V0.4	21.10.2024	Maria Coulson	Updated following further legal advice
V0.5	29.10.2024	Maria Coulson	Updated following further legal advice and incorporating news release
V0.6	04.11.2024	Maria Coulson	Updated following further legal advice and developing appendices
V0.7	06.11.2024	Maria Coulson	Updated following comms development
V0.8	07.01.2025	Maria Coulson	Signed off version implemented

1. Purpose, aims and objectives

- 1.1 To provide clarity and follow up communication to key stakeholders regarding the SEND transport policies for the 2024/2025 academic year. To detail the proposed consultation and broader communication approach for:
- the Draft SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy for the academic years 2025/2026 to 2027/2028
 - the Draft 2025/2026 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement

2. Communication risks

- 2.1 Failure to communicate effectively could contribute to a perception of poor communication with stakeholders.
- 2.2 The rules surrounding SEND transport are quite ambiguous and much depends on councils taking an informed, objective view of each individual child / young person's circumstances. This means that all policies have an element of ambiguity for people who rely on them (across all councils).

3. Audience

- 3.2 The focus will be on young people, particularly those with SEND, their parents / carers and Education providers.
- 3.3 Key messages:
- The council cares about families who have SEND children and young people and is committed to supporting them to thrive in education.
 - Due to financial limitations the way that the council meets need has to change. There is a risk that some young people will become not employed, in education or training (NEET). This has a knock on effect to benefit entitlement.
 - Consistency and clarity of approach is an important part of families understanding what support will be provided in the future. The assessment of eligibility is changing for post-16 learners, such that those who have previously benefitted from support may no longer be eligible.
 - Policy will be consistently and robustly implemented in the 2025/2026 academic year across all ages.
 - Policy implementation will mean that some families may need to make arrangements to ensure that they can meet their legal parental responsibility.
 - Financial implications are a factor as funding to exercise discretionary support is not in place.

4. Communication methods:

Audience	Direct Comms	Meeting (could be virtual)	Social Media	Schools Extranet	Partner Comms	LCC website	Members bulletin
All residents – consultation on Citizen Space for 8 weeks						✓	
Parents/ carers of all CYP in receipt of SEND Transport 2024 / 2025	✓						
City Mayor / executive		✓					
Ward Councillor's							✓
Schools and colleges		✓		✓			
Parent Carer Forum	✓	✓					
Independent Schools and Colleges	✓						
SEND Staff Social Care & Education Staff	✓						
MP's	✓						
News release			✓			✓	
Other providers including SENDIASS	✓						
Unions	✓						
Big Mouth Forum	✓	✓					

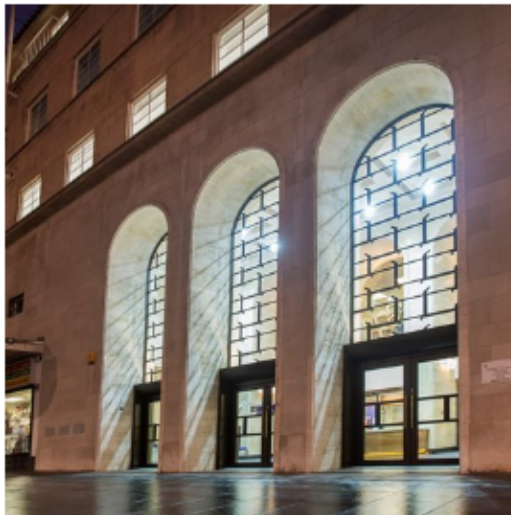
Appendix 1 –Actual News Release – published on 07.11.2024

[Consultation under way on school transport funding](#)

Consultation under way on school transport funding

Published on Thursday, November 7, 2024

🕒 1 minute read



PEOPLE are being asked for their views on council proposals to end school transport funding for young people aged 16 and over who have special educational needs and disability (SEND).

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

Launched today (7 November) the new consultation asks for views on a revised SEND transport policy, and how it will

impact parents and children.

The proposed new policy includes the general withdrawal of support for post-16 transport for the academic year 2025/26. It also sets out in detail where exceptions will be made to this.

Cllr Elaine Pantling, asst city mayor for education and SEND said: "It's important that we hear the views of all those who would be affected by this proposal.

"We are writing directly to parents and carers to encourage them to take part in the consultation, and also talking to schools and local groups such as the Parent Carer Forum and the Big Mouth Forum, which is made up of young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

"I would urge anyone with a view to look at our online consultation and to have their say."

The council's budget is in crisis due to years of government austerity, rising costs of adult social care, more children being looked after by the council and an increase in homeless families. The council is expecting a substantial gap between its spending and its income in 2025/26, and needs to take all the opportunities it can to reduce cost.

The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

The consultation will run until 2 January and can be found on the council's [website](#).

Appendix 2. Consultation questions

As with all consultations this is an online form. There are different flows for different people answering questions.

[Post-16 education transport for young people with SEND - Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

The proposed policy and consultation question approach were developed following:

- Lead Commissioner attendance at the Big Mouth forum on 15 August 2024 to listen to the concerns that young people have surrounding travel.
- Director of SEND and Education, Lead Commissioner and LCC Communications Team forums with parents involved with previous legal challenges in this area and the Parent Carer Forum.
- Details of the questions and approach were shared with the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee on 01.10.2024 for their information.

A separate appendix to the consultation report contains details of all questions and responses.

Appendix 3. Letter emailed to all parents/ carers in receipt of SEND Transport support provided by Leicester City Council when the consultation opened on 07.11.2024

Dear Parent / Carer,

Re: Transport policy consultation – proposed changes to Post 16 SEND transport service provision

Earlier this year we said we would consult again on our proposals to amend the home to school and college transport policies. Between now and the 2 January 2025 the consultation is open and you have an opportunity to tell us what you think about those proposed policies.

As with many parts of the country, the council has to change services to fit within the budgets it has available. This means we have had to propose changes that affect transport for young people with SEND who are over compulsory school age. These potential changes include:

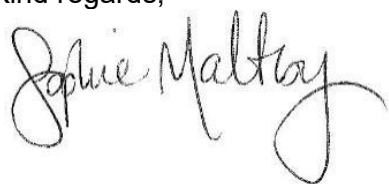
- The general withdrawal of post 16 SEND Transport support for the academic year 2025/26.
- Very limited 'exceptional circumstances' when the council provides post 16 SEND transport support and the type of support offered will be in the form of a personal transport budget.
- There are also a few smaller changes to the policy for all children, for example where more than one address is 'home' and that parents / carers may be provided with a bus pass to travel with their child / young person.

Because these proposed changes could affect a large number of families it's really important that we hear what you have to say about the impact.


The changes are proposed for the next academic year (2025/2026). There will be no changes to transport support this academic year (2024/2025).

You can tell us what you think by responding to the consultation at [link].

Kind regards,



Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care
and Education

IMPLEMENTED

Appendix 4. City Mayor / Executive Briefing.

The City Mayor was briefed regarding the approach on 26.09.2024. This was to provide an update surrounding the proposed approach.

A copy of the slides developed for the briefing are available separately should they be required.

Appendix 5. Ward Councillor’s Briefing – sent on 07.11.2024.

For Information: Consultation under way on school transport funding

schools-extranet

SE

Follow up.

Start by 11 November 2024.

Due by 11 November 2024.

This message was sent with High importance.

☺

↩

↩

→

📧

⋮

Reply

Reply All

Forward

Thu 07/11/2024 16:03

To

○ Cllr Abdul Osman; ○ Cllr Adam Clarke; ○ Cllr Annette Byrne; ○ Cllr Ashiedu Joel; ○ Cllr Bhupen Dave; ○ Cllr Charleigh Barnes; ○ Cllr Deepak Bajaj; ○ Cllr Devi Singh Patel; ○ Cllr Diane Cank; ○ Cllr Dilip Joshi; ○ Cllr Elaine Halford; ○ Cllr Elaine Pantling; ● Cllr Ely Cutkelvin; ○ Cllr Geeta Karavadra; ○ Cllr Geoff Whittle; ○ Cllr George Cole; ○ Cllr Hanif Aqbany; ○ Cllr Hazel Orton; ○ Cllr Hemant Rae Bhatia; ● Cllr Jaantilal Gopal; ○ Cllr Jenny Joannou; ○ Cllr Karen Pickering; ○ Cllr Kulwinder Singh Johal; ○ Cllr Liz Sahu; ○ Cllr Lynn Moore; ○ Cllr Manjit Kaur Saini; ● Cllr Manjula Sood; ○ Cllr Melissa March; ○ Cllr Mick Gregg; ● Cllr Misbah Batool; ○ Cllr Mohammed Dawood; ○ Cllr Mohinder Singh Sangha; ○ Cllr Molly O'Neill; ○ Cllr Mustafa Malik; ○ Cllr Nags Agathy; ○ Cllr Nigel Porter; ○ Cllr Patrick Kitterick; ○ Cllr Paul Westley; ○ Cllr Raffiq Mohammed; ○ Cllr Ravi Mahesh; ○ Cllr Sanjay Modhwadia; ● Cllr Sarah Russell; ○ Cllr Scott Kennedy-Lount; ○ Cllr Shital Adatia; ○ Cllr Stephen Bonham; ○ Cllr Sue Waddington; ○ Cllr Susan Barton; ○ Cllr Syed Zaman; ○ Cllr Ted Cassidy; ● Cllr Teresa Aldred; ○ Cllr Vi Dempster; ● Cllr Yasmin Surt; ○ Cllr Yogesh Chauhan; ○ Cllr Zuffar Haq; ● Sir Peter Soulsby

Dear Ward Councillor,

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#).

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

Launched today 7 November 2024, the new consultation asks for views on a revised SEND transport policy, and how it will impact parents and children.

The proposed new policy includes the general withdrawal of support for post-16 transport for the academic year 2025/26. It also sets out in detail where exceptions will be made to this.


The council’s budget is in crisis due to years of government austerity, rising costs of adult social care, more children being looked after by the council and an increase in homeless families. The council is expecting a substantial gap between its spending and its income in 2025/26, and needs to take all the opportunities it can to reduce cost.

The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.


The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council’s website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Maltby
Director for SEND, Early Help & Education




Laurence Jones
Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

IMPLEMENTED

Appendix 6. Schools / colleges briefing - sent on 07.11.2024.

From: schools-extranet <schools.extranet@leicester.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 November 2024 16:12
To: schools-extranet <schools.extranet@leicester.gov.uk>
Subject: For Action/Information: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Please note: this email has only been sent to the Head and School Office email address.



<http://schools.leicester.gov.uk>

Thursday 7 November 2024

For the attention of all Heads/Principals. All Schools

SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#).

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

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Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Best wishes


Sophie Maltby
Director of SEND and Education


Laurence Jones
Strategic Director, Social Care and Education


- Lead Commissioner attended Keeping In Touch call for all City Schools on 21 November 2024 and shared the process to access the consultation with all attendees.

Appendix 7. Independent schools / colleges briefing –sent on 07.11.2024

As per appendix 6 was sent on 07.11.2024


Appendix 8. Internal Staff Briefings – sent to all Social Care and Education Staff on 14.11.2024

Welcome to your SCE monthly staff update



Social care and education <newsletter@newsletter.leicester.gov.uk>
To: [redacted]

Follow up. Start by 15 November 2024. Due by 15 November 2024.
If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.



Thu 14/11/2024 12:41

SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#)

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

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The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 9. MP Offices – sent on 07.11.2024

From: [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:44 PM
To: 'liz.kendall.mp@parliament.uk' <liz.kendall.mp@parliament.uk>
Subject: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Dear Liz Kendall,

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#)

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

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The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Kind regards,



Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Children's Strategic Commissioning Team
Social Care and Education
Leicester City Council

0116 454 2230

www.leicester.gov.uk

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:46 PM

To: 'shockat.adam.mp@parliament.uk' <shockat.adam.mp@parliament.uk>

Subject: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Dear Shockat Adam,

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#)

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

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The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

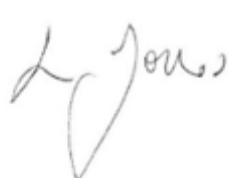
The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Kind regards,



Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Children's Strategic Commissioning Team
Social Care and Education
Leicester City Council

0116 454 2230

www.leicester.gov.uk

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:47 PM

To: shivani.raja.mp@parliament.uk

Subject: FW: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Dear Shivani Raja,

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#)

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

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Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Kind regards,



Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Children's Strategic Commissioning Team
Social Care and Education
Leicester City Council

0116 454 2230
www.leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council will operate with creativity and drive for the benefit of Leicester and its people.

Be confident | Be clear | Be respectful | Be fair | Be accountable

Appendix 10. Parent carer forum briefing – sent on 07.11.2024

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 3:22 PM
To: [REDACTED] <Info@lcpf.net>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Dear [REDACTED],

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#).

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND. Launched today 7 November 2024, the new consultation asks for views on a revised SEND transport policy, and how it will impact parents and children.

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The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Thank you again for your help developing the consultation questions with us.

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Kind regards,



Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Appendix 12. Parents who supported consultation question development sent on 07.11.2024

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 2:50 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Dear [REDACTED],

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#).

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

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The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Thank you again for your help developing the consultation questions with us.

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Kind regards,



Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Appendix 13. - SENDIASS – sent on 19.11.2024

Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 6:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]sendiassleicester.org.uk>
Subject: SEND Transport Consultation

Dear SENDIASS

SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Please view the news release - **Consultation under way on school transport funding** [link to be inserted].

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

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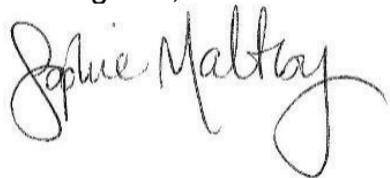
The council's budget is in crisis due to years of government austerity, rising costs of adult social care, more children being looked after by the council and an increase in homeless families. The council is expecting a substantial gap between its spending and its income in 2025/26, and needs to take all the opportunities it can to reduce cost.

The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

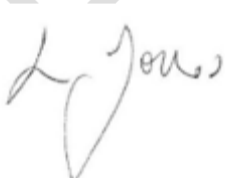
The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Kind regards,




Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Appendix 14. Unions – sent on 07.11.2024
From: schools-extranet <schools.extranet@leicester.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:16 PM

Subject: For Action/Information: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens



<http://schools.leicester.gov.uk>

Thursday 7 November 2024

For the attention of all Unions

SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Please view the news release - [Consultation under way on school transport funding](#).

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

Launched today 7 November 2024, the new consultation asks for views on a revised SEND transport policy, and how it will impact parents and children.

The proposed new policy includes the general withdrawal of support for post-16 transport for the academic year 2025/26. It also sets out in detail where exceptions will be made to this.

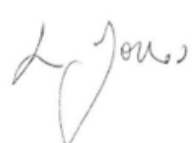

The council's budget is in crisis due to years of government austerity, rising costs of adult social care, more children being looked after by the council and an increase in homeless families. The council is expecting a substantial gap between its spending and its income in 2025/26, and needs to take all the opportunities it can to reduce cost.

The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.



































































Best wishes



Sophie Maltby
Director of SEND and Education

Laurence Jones
Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Appendix 15. Big Mouth Forum – attended on 15.08.2024. (minutes below) Comms sent on 08.11.2024

<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div>Register</div><div></div></div><div><div>Register</div><div>Forum members: Ahmed, <u>Aaminah</u>, Ezra, Mo, Moosa, <u>Rodiyvah</u>, <u>Sulayman</u>, Roshni, <u>Umaymah</u>. Staff: Becky, Vanisha, Tessa, Guests: Cllr Whittle: Assistant City Mayor – <u>Environment</u> and Transport Maria Coulson: Senior Business Change Commissioning Manager SEND and Education Kavita Dholakia: Valuing People Support Officer Adult Social Care & Commissioning Rizwana Hassan: Business Change Commissioning Manager • Adult Social Care & Commissioning</div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div>Welcome</div></div><div><div></div><div><div>Introductions</div><div>Everyone introduced themselves and Ezra led a vocal warm up activity as the ice breaker. Then everyone introduced themselves by saying what animal they would be.</div></div></div><div><div><div>Public Transport and Personal Safety</div><div>Cllr Whittle and Maria Coulson introduced themselves and their role Cllr Whittle also explained that he is a member of the executive on Environment and Transport. Becky explained that she had asked Cllr Whittle and Maria to come because of their role in supporting services to make improvements to transport services. Becky</div></div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div><div>1</div><div>2</div><div>3</div></div><div></div></div><div><div>asked everyone to look at the comments from the previous meeting to check they were correct and make sure there was nothing that needed to be added. Forum members additional comments include people parking on double lines is a problem, they are anxious their care will be removed even when they have contributed. They would like more wheelchair spaces on public buses and sometimes buses don't always arrive. One young person said there should be seat belts on buses for disabled people and babies. Some young people explained they had not experienced travelling on public transport, some said they worry that others don't</div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div>Training Room</div></div><div><div></div><div><div>Please face me & talk clearly</div><div>Ulip read</div></div></div><div><div>understand disabled people's behaviours and people need to be protected before they get hurt. Some said they would like better signs and emergency support. Cllr Whittle gave an update to some of the forum members questions. He explained that every bus driver should receive disability awareness training and they have to go on the training every 5 years. Drivers should know that people may struggle to understand and communicate. Cllr Whittle also explained that each bus company has how to help me cards that passengers can print off from the company's websites. The cards will tell the driver and other travellers what help the</div></div></div>
<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div><div>passenger need. Everyone talked about drivers have the how to help me cards available in the carriage so passengers could point at what extra help they needed. Becky said that with tickets on the bus company's apps it would be good if the driver could see the how to help me cards information on a person's phone next to their electronic ticket. Action: Maria agreed to find out if young people receiving travel training support are given how to help me cards. Becky explained that the trainers who attend the DCS's train the trainer courses are informed of the how to help me cards as a support aid. Cllr Whittle explained a Leicester City Council</div></div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div><div>officer <u>Bijal</u> Mistry in transport planning would appreciate the chance to work with someone from the forum. <u>Sulayman</u> said he would like to help. There was a discussion on the possibility of increasing number of bike lanes. Cllr Whittle said the number of lanes has increased and there is a map showing where they are located across Leicester. Becky explained that she knows of one school who is providing cycle training. Cllr Whittle explained that First Bus have 99% reliability and Arriva say they have 90% reliability. Becky explained she commutes to work using public transport and often Arriva stop and wait at bus stops regularly on their route. Cllr Whittle</div></div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div><div>explained that if a bus is early, they must wait until they are programmed to leave. Everyone talked about cameras on buses which drivers can see to help people to stay safe. Everyone talked about facilities at the city's bus stations <u>Sulayman</u> explained that sometimes they can be smelly. Cllr Whittle explained that the council is aware of vandalism, and they are trying to work out what to do to stop it. He explained the toilets get cleaned on a regular basis. Becky asked Cllr if there is any security at the bus stations later at night because she had a positive experience when a passenger was causing problems with other travellers. Security and the police stepped in</div></div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div><div>quickly to help. Cllr Whittle agreed to find further information on security available in bus stations. Becky explained that the plan has been for the forum to complete some audit and asked if this would be useful to Bijal. Cllr Whittle agreed any information is useful.</div></div></div><div><div></div><div><div>Adult Learning Disability Partnership Board <u>Riz</u> and Kavita explained why they had come to the forum's meeting and said they hoped to create better links between the Learning Disability Partnership Board, the We Think Group and the Big Mouth Forum. <u>Riz</u> explained that she was aware of a young adult's plan to start a young adults social group and</div></div></div></div>
<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div><div>Adult Social Care would like to provide support. <u>Riz</u> also explained there are adult leaders from the We Think Group that attend the Learning Disability Partnership Board and said it would be great if a BMF leader/ chairperson could attend the Partnership Board meeting as well. The meetings take place 4 times a year and the meetings talk about education, police, benefits, <u>jobs</u> and support for carers. Action: A forum member to attend the LDPB with Becky in October. Becky explained that the BMF have 3 priority areas and the first is to make sure people can have a support plan they have access to when they need it for life.</div></div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div><div>Becky gave <u>Riz</u> an example <u>plan</u> the forum had been working on. Action: Becky to share with <u>Riz</u> further information re plans for the young adult social club and details of the BMF top priority areas. <u>Riz</u> and Kavita to attend future BMF meetings when available.</div></div></div><div><div></div><div><div>Questions for the October Youth Summit Becky played a game with the forum and asked them to think of a question to ask leaders at the Youth Participation Summit in October. Family's Mental Health and being able to spend quality time with each other, professionalism of staff, <u>Booking</u> appointments online, access to assistive</div></div></div></div>	<div>Big Mouth Forum</div> <div>Transport Support and Personal Safety for SEND</div> <div>People</div> <div><div><div></div><div><div>technology, improving knowledge by having better access to information and improving young person's confidence were all discussed as areas of importance Action: To agree the two questions to ask at the September forum.</div></div></div><div><div></div><div><div>Nothing mentioned</div></div></div><div><div></div><div><div>Date of Next Meeting 19th September (Topic Debates and Scrutiny)</div></div></div></div>	

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Yes of course, just drafting an email now and it will go out tomorrow morning at the latest. I will also double check if they need help to complete the survey at the next meeting

Best Regards

Subject: SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens
Importance: High

Good afternoon [REDACTED],

I hope this email finds you well. Please could you share this with the Big Mouth Forum. Please explain that every response helps Cllr Pantling make a decision about what happens next.

Kindest regards,

[REDACTED]

Dear Big Mouth Forum

SEND Transport Policy Consultation Opens

Please view the news release - **Consultation under way on school transport funding** [link to be inserted].

The council currently spends more than £4 million a year on the transport costs of around 500 young people with SEND.

Funding had been due to end in July 2024, following a consultation that took place two years ago. However, after concerns were raised by some parents about the process, the council announced that funding would continue for the 2024/2025 academic year, and a new consultation would take place.

Launched today 7 November 2024, the new consultation asks for views on a revised SEND transport policy, and how it will impact parents and children. Thank you for inviting Maria Coulson, the Lead Commissioner, Childrens Services to come and listen to some of the challenges you face when travelling.

Although the proposed new policy includes the general withdrawal of support for post-16 transport for the academic year 2025/26 your input helped us understand that the change really could affect a lot of young people quite significantly.

The council's budget is in crisis due to years of government austerity, rising costs of adult social care, more children being looked after by the council and an increase in homeless families. The council is expecting a substantial gap between its spending and its income in 2025/26, and needs to take all the opportunities it can to reduce cost.

The council is not required to provide post-16 school SEND transport, and receives no funding from the Government to do so.

The consultation will run until 2 January 2025 and can be found on the council's website here: [Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

Your support is requested to ensure that the impact of the proposed changes is fully captured with a strong consultation response – please help promote the consultation and encourage as many people as possible to have their say, supporting a transparent process.

Kind regards,



Sophie Maltby Director for SEND & Education



Laurence Jones Strategic Director, Social Care and Education

Appendix 17. Reminder sent to all schools in December

From: schools-extranet <schools.extranet@leicester.gov.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2024 12:56 PM

To: schools-extranet <schools.extranet@leicester.gov.uk>

Subject: Update from the Director of SEND and Education - Wednesday 11

IMPLEMENTED

Appendix 7

Post-16 education transport for young people with SEND

Overview

Like other authorities across the country, the council is facing very significant financial pressures. The council is forecasting a shortfall of £60 million in next year's budget. As a result, the council is having to look at all services that it does not have a duty to provide.

The local authority does not have any statutory duty to provide free post-16 SEND transport, and receives no funding from central government to do so. It is something that needs to be funded through local taxation.

The demand for this service is increasing and the budget in this area is overspent. For the 2023/2024 academic year the cost for discretionary Post 16 SEND transport in Leicester exceeded £4 million. It is early in the 2024/2025 academic year and projections based on current levels of service are unreliable. A new system for taxi procurement was developed which may mean a reduction in some of the costs. However, the budget for 2024/2025 is projected to be over £13m in 2024/2025, with an unbudgeted overspend of over £1.5m.

The council is therefore proposing to make changes to the way Post-16 SEND transport is provided. The proposals include the general withdrawal of support for Post-16 transport for the academic year 2025/26.

There are significant changes proposed in the draft Children and Young People with SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy which would affect post 16 SEND transport provision. The proposals are mirrored in the draft Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. The proposed changes reflect the general proposal to withdraw support for post-16 transport and set out where exceptions will be made to this. In line with the general withdrawal of support, the proposed 'exceptional circumstances' would apply in limited cases, and in those instances, it is proposed that transport assistance would be in the form of a personal transport budget.

The proposed policies for 2025/26 and the current ones are attached below as supporting documents (PDFS). You can also read the current Post-16 policy statement on families.leicester.gov.uk/post-16-transport-policy <<https://families.leicester.gov.uk/post-16-transport-policy>>

We understand the proposed changes are likely to have a significant impact on young people and their families, in that the proposals have the potential to:

- result in increased pressure on parents and carers and have an adverse impact on families' lives.
- affect some young people who have started courses and may now need to find alternate transport arrangements for the 2025/2026 academic year.
- mean that some young people stop attending education or training and possibly become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). This is proven to affect their future life chances.

It's important that we hear from all those who would be affected by the proposals. We urge everyone with a view to have their say here.

Questions for you

Which questions would you like to answer?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Questions for young people
- ☐ Questions for adults

Introduction

By law parents have a duty to look after their children until they become adults at 18. Councils must also provide support for transport to school for children when they have to attend school, up to the end of Year 11. Young people who choose Post-16 education are generally expected to be capable of making their own transport arrangements as part of preparing for adult life.

Proposed changes to transport support for those in education

Until now, our travel service has been able to provide discretionary free transport support to young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). But due to the high costs involved, and the restraints on our budget, we are proposing to change the way we provide transport services.

Transport having been provided in previous years should not be considered as evidence of eligibility under the proposed policy, and planning should factor this into consideration.

A summary of the proposals

Timing

There is a general withdrawal of Post-16 SEND transport support in the proposed policies for the 2025/2026 academic year.

The proposed policies would be for the start of the 2025/2026 academic year.

This means that parents, carers and young people affected will have limited time to adapt.

This could affect young people's ability, in some cases, to continue in their existing provision.

Eligibility

There remain 'foundation' eligibility requirements, for example, the young person must be from Leicester. A foundation eligibility requirement for those in Post-16 education has been added which states that a young person must have complex SEND needs with a clear definition.

The definition is:

The young person must have a complex SEND need and a placement specified in an Education Health and Care Plan. A complex SEND need for the purposes of this policy is where a young person has:

A diagnosed terminal illness that has severe impact on their current physical and/or mental health and that is likely to significantly reduce their life expectancy, and/or When accompanied, the young person's additional needs or disability places them or others at a severe and serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school, and/or

The student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle such as tail-lift access that is not available to them (including on public transport where that has to be relied upon), and/or

The learner is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school.

Exceptional circumstances must also apply

A young person who satisfies the foundation eligibility criteria will be eligible for travel assistance **only if** there are also exceptional circumstances.

Whether there are exceptional circumstances in a particular case will be determined by the Strategic Director of Social Care (or another officer exercising delegated authority) in the light of the specific circumstances of that case. In each case, the Council will require appropriate evidence as to any claimed exceptional circumstances.

What are the exceptional circumstances where transport support will be offered?

Each of the following is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance where we propose that transport support would be available:

The young person missed a significant majority of Year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.

The placement named by the local authority is a considerable distance* from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs.

Taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

*A proposed definition of 'considerable distance' is 75 minutes each way including time to walk to any pickup point.

It's proposed that 'journey time' is calculated using the most effective means of transport available. For example, if it is more efficient to travel by car than by bus then the journey time in a car will be used as the foundation of the calculation or, if it is more effective to travel by train than car then the journey time by train will be used as the foundation for the calculation.

For journey calculation purposes it's proposed that two changes on public transport is considered reasonable (this is the same for younger children).

Situations not classed as exceptional circumstances

It's proposed that none of the following (taken in isolation) is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

Single parent families

Parent(s)/carers who work

Having other children to look after and/or at other schools

Travelling to an independent school out of area

Parents/carers/students unable to drive or not having access to a car

Students in wheelchairs

Over 18s

For those students aged between 19 and 25 it is proposed that the policy is exactly the same as for 16-18 year olds. This is to ensure that older students don't have more support than younger ones and to make the policy clearer.

EHCPs

The requirement to review transport arrangements during Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) reviews is removed unless travel is a learning outcome. This is to reflect the fact that the travel support application process is generally separate from EHCP reviews.

What type of support will it be?

It is proposed for those with SEND in Post-16 education, that where a young person meets the 'foundation' eligibility requirements and a decision has been made that exceptional circumstance applies, the transport assistance offered will be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget.

This is beneficial to some as it provides a degree of flexibility which, in some situations, may alleviate financial hardship, but it could mean that families who have been used to the council paying for taxi journeys may not be able to continue to rely on that mode of transport going forward.

Travel training amendment

There is an amendment to the wording around travel training. Before it said that if travel training was unsuccessful, transport support would continue. It has now been amended to say that transport support will only be offered if the child or young person is eligible under the policy. This has been changed to be clearer because in some instances young people who are over 16 may not be able to travel independently but they may not be eligible for transport support.

Free bus passes

It is proposed that for all ages, where children and young people are eligible and it would meet the need, free travel may be by bus pass, and a parent may be offered a bus pass to accompany their child.

The logic is that this helps get the young person used to the journey with the parent, it is more cost effective and more environmentally friendly.

Multiple addresses

It is proposed that, for all ages in the travel policy there is improved clarity about multiple addresses. The proposed policies explain that:

If a pupil has more than one place that may be considered a home address, parents/carers must nominate a primary address for travel purposes.

Home addresses should be for primary carers and travel to the homes of extended family members will not usually be considered a home address.

The council acknowledges that families need flexible arrangements and will support travel to multiple addresses where it is specifically highlighted and agreed at the point of application. In year arrangements for changes will require a new application.

Where there are multiple home addresses being requested the home address closest to the child or young person's school or college will be considered the primary home address. That primary home address will be used to determine eligibility.

The Council will not generally support applications which mean that travel to multiple addresses will result in increased journey time or cost of provision. Personal Transport Budgets may be the best option to meet need in these situations.

Withdrawing support

In the past the council has not consistently withdrawn support due to challenging behaviours. It is intended that this is adopted going forward as failure to do so enables poor behaviours and is harmful to children, young people and those providing transport.

In some cases the council may investigate whether transport is being correctly provided, this could be mid-year. If a claim is proven to be ineligible transport could be withdrawn with four weeks notice.

If travel is temporarily or permanently withdrawn for behavioural reasons parents would be responsible for getting their children to school and for any costs incurred.

Pick-up points

It is proposed that travel to or from pick-up points may take place rather than a door to door service.

Why have we proposed these 'exceptional circumstances'?

There are cases that we recognise it is appropriate we exercise a discretion to provide support but it is meant to be the exception rather than 'the rule'.

We created the 'exceptional circumstance' criteria in this proposal, hoping to provide clarity to people about the very limited circumstances when young people over 16 with SEND will be eligible for transport assistance from the council.

We have chosen these particular 'exceptional circumstances' to be very narrow deliberately because the ultimate aim of the proposed policies is the withdrawal of SEND transport support for those who are not of compulsory school age.

In summary, the proposed policy is seeking to remove support for most people, but we think there will still be the occasional case where we should provide support, and therefore have created a section of the policy which describes who will be eligible and who will not.

Would you like to look at our proposed travel policies in detail?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes, please
- ☐ No thanks, just an overview

Our proposed transport policies

We have three policies which tell you how we help with travel to school for children and young people living in Leicester:

1) For children of compulsory school age, 5-16 year-olds

This explains what services are available to help children and young people get to school. This policy is not changing.

[Download the home to school transport policy \(PDF\)](#) <user_uploads/home-to-school-transport-policy.pdf>

2) For young people in Post-16 education and beyond

This proposed policy helps young people planning for Post-16 education and their families understand the different types of transport support available to them. It doesn't just explain the proposed changes to travel support, but also includes other options. For example, concessionary travel tickets from bus companies, bus services operated by colleges, and the 16-19 bursary fund.

It also covers continuing learners aged 19 and those aged 19–24 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It includes the proposed exceptional circumstances where transport support may be offered in the form of a Personal Transport Budget.

[Download the proposed Post-16 transport policy for 2025/26 \(PDF\)](#) <user_uploads/draft-post-16-transport-policy-statement-2025-2026-v0.3.pdf>

3) For children and young people who have a special educational need or disability

This explains what services are available to help children and young people get to school or college if they have a special educational need or disability.

It explains the proposed 'exceptional circumstances' where transport support may be offered in the form of a Personal Transport Budget when a child reaches Post-16 further education age.

[Download the proposed SEND travel policy for 2025/26 \(PDF\)](#) <user_uploads/draft-send-home-to-school-and-college-travel-policy-for-the-academic-years-2025-2026-to-2027-2028-v0.3.pdf>

Why is there a separate post-16 travel policy?

The law about the transport support for young people in post-16 education is different to the law for compulsory school years.

This is because young people can choose to leave education at 16 to go into a job with training or an apprenticeship.

When a young person reaches 18 they are legally an adult. Those with SEND have additional rights to continue to be supported to learn, but they are eligible for adult services at that point.

Because of these important changes, the council has a duty to explain what support is available.

Special travel needs support - what you need to know about our policies

We want young people to learn how to travel independently as much as possible.

Most young people can use public transport with the right support

If a child or young person with SEND is able to use public transport, they will be assessed using the same criteria as all other children, even if they must be accompanied when travelling.

Young people who can't use public transport

There are several factors which are considered for special travel needs support for children of compulsory school age:

The child's age.

The statutory walking distance to the nearest suitable school.

If it's an unsafe walking route (even if accompanied by an adult).

SEND or significant mobility problems.

If travel is stated as essential for EHCP learning outcomes.

Extended rights (for low-income families).

And for post-16 students applying for special travel needs support, the factors include:

Whether the student is attending a full time publicly funded course.

Whether the student has additional needs or a disability that places them or others at a serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school or college.

Whether the student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle, such as tail-lift access.

Whether the student is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school or college.

The complexity of the journey.

If travel is stated as essential for EHCP learning outcomes.

If you need travel support it will be a Personal Transport Budget payment.

About you

Are you responding as a ...? (Please select one)

Please select only one item

- ☐ parent, carer, family member or guardian of a child or young person in education
- ☐ responding on behalf of a child, young person or family
- ☐ responding on behalf of a group, organisation or professional body
- ☐ service staff or professional giving my own views
- ☐ none of the above but a resident of Leicester
- ☐ none of the above but a resident of another area
- ☐ prefer not to say

If responding on behalf of a group, organisation or professional body, please add the organisation's name. (Optional)

Your organisation

Tell us how the change in travel support might effect your community, school or organisation.

Please tell us about your child

The questions are all optional. This is an anonymous survey. The answers you give will only be used to help us understand how the proposed changes to the school travel policies may affect you. You can find out about how we manage personal data on our [website](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/data-protection-and-foia/data-protection/) <<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/data-protection-and-foia/data-protection/>> .

If you are responding about more than one child in a family, you can refer to the child who will be most affected by the proposals, or you can take the survey again to tell us about each child.

Where does your child live? (Select one answer)

(Required)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Leicester city
- ☐ Leicestershire
- ☐ Another area

Leicestershire and other areas

Our school transport service is for children and young people who live in Leicester. If you live in Leicestershire or Rutland you can find out more about their service on their websites.

Leicestershire school transport <<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/school-transport>> (leics.gov.uk)

Rutland school transport <<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/roads-transport-parking/transport/school-transport>> (rutland.gov.uk)

You might still want to comment on the proposed changes to school travel for children and young people who live in Leicester city.

What do you want to do now?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Leave the survey
- ☐ Continue taking the survey

More about your child

Does your child have a special educational need or disability? (Select one answer)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)? (Select one answer)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Does your child go to school or college at the moment?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What they do

Are they ...? (Select one)

Please select only one item

- ☐ at work in a job or apprenticeship
- ☐ on a training course or placement
- ☐ unemployed, but looking for work
- ☐ not able to go to school/college/work due to their disability
- ☐ not going to school, college or work for another reason
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Travel to school or college

Are they...? (Select one)

Please select only one item

- ☐ at primary school
- ☐ Year 7, 8, 9 or 10
- ☐ Year 11
- ☐ Year 12 or 13 (Post-16 education)
- ☐ older than Year 13 and in full time Further Education or Higher Education

How does your child travel to school or college at the moment?
(Select the option for the thing they do most often)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Bicycle or scooter
- ☐ Wheel using equipment designed for disability (such as wheelchair, adapted bike)
- ☐ Use a public bus or train
- ☐ Go on a school bus
- ☐ Go in a minibus
- ☐ Go in a taxi with other passengers
- ☐ Go in a taxi with no other passengers
- ☐ Myself, someone in the family or a friend drives them there
- ☐ They drive themselves

If they go on transport, do you usually have to take them to the bus stop or a pick-up point?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you get support from the council to pay for your child's transport to school or college at the moment? (Select one option)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure/don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

The type of support

Which type of support do you have? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ A disabled persons bus or train pass
- ☐ The council arranges transport by taxi/minibus
- ☐ A Personal Transport Budget payment
- ☐ Not sure/don't know
- ☐ Other support

If Other support, please tell us about this

About your child's travel next year

Is your child's travel to school or college going to change next academic year (2025/26)?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure yet/don't know
- ☐ Doesn't apply - they are leaving school/college
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Travel next year

What might change? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ I might make other arrangements
- ☐ The transport may not be available for free
- ☐ They will have a bus pass and go by bus
- ☐ They will walk, wheel or cycle
- ☐ They will move to a different school or college
- ☐ Don't know yet
- ☐ Other things might change

If you wish to, you can tell us about other things that might change

How do you feel about your child's travel potentially changing? (Select one)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Good - it will be an easy transition
- ☐ Ok, I don't mind
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ I am a bit worried or anxious
- ☐ Bad – it will be difficult for me

If the proposed policies were adopted what would be the impact on you? (Select any that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ It will affect my work
- ☐ My child won't be able to continue in education or training
- ☐ There will be too much pressure on me
- ☐ I have other children that will be affected
- ☐ No impact on me
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Other (please give details below)

Tell us about other impacts on you

What do you think the equalities impact of this will be on your child? (How fair will it be to them?)

Add an answer about the equalities impact if you wish

Tell us more...

These are the last questions about your child's school or college travel.

If you want to tell us something else about your child's CURRENT transport to school or college, please add it in the box.

If you want to tell us something else about getting your child to school or college IN THE FUTURE, please add it in the box.

Does your child travel to places on their own?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Needs to be with someone else
- ☐ Not ready yet
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Who has helped your child learn about travelling on their own? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ Me or another adult
- ☐ Friends, brothers or sisters
- ☐ School
- ☐ They've found out for themselves
- ☐ They haven't had help to learn this yet
- ☐ Not sure/don't know
- ☐ Not applicable for my child
- ☐ Other

If Other, please tell us about it

Transport and your child's ambitions

Thinking ahead to your child's future if the policies are adopted, please answer yes or no to the following statements, or skip any you prefer not to answer.

They will be confident to travel to places like college or a workplace on their own.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

They will only choose college or work near home.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

When they want to go somewhere, I'll have to think carefully about how much it costs.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

The cost of transport won't stop them doing things they want to do.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

I am anxious or worried about how I will afford to get them to places.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Your general comments

Do you think that the proposed policies are a good idea?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Are the policies clear?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

What should we do differently?

Add a comment if you wish

Should anything else be considered as an exceptional circumstance?

See proposed exceptional circumstances

- The young person missed a significant majority of Year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
- The placement named by the local authority is a considerable distance from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs.
- Taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

Add your suggestion here

Independent Travel Training

Many young people with SEND can be taught to travel independently using public travel, and we encourage parents and carers to work with us to support young people to do so.

Learning to travel independently offers people more freedom and independence. We are helping young people to become more independent when going to school or college through our Independent Travel Training scheme.

Travel training courses are aimed at staff, parents and carers who want to learn the skills to support a young person or adult to travel independently.

The course helps you to prepare young people for travelling independently to access education, employment or leisure.

Travel training improves social skills, self-esteem and confidence.

Read more about Independent Travel Training

There are details about this training on the Family Hub website, with upcoming course dates (online on Teams) and what to expect:

[Independent travel training | LCC Family Hub](https://families.leicester.gov.uk/send-local-offer/search-for-local-offer-services/support-with-send-in-leicester-city/disabled-children-service/independent-travel-training/) <<https://families.leicester.gov.uk/send-local-offer/search-for-local-offer-services/support-with-send-in-leicester-city/disabled-children-service/independent-travel-training/>>

Have you heard about this training?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Have you done the course (3 half days)?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, but I've done similar training
- ☐ Not sure

If you have a comment or suggestion you would like to make about our Independent Travel Training scheme, please add it here.

Thank you, you have nearly reached the end of the survey.

Nearly finished

Finally, if you have anything else you'd like to tell us, please add it here.

Equalities monitoring

The following questions are all optional, but by answering them you are helping us to know the range of people who are responding to our surveys so we can check we are reaching everyone we need to.

You can read our [privacy policy on our website](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/our-website/privacy/) <<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/our-website/privacy/>> .

Ethnic background:

Please select only one item

- ☐ Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- ☐ Asian or Asian British: Indian
- ☐ Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- ☐ Asian or Asian British: Any other Asian background
- ☐ Black or Black British: African
- ☐ Black or Black British: Caribbean
- ☐ Black or Black British: Somali
- ☐ Black or Black British: Any other Black background
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Chinese: Any other Chinese background
- ☐ Dual/Multiple Heritage: White & Asian
- ☐ Dual/Multiple Heritage: White & Black African
- ☐ Dual/Multiple Heritage: White & Black Caribbean
- ☐ Dual/Multiple Heritage: Any other heritage background
- ☐ White: British
- ☐ White: European
- ☐ White: Irish
- ☐ White: Any other White background
- ☐ Other ethnic group: Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller
- ☐ Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you said your ethnic group was one of the 'Other' categories, please tell us what this is:

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months. People with HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis (MS) and severe disfigurement are also covered by the Equality Act.

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you have answered **'Yes'** to the above, please state the type of impairment that applies to you. People may experience more than one type of impairment, in which case you may need to tick more than one box. If none of the categories apply, please tick 'Other' and state the type of impairment.

Please select all that apply

- ☐ A long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- ☐ A mental health difficulty, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder
- ☐ A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- ☐ A social / communication impairment such as a speech and language impairment or autism
- ☐ A learning difficulty or disability
- ☐ Blind or have a visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- ☐ Deaf or have a hearing impairment
- ☐ An impairment, health condition or learning difference that is not listed above (specify if you wish)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

If Other, please say

Are you a parent or carer? If yes, please indicate the age(s) of the children / people you care for

Please select all that apply

- ☐ 0-4 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-17 years
- ☐ 18+

Introduction for young people

By law parents have a duty to look after children until they become adults at 18. Councils must also provide support for transport to school for children when they have to attend school, up to the end of Year 11. If you choose Post-16 education you are generally expected to be capable of make your own transport arrangements as part of preparing for adult life.

How do you get to school or college this year?

Will it be different as you get older?

Will you need to be more independent?

We want to know how the proposed changes to travel support may affect you. We will listen to what you tell us so that we can help people who have to make a decision about the policy understand what you have said.

The law says that the council has a choice about whether to provide transport support for young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) at the age when they can leave school.

The council has to make sure it can pay for services. At the moment, you may have seen in the news that there is a problem for many councils where what they have to pay out, is more than is coming in. Money coming into the council mainly comes from central government or from everyone in the city who pays council tax. If no extra money comes in from the government to pay for services the council has to choose – does it cut the services the law says that it can, or does it try to increase council tax?

The proposed changes mean that for Post-16 students with SEND needs, we would only continue to offer transport support in exceptional circumstances.

Now you can either read more about the proposed changes to our policies, or you can start to answer questions and read about the changes as you go along.

Timing

There is a general withdrawal of Post-16 SEND transport support in the proposed policies for the 2025/2026 academic year.

The proposed policies would be for the start of the 2025/2026 academic year.

- This means that parents, carers and young people affected will have limited time to adapt.
- This could affect young people's ability, in some cases, to continue in their existing provision.

Eligibility

There remain 'foundation' eligibility requirements, for example, the young person must be from Leicester. A foundation eligibility requirement for those in Post-16 education has been added which states that a young person must have complex SEND needs with a clear definition.

The definition is:

The young person must have a complex SEND need and a placement specified in an Education Health and Care Plan. A complex SEND need for the purposes of this policy is where a young person has:

- A diagnosed terminal illness that has severe impact on their current physical and/or mental health and that is likely to significantly reduce their life expectancy, and/or
- When accompanied, the young person's additional needs or disability places them or others at a severe and serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school, and/or
- The student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle such as tail-lift access that is not available to them (including on public transport where that has to be relied upon), and/or
- The learner is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school.

Exceptional circumstances must also apply

A young person who satisfies the foundation eligibility criteria will be eligible for travel assistance *only* if there are also exceptional circumstances.

Whether there are exceptional circumstances in a particular case will be determined by the Strategic Director of Social Care (or another officer exercising delegated authority) in the light of the specific circumstances of that case. In each case, the Council will require appropriate evidence as to any claimed exceptional circumstances.

What are the exceptional circumstances where transport support will be offered?

Each of the following is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance where we propose that transport support would be available:

- The young person missed a significant majority of Year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
- The placement named by the local authority is a considerable distance* from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs, and taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

*A proposed definition of 'considerable distance' is 75 minutes each way including time to walk to any pick-up point.

It's proposed that 'journey time' is calculated using the most effective means of transport available. For example, if it is more efficient to travel by car than by bus then the journey time in a car will be used as the foundation of the calculation or, if it is more effective to travel by train than car then the journey time by train will be used as the foundation for the calculation.

For journey calculation purposes it's proposed that two changes on public transport is considered reasonable (this is the same for younger children).

Situations not classed as exceptional circumstances

It's proposed that none of the following (taken in isolation) is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- Single parent families
- Parent(s)/carers who work
- Having other children to look after and/or at other schools
- Travelling to an independent school out of area
- Parents/carers/students unable to drive or not having access to a car
- Students in wheelchairs

Over 18s

For those students aged between 19 and 25 it is proposed that the policy is exactly the same as for 16-18 year olds. This is to ensure that older students don't have more support than younger ones and to make the policy clearer.

EHCPs

The requirement to review transport arrangements during Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) reviews is removed unless travel is a learning outcome. This is to reflect the fact that the travel support application process is generally separate from EHCP reviews.

What type of support will it be?

It is proposed for those with SEND in Post-16 education, that where a young person meets the 'foundation' eligibility requirements and a decision has been made that exceptional circumstance applies, the transport assistance offered will be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget.

This is beneficial to some as it provides a degree of flexibility which, in some situations, may alleviate financial hardship, but it could mean that families who have been used to the council paying for taxi journeys may not be able to continue to rely on that mode of transport going forward.

Travel training amendment

There is an amendment to the wording around travel training. Before it said that if travel training was unsuccessful, transport support would continue. It has now been amended to say that transport support will only be offered if the child or young person is eligible under the policy. This has been changed to be clearer

because in some instances young people who are over 16 may not be able to travel independently but they may not be eligible for transport support.

Free bus passes

It is proposed that for all ages, where children and young people are eligible and it would meet the need, free travel may be by bus pass, and a parent may be offered a bus pass to accompany their child.

The logic is that this helps get the young person used to the journey with the parent, it is more cost effective and more environmentally friendly.

Multiple addresses

It is proposed that, for all ages in the travel policy there is improved clarity about multiple addresses. The proposed policies explain that:

If a pupil has more than one place that may be considered a home address, parents/carers must nominate a primary address for travel purposes.

Home addresses should be for primary carers and travel to the homes of extended family members will not usually be considered a home address.

The council acknowledges that families need flexible arrangements and will support travel to multiple addresses where it is specifically highlighted and agreed at the point of application. In year arrangements for changes will require a new application.

Where there are multiple home addresses being requested the home address closest to the child or young person's school or college will be considered the primary home address. That primary home address will be used to determine eligibility.

The Council will not generally support applications which mean that travel to multiple addresses will result in increased journey time or cost of provision. Personal Transport Budgets may be the best option to meet need in these situations.

Withdrawing support

In the past the council has not consistently withdrawn support due to challenging behaviours. It is intended that this is adopted going forward as failure to do so enables poor behaviours and is harmful to children, young people and those providing transport.

In some cases the council may investigate whether transport is being correctly provided, this could be mid-year. If a claim is proven to be ineligible transport could be withdrawn with four weeks notice.

If travel is temporarily or permanently withdrawn for behavioural reasons parents would be responsible for getting their children to school and for any costs incurred.

Pick-up points

It is proposed that travel to or from pick-up points may take place rather than a door to door service.

Read the proposed policies (PDF)s

For children and young people who have a special educational need or disability

This explains what services are available to help children and young people get to school or college if they have a special educational need or disability.

It explains the proposed 'exceptional circumstances' where transport support may be offered in the form of a Personal Transport Budget when a child reaches Post-16 further education age.

[Download the proposed SEND transport policy for 2025/26 \(PDF\)](#) <user_uploads/draft-send-home-to-school-and-college-travel-policy-for-the-academic-years-2025-2026-to-2027-2028-v0.3.pdf>

For young people in post-16 education and beyond

This proposed policy helps young people planning for Post-16 education and their families understand the different types of transport support available to them. It doesn't just explain the proposed changes to travel support, but also includes other options. For example, concessionary travel tickets from bus companies, bus services operated by colleges, and the 16-19 bursary fund.

It also covers continuing learners aged 19 and those aged 19–24 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It includes the proposed exceptional circumstances where transport support may be offered in the form of a Personal Transport Budget.

[Download the proposed Post-16 transport policy for 2025/26](#) <user_uploads/draft-post-16-transport-policy-statement-2025-2026-v0.3.pdf>

Why we have proposed 'exceptional circumstances'

There are cases that we recognise it is appropriate we provide support but it is meant to be the exception rather than 'the rule'.

We created the 'exceptional circumstance' criteria which we hope will provide clarity to you about the very limited circumstances that we propose would make young people with SEND in Post-16 education eligible for transport assistance from the council.

We have chosen these particular 'exceptional circumstances' to be very narrow deliberately because the ultimate aim of these draft policies is the withdrawal of SEND transport support for those who are not of compulsory school age.

In summary, the proposed policy is seeking to remove support for most people but we think there will still be the occasional case where we should provide support and therefore have created a section of the policy which describes who will be eligible and who will not.

Questions

Where do you live?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Leicester city
- ☐ Leicestershire
- ☐ Another area

Leicestershire and other areas

Our school transport service is for children and young people who live in Leicester. If you live in Leicestershire or Rutland you can find out more about their service on their websites.

Leicestershire school transport <<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/school-transport>> (leics.gov.uk)

Rutland school transport <<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/roads-transport-parking/transport/school-transport>> (rutland.gov.uk)

You might still want to comment on the changes to school travel for children and young people who live in Leicester city.

What do you want to do now?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Leave the survey
- ☐ Continue taking the survey

Special travel needs support and you

What you need to know

We want young people to learn how to travel independently as much as possible.

Some children have special travel needs, so we are telling you about the rules we will use next year (2025/26) to decide if we must provide travel support for you to get to school or college.

Now tell us more about you

The questions are all optional. This is an anonymous survey. The answers you give will only be used to help us understand how our school travel policies affect you. You can find out about how we manage personal data on our [website](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/data-protection-and-foia/data-protection/) <<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/data-protection-and-foia/data-protection/>> .

Do you have a special educational need or disability? (Select one answer)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)? (Select one answer)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you go to school or college at the moment?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What you do

Are you ...? (Select one)

Please select only one item

- ☐ at work in a job or apprenticeship
- ☐ on a training course or placement
- ☐ unemployed, but looking for work
- ☐ not able to go to school/college/work due to your disability
- ☐ not going to school, college or work for another reason
- ☐ prefer not to say

Travel to school or college

Most young people can use public transport with the right support.

If you are a child or young person with SEND and you are able to use public transport, next year (2025/26) you will be assessed for travel support **in the same way as other children**, even if you need someone to travel with you to school or college.

More about you

What stage of education are you at? (Select one)

Please select only one item

- ☐ primary school
- ☐ Year 7, 8, 9 or 10
- ☐ Year 11
- ☐ Year 12 or 13 (Post-16 education)
- ☐ older than Year 13 and in full time Further Education or Higher Education

Young people who **can't** use public transport
Read about the different ways we decide if you need transport to school or college.

If you are school-aged up to Year 11

When deciding whether you need a bus pass, or whether you need another type of transport we will think about:

- Your age.
- The walking distance to your nearest suitable school.
- If it's a safe walking route (alone or with an adult).
- Your SEND needs or if you have significant mobility problems.
- If essential travel is stated on your EHCP for learning outcomes.
- If your family has a low income you may have 'extended rights', which make a difference.

When you are a post-16 student

We will think about:

- Whether you are attending a full time publicly funded course.
- Whether you have additional needs or a disability that places you or others at a serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school or college.
- Whether you have a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle, such as tail-lift access.
- Whether you are likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school or college.
- The complexity of the journey.
- If essential travel is stated on your EHCP for learning outcomes.

If you need travel support it will be a Personal Transport Budget Payment to your parent/guardian.

If you want to find out more, you can read the [proposed SEND travel policy \(PDF\)](#) <user_uploads/draft-send-home-to-school-and-college-travel-policy-for-the-academic-years-2025-2026-to-2027-2028-v0.3.pdf> .

If you would like to make a comment about how these rules will affect you, or someone you know, please add it in the box.

How you travel to school or college

How do you travel to school or college at the moment? (Select the option for the thing you do most often)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Bicycle or scooter
- ☐ Wheel using equipment designed for disability (such as wheelchair, adapted bike)
- ☐ Use a public bus or train
- ☐ Go on a school bus
- ☐ Go in a minibus
- ☐ Go in a taxi with other passengers
- ☐ Go in a taxi with no other passengers
- ☐ Someone in my family or a friend drives me there
- ☐ I drive there myself

If you go on transport, does someone usually take you to a bus stop or pick up point?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Does your parent/guardian get support from the council to pay for your transport to school or college at the moment? (Select one option)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure/don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

The type of support

Which type of support do you have? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ A disabled persons bus or train pass
- ☐ The council arranges my transport by taxi/minibus
- ☐ My parent/guardian gets a Personal Travel Budget payment
- ☐ Not sure/don't know
- ☐ Other support

If Other support, please tell us about this

About your travel next year

If the proposed changes happen, do you think how you'll travel to school or college next year will change as a result (2025/26 academic year)?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure yet/don't know
- ☐ Doesn't apply - I'm leaving school/college
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Travel next year

What might change? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ My parent/guardian might make other arrangements
- ☐ My transport may not be available for free
- ☐ I'll have a bus pass and go by bus
- ☐ I'll will walk, wheel or cycle
- ☐ I'll move to a different school or college
- ☐ Don't know yet
- ☐ Other things might change

If you wish to, you can tell us about other things that might change

How do you feel about your journey to school/college potentially changing? (Select one)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Good - it will be easy
- ☐ Ok, I don't mind
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ I am a bit worried or anxious
- ☐ Bad – it will be difficult

If the proposed changes to the policies happen, what would be the impact on you? (Select any that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ It will affect my education
- ☐ I won't be able to continue in education or training
- ☐ There will be too much pressure on me
- ☐ My family will be affected
- ☐ No impact on me
- ☐ Other (please give details below)

Tell us about other impacts on you

How fair will the changes be to you?

Add any comments you have about this

Tell us more...

These are the last questions about your school or college travel.

If you want to tell us something else about your CURRENT transport to school or college, please add it in the box.

If you want to tell us something else about getting to school or college IN THE FUTURE, please add it in the box.

Your general comments

Do you think that the proposed policies are a good idea?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Are the policies clear?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

What should we do differently?

Add a comment if you wish

Should anything else be considered as an exceptional circumstance?

See proposed exceptional circumstances

- The young person missed a significant majority of Year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
- The placement named by the local authority is a considerable distance from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs.
- Taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

Add your suggestion here

Travelling independently

Do you travel to places by yourself?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Need to be with someone else
- ☐ Not ready yet
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Who has helped you learn about travelling by yourself? (Select all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- ☐ Parent or another adult
- ☐ Friends, brothers or sisters
- ☐ School
- ☐ I've found out for myself
- ☐ I haven't had help to learn this yet
- ☐ Not sure/don't know
- ☐ Not applicable for my child
- ☐ Other

If Other, please tell us about it

If you've got an idea that could help other young people learn about travelling independently, please tell us about it.

Transport and your ambitions

Thinking ahead to your future, please answer yes or no to the following statements, or skip any you prefer not to answer.

I'll be confident to travel to places like college or a workplace by myself.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

I will only choose college or work near home.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

When I want to go somewhere, I'll have to think carefully about how much it costs.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

The cost of transport won't stop me doing things I want to do.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

I am anxious or worried about how I will afford to get to places.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Thank you, you have nearly reached the end of the survey.

Some general questions to finish

Will the proposed changes to transport support affect someone you know, or your community? If you want to tell us about this, please add your comment in the box

Finally, if you have anything else you'd like to tell us, please add it here.

Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training

Statutory guidance for local authorities

January 2019

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Summary

About this guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education¹. This means that local authorities must have regard to it when carrying out their duties in developing their transport policy and publishing their transport policy statements for young people of sixth form age² and adults aged 19 and over (including those with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan) in education and training³.

We use the term ‘must’ when the local authority is required to do something in law. When setting out the department’s expectations we have highlighted areas where the local authority should also take reasonable account of the circumstances of learners.

Local authorities should take their own legal advice when preparing the policy statement and devising a local response to transport needs, to ensure that they are exercising their duties and powers in a manner which complies with the legislation and public law.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be kept under review and updated versions will be published if necessary.

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

The guidance refers to legislation⁴ regarding the provision of transport to post-16 education and training for young people of sixth form age and legislation regarding the provision of transport to post-19 education and training for those aged 19 to 25 and for whom an EHC plan is maintained. Relevant legislation is set out in [‘Appendix A – statutory provisions’](#).

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for local authorities in England. It may also be of interest to:

- schools;
- parents;
- organisations involved in advising parents; and
- transport providers.

¹ Section 508H and Section 509AB(5).

² Section 509AC(1) of the Education Act 1996 defines persons of sixth form age for the purposes of the sixth form transport duty.

³ Sections 508F and 508G of the Education Act 1996.

⁴ Education Act 1996.

Main changes from 2017 guidance

There have been no changes to existing policy in this guidance update but changes have been made to:

- Further clarify the sixth form age and adult duties, including clearer explanation of when each applies;
- Include good practice suggestions;
- provide additional annexes containing an example Local Authority Transport policy template, information on compliance checks conducted by the department and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Key points

1. We are striving for world class education, training and care for everyone – whatever their background. This will create a more productive economy, fit for the future and ensure that everyone has a chance to reach their potential to live a more fulfilled life. Local authority transport policies play an important role in supporting young people's participation in education and training. By publishing their transport policies each year, local authorities enable young people (and their parents) to take reasonable account of the arrangements available when choosing between different options.
2. Local authorities must act reasonably, taking into account all relevant matters, such as the needs of their population, the local transport infrastructure and the resources available.
3. The planning of transport provision at a local level should take the following into account:
 - young people are now required to stay in education or training until their 18th birthday⁵. Local authorities are responsible for promoting the effective participation in education and training of young people who are subject to the duty to participate⁶; and
 - under the September Guarantee, every young person aged 16 or 17 should be offered a suitable place in education or training - further details are available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/september-guarantee-offers-of-education-or-training-for-16-to-17-year-olds.

⁵ Education and Skills Act 2008.

⁶ Participation of young people: education, employment and training - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training>

Local authority responsibility

4. The statutory responsibility for transport for 16-19 year olds (who have started a course before their 19th birthday) rests with local authorities. Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport, or otherwise that the authority considers necessary, to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training⁷.
5. The sixth form age duty applies to young people of sixth form age and young people with EHC plans up to age 25 where they are continuing on a course started **before** their 19th birthday.
6. The overall intention of the sixth form age transport duty is to ensure that:
 - learners of sixth form age are able to access the education and training of their choice; and
 - if support for access is requested, this will be assessed and provided where necessary.
7. Additionally local authorities have a duty under sections 508F and 508G of the Education Act 1996, as inserted by section 57 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. Under section 508F, the local authority is required to make such arrangements for the provision of transport as they consider necessary in respect of:
 - (a) adults (i.e. those who are aged 19 or over) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institutions or institutions within the further education sector; and
 - (b) relevant young adults with an EHC plan (which can only be maintained up until the age of 25) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors. For those young adults, the local authority's duty only applies where the local authority has secured the provision of education or training at that institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.
8. The adult duty applies only to young people who are attending a course which they started **after** their 19th birthday, including those with EHC plans.
9. Where the local authority makes such arrangements, any transport provided must be free of charge. Where the local authority decides not to provide transport arrangements in a particular case, they still have discretion to pay all or part of the reasonable travelling expenses for the student.

⁷ Section 509AA of the Education Act 1996.

10. The local authority also has a duty under section 508G to prepare a transport policy statement setting out any transport or other arrangements that it proposes to make for that academic year in respect of adults aged under 25 with EHC plans.

11. The overall intention of the adult transport duty is to ensure that:

- Those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation are able to undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday to help them move towards more independent living.

Sustainable transport

12. Section 508A of the Education Act places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. The duty applies to young people of sixth form age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area. The duty relates to journeys to and from institutions where education or training is received.

13. There are five main elements to the duty which local authorities must undertake:

- an assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority's area;
- an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority's area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions;
- a strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of young people are best catered for;
- the promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions; and
- the publication of Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

14. The Education Act 1996 defines sustainable modes of travel as those that the local authority considers may either improve the physical well-being of those who use them, the environmental well-being of all or part of the local authority's area, or both.

Extent and coverage of the duties

15. The Education Act 1996 section 509AA duty applies to all local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for young people (over compulsory school age) aged 16-18 and those continuing learners up to age 25 with EHC plans who started their programme of learning **before** their 19th birthday.

16. The legislation recognises that a local response to transport arrangements is important in enabling young people's participation in education and training and as such the flexibility of the extent of an individual policy lies with individual local authorities. A local approach allows local circumstances to be taken into account. The legislation therefore gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial support

are necessary to facilitate young people's attendance. The local authority must exercise its power to provide transport or financial support reasonably, taking into account all relevant matters.

17. The local authority must publish a transport policy statement on or before 31 May each year. The statement must include the details of the transport arrangements and the details of the financial support in respect of reasonable travelling expenses that the local authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate access to education or training for learners of sixth form age⁸ for the following academic year. These arrangements could include but are not limited to:

- The availability of a concessionary fares scheme
- A bus pass or cash equivalent of a bus pass
- A bus pass or cash equivalent plus a companion pass or cash equivalent
- Independent travel training
- A fixed mileage allowance
- Provision of actual transport

18. The section 509F and 508G duties apply to all local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for adults aged 19 and over, who started their programme of learning **after** their 19th birthday.

19. The legislation recognises that it is important that decisions on whether local authority arranged transport for this age group is necessary, sits at a local level and, as with the previous duty, the flexibility of the extent of an individual policy lies with individual local authorities. Where local authorities do decide that it is necessary for them to provide transport, this must be provided free of charge, however, the legislation also gives local authorities the flexibility to contribute to, fund or charge for other transport solutions where it wishes.

20. Local authorities must prepare a transport policy statement by the end of May each year setting out any transport or other arrangements that it proposes to make for that academic year in respect of adults aged under 25 with EHC plans under the 508F duty.

Transport policy statement audience and content

21. The transport policy statement is intended to inform young people, in years 11, 12 and 13, and their parents about what transport arrangements and support are available locally. The statement should be a single point of reference providing information about transport arrangements to all types of provision, including arrangements made by bodies other than the local authority, including local transport providers. The statement must set out what the local authority's overall transport policy is in regard to young people and should include the rationale behind the policy. It is important that the local authority does not differentiate between providers or institutions in its arrangements.

⁸ See section 509AA(2), (3) and (7)(a) of the Education Act 1996.

The arrangements must be set out for learners of sixth form age who are receiving education or training at:

- a school;
- a further education institution;
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education;
- a 16 to 19 Academy; or
- at any establishment (not falling within the above categories) at which the authority secures the provision of education or training under section 15ZA of the Education Act 1996.

22. Arrangements to support learners undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships should also be set out in the transport policy statement. These may include the costs of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Employers and learning providers will want to take account of young people's likely transport arrangements when planning off-the-job training, particularly outside normal working hours.

23. The transport policy statement must also specify the arrangements proposed to be made by the governing bodies of schools maintained by the local authority and further education institutions in the local authority's area which may include support with transport costs or transport provision⁹. The local authority should only include arrangements that are actually going to be made and not make assumptions about what arrangements it thinks schools and colleges should make. Governing bodies are under a duty to co-operate in giving the local authority any information and other support that is reasonably required by the authority to enable them to prepare their statement¹⁰.

24. The transport policy statement should be clear and provide sufficient detail about the transport arrangements and support provided to inform young people in making their post-16 choices. Young people should be provided with information through the transport policy statement about who is eligible for transport support and how and when they should apply for support. Details of any concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies or travel cards should be included alongside the eligibility criteria for this support and how eligibility will be assessed¹¹. Clear signposting from the statement should point young people to sources of further information, for example local authority, college or transport provider websites or contact details.

25. Additionally the policy statement must include full details of how a young person or parent can appeal if they disagree with a local authority's decision and further avenues of complaint open to them if they remain dissatisfied following completion of the local procedure. Further details about complaints and appeals can be found at para 38 onwards.

⁹ Section 509AA(4) of the Education Act 1996.

¹⁰ Section 509AA(5) of the Education Act 1996.

¹¹ Section 509AA(2) of the Education Act 1996.

26. A template of a post 16 transport policy is included at Appendix B.
27. The DfE will undertake annual compliance checks on local authority statements in June each year, further details of these can be found at Appendix C.

Funding

28. Local authorities fund their responsibilities through the grants they receive from national government, which are not ring-fenced, and through generated income, such as council tax.

Assessment of what arrangements are needed

29. In assessing what transport arrangements or financial support may be required, the local authority has flexibility over the decisions it makes but must have regard to the following:

- a. **The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to access education or training provision if no arrangements were made**¹²

Local authorities should satisfy themselves that they have made the transport arrangements or arrangements for financial support necessary to facilitate young people's participation in education or training. In doing so, they should consider the needs of the most vulnerable or socially excluded. The needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities should be specifically considered and the arrangements in place for each group must be documented in the transport policy statement (see section '[Specific consideration of learners with special educational needs and disabilities.](#)'

Local authorities should also consider the needs of:

- those who are vulnerable to becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the age of 16 or 17 or who have already become NEET. These young people should be offered a suitable course of education or training and provided with any transport support that is necessary to enable them to participate¹³;
- young parents – Care to Learn (C2L) can help pay for childcare and travel costs for learners aged 19 and under at the start of their course¹⁴. Learning providers should be encouraged to support young people to apply for C2L – further details are available at www.gov.uk/care-to-learn; and

¹² Section 509AB(3)(a) of the Education Act 1996.

¹³ Local authorities are reminded that all 16 and 17 year olds (i.e. those completing compulsory education in the current year, or who completed in the previous year) are entitled to an offer of a place in post-16 learning under the September Guarantee.

¹⁴ The additional costs of taking a child to and from childcare may be claimed, within a set weekly limit. C2L does not support the costs of travel to the learning provider.

- those who live in particularly rural areas where the transport infrastructure can be more limited.

b. The need to ensure that young people have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided¹⁵

Young people should have a reasonable opportunity to choose between the courses available to them at 16 and be supported to access their choices. Local authority transport policies must be supportive of reasonable choice. In defining what is 'reasonable', local authorities will want to take into account any complaints received in previous years in respect of local transport policy statements.

We would expect reasonable choice to include enabling young people to choose courses outside their home local authority boundaries if it makes sense for them to do so. Local authorities will want to be mindful of neighbouring transport policies and consider how their own transport policy can support movement across boundaries. The transport policy statement should set out the local authority's policy for travel to neighbouring local authority areas.

Reasonable choice should also include enabling young people to choose an establishment of education or training that is not the closest to where they live if it makes sense to do so.

When developing their transport policy, local authorities are required to consider their responsibilities to secure suitable education and training to meet the reasonable needs of young people of sixth form age and those aged 19 or over [and for whom an EHC plan is maintained].¹⁶ Transport arrangements will need to support commissioning arrangements to ensure that young people have access to the education and training provision that has been commissioned.

c. The distance from the learner's home to establishments of education and training¹⁷

Local authorities must consider distance in determining eligibility for support with transport. Young people in rural areas should not be worse off financially because they may need to travel further to access education and training provision than their peers in urban areas.

The statutory walking distance of 3 miles to school (along the nearest available route) for those of compulsory school aged 8 and over is set out under section 444(5) of the Education Act 1996. This can be taken into account by local authorities in defining the distance a young person might reasonably be expected to walk to access education or training.

¹⁵ Section 509AB(3)(b) of the Education Act 1996.

¹⁶ Section 15ZA(1) of the Education Act 1996.

¹⁷ Section 509AB(3)(c) of the Education Act 1996.

In determining whether transport arrangements are necessary, local authorities should take into account other factors, such as the impact a learning difficulty or disability may have on a young person's ability to walk this distance, and the nature (including safety) of the route, or alternative routes, which a young person could be expected to take.

d. The journey time to access different establishments¹⁸

Journey time also needs to be taken into account. Young people should be able to reach their education or training without incurring such stress, strain, or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefiting from the education provided.

For example, a young person should not have to make several changes of public service bus to get to their education or training, if that would result in an unreasonably long journey time. In this context, local authorities should consider which mode of transport will best meet the need to ensure a reasonable journey time.

Good practice suggests that a child of secondary school age may reasonably be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way to access learning. Local authorities should apply similar expectations to young people of sixth form age.

e. The cost of transport to the establishments in question¹⁹

Local authorities are expected to target any support on those young people – and their families – who need it most, particularly those with a low income. The transport policy statement should set out clearly the criteria used to establish a learner's eligibility to receive transport/financial support.

Local authorities may ask learners and their parents for a contribution to transport costs and in exercising their discretion they should:

- ensure that any contribution is affordable for learners and their parents;
- ensure that there are arrangements in place to support those families on low income; and
- take into account the likely duration of learning and ensure that transport policies do not adversely impact particular groups. For example, as young people with special educational needs and disabilities are more likely to remain in education or training longer than their peers, any contribution sought from these families would need to allow for the fact they may have to contribute for longer.

Local authorities can take receipt of 16-19 bursary funding into account in assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport.

To aid transparency, it is good practice for local authorities to set out the average cost per young person of post-16 transport in their area before any subsidies are

¹⁸ Section 509AB(3)(c) as amended by the Education and Skills Act, section 83.

¹⁹ Section 509AB(3)(d) of the Education Act 1996.

deducted. Clearly setting out average costs will enable learners and parents to understand the extent of the local authority subsidy.

f. **Alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments**²⁰

Local authorities must consider alternative, safe means of facilitating attendance at establishments of education or training. Suitable and appropriate alternatives may include transport solutions, for example:

- cycle schemes – which can support independence and also offer a sustainable form of transport provision.
- moped schemes – which can support individual learners (over the age of 17) to travel to education and training from rural areas where public transport may not be available.
- independent travel training to enable young people (often with special educational needs and disabilities) to travel on public transport independently. See section [‘Specific consideration of learners with special educational needs and disabilities’](#) for further details.

g. **Preferences based on religion**

Local authorities must have regard to any preference the individual may have for a particular institution based on their religion or belief.

For the purposes of section 509AD²¹ “religion” means any religion and “belief” means any religious or belief.²² References to “religion” or “belief” include references to a lack of religion or belief.

h. **Non-transport solutions to facilitate learner access**

Local authorities should consider whether non-transport solutions could facilitate learner access to education or training: for example peripatetic teachers, mobile provision and e-learning options.

Specific consideration of learners with special educational needs and disabilities

30. The 16-19 transport duty applies to young people of sixth form age with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 19 (and beyond the age of 19 if they are continuing on a particular course started before the age of 19).

²⁰ Section 509AB(3)(d) of the Education Act 1996.

²¹ Section 509AD(3) of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 84 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

²² The Department’s position is that Belief includes philosophical belief

31. Local authorities also have a duty under the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with special educational needs and disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training. It therefore follows that local authorities should include information on what transport arrangements are available and whether they are adequate to enable these young people to participate.
32. Section 509AB(1) of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to set out the extent to which the arrangements they have put in place pursuant to the transport statement prepared under section 509AA facilitate the attendance of young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
33. The transport needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities must be reassessed when a young person moves from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, even if the young person is remaining at the same educational setting. Arrangements cannot be limited to those young people who had been assessed as having particular transport needs prior to the age of 16. The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to publish a 'local offer' setting out their services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and this must include information on the arrangements for travel to and from post-16 institutions.
34. Young people with an EHC plan will have an institution named in their plan at Section I. There is no entitlement to transport to and from this named provider and transport should only be named in an EHC plan in exceptional circumstances. Local authorities should ensure during EHC plan discussions that parents are made aware that transport support will be considered in accordance with the local authority's own post-16 transport policy.
35. A learner with special educational needs and disabilities may take longer to complete a programme of learning or training, and therefore it will be good practice for the local authority to extend the arrangements for the provision of transport until a learner has completed their programme even if that is after they have reached the age of 19.
36. If the local authority and/or providers operate an independent travel training scheme it is good practice to include such initiatives in the transport policy statement.
37. Local authorities should be aware of the adult transport duty in carrying out their responsibilities for this group, and it would be good practice not to charge a contribution for transport for a young person assessed under the sixth form age duty if it likely that they will be eligible for free transport under the adult transport duty.

Local complaints process

38. Local authorities should publish as part of the transport policy statement the process which will be followed should a complaint or an appeal against a local authority decision be made on behalf of, or by, a young person. Complaints and appeals must first be taken up with the local authority²³. Good practice suggests using a similar 2 stage

²³ Section 509AE(4) of the Education Act 1996.

complaints process as that used for pre 16 appeals and once an application has exhausted the complaints process advising that no further applications can be made within the academic year unless there has been a material change in circumstances or further supporting evidence has been obtained. If these do not result in a satisfactory outcome, it may be appropriate for young people or their families to consider contacting the Local Government Ombudsmen (LGO) or complaining to the Secretary of State for Education. The LGO is an independent organisation that looks into complaints against councils. This is a free service and information can be found online at www.lgo.org.uk.

Complaints to the Secretary of State for Education

39. To complain to the Secretary of State, young people or their families should use the contact form on gov.uk - www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus. Any complaint should outline the case, set out the decision taken by the local authority and include any other relevant documentation, for example any advice or decisions from the LGO where appropriate.
40. Under section 509AA (9), of the Education Act 1996, the Secretary of State may direct a local authority to make transport arrangements to facilitate the attendance of those of sixth form age receiving education or training, or provide reasonable travelling expenses. This only applies where particular transport arrangements or financial support have not been included in, or are not covered by, the local authority's transport policy statement. The Secretary of State can make a direction where he/she considers it expedient to do so, having regard to the particular circumstances of the case.
41. Under section 508I of the Education Act 1996, the Secretary of State may choose to use his/her powers under sections 496 and 497 of the same Act to direct a local authority where they have exercised (or are proposing to exercise) their functions unreasonably or where they have failed to discharge a duty in relation to the adult transport duty. If the Secretary of State is satisfied that an authority has acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably, he/she may give such directions as to the exercise of the power or performance of the duty as appear to him/her to be appropriate.
42. The Secretary of State may exercise his/her section 496 and 497 powers following a complaint, or if the matter is brought to the department's attention by other means. When a complaint is submitted to the department, officials will consider the evidence received and where appropriate, seek further information. If the department finds that it is not appropriate for the Secretary of State to intervene by making a direction, they will communicate this decision to the correspondent and, where appropriate, the local authority.
43. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the way in which the department has handled the case they can log a [service complaint](#). Further information on the department's complaints process can be found on gov.uk at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/complaints-procedure. A service complaint will prompt consideration of how the case has been

managed but there will not be a review of the substance of the decision made. The substance of the decision would only be considered if the complainant provided additional information relevant to the decision not to intervene.

44. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can ask their local MP to refer their case to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). If the PHSO accept a complaint for further consideration they could normally look at the department's handling of the case. The PHSO's role is not to reverse decision-making, but where it upholds a complaint, it can make recommendations to the department to put things right. Information on the PHSO can be found online at: www.ombudsman.org.uk.

Consulting key partners on the transport policy statement

45. The transport policy statement is the responsibility of the local authority. However, the local authority should try to achieve a consensus and work with other partners and stakeholders to develop a collaborative approach to transport solutions and the production of the transport policy statement. It is good practice for the different 41
46. departments within each local authority to take a joined up approach. For example, the transport department might need to speak to the social services department if the social services department also procures transport.
47. The local authority must consult with the following stakeholders in developing the statement to ensure that it provides a full picture of the available transport and support:
- any other local authorities it considers appropriate (including neighbouring local authorities that are in Wales or Scotland)²⁴. There will be occasions where learners will travel across local authority boundaries and this should not be a barrier for the learner. There are also clear benefits for local authorities to collaborate where similar challenges exist or to share good practice;
 - the governing bodies of schools and further education institutions²⁵. It is important to note that the power of schools and colleges to make arrangements is in addition to, and not instead of, the power of the local authority to make arrangements;
 - the appropriate transport administration body for your area²⁶;
 - Transport for London, if the local authority is a London borough council or the Common Council of the City of London²⁷; and
 - persons who will be of sixth form age at the time of the transport policy statement and their parents²⁸. Local authorities should set out in their transport policy statements how and when they propose to consult young people and their parents to inform the development of their transport policy statements in the following year.

²⁴ Section 509 AB(6)(a) of the Education Act 1996.

²⁵ Sections 509AB(6)(b) and 509AA(4).

²⁶ Section 509AB(7)(a).

²⁷ Section 509AB(7)(b).

²⁸ Section 54 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 inserts new subsection (ca) in s509AB(6.) This was commenced in April 2010, to apply for the academic year 2011/12.

48. Other bodies including education and training providers; higher education institutions; transport companies and authorities operating in the locality; public sector bodies; community groups; voluntary organisations and groups/organisations with an interest in disability issues (including independent specialist providers) should also be consulted where appropriate.

Publication of the transport policy statement

49. The transport policy statement must be published by the local authority by 31st May each year and must be clearly dated showing the academic year to which it applies.
50. The transport policy statement should be made available on the local authority's own website each year to inform young people's²⁹ choice of post-16 provision for the following academic year.
51. Local authorities are also responsible for ensuring that a link is made from their transport policy statement to the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). To facilitate this process the local authority's web team should complete the following actions:
- load the transport policy statement on to the council website; and
 - ensure a working link is available from GOV.UK page www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19.
52. To update the link or report broken links either raise a request via the Government Digital Service helpdesk which can be found at <https://govuk.zendesk.com> or email: local-direct-admin@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk.

In-year changes

53. Local authorities should consider their approach to implementing what is set out in its transport policy statement and continue to monitor its progress throughout the year.
54. Local authorities may amend and republish their transport policy statements in-year in response to complaints. Local authorities must revise and republish their transport policy statements as soon as practicable if, as a result of a complaint, the Secretary of State has directed them to do so³⁰.

²⁹ Section 509AA (7)(a) of the Education Act 1996.

³⁰ Section 509AE (2) (3) of the Education Act 1996.

Glossary

In this guidance —

“adult” means a person who is neither a child nor a young person of sixth form age;

“young person of sixth form age” is a young person over compulsory school age but under 19 or a young person aged under 25, who has a current EHC plan and is on a course that started before their 19th birthday; and

“relevant young adult” means an adult who is aged under 25, started their current course after their 19th birthday and for whom an EHC plan is maintained.

Appendix A – statutory provisions

This appendix sets out the relevant statutory provisions in the Education Act 1996 (as amended) in relation to local authorities' responsibilities for the provision of transport for relevant young adults and persons of sixth form age³¹.

508F Local authorities in England: provision of transport etc. for adult learners

(1) A local authority in England must make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary, or as the Secretary of State may direct, for the purposes mentioned in subsections (2) and (3).

(2) The first purpose is to facilitate the attendance of adults receiving education at institutions—

- (a) maintained or assisted by the authority and providing further or higher education (or both), or
- (b) within the further education sector.

(3) The second purpose is to facilitate the attendance of relevant young adults receiving education or training at institutions outside both the further and higher education sectors, but only in cases where the local authority have secured for the adults in question —

- (a) the provision of education or training at the institution in question, and
- (b) the provision of boarding accommodation under section 514A.

(4) Any transport provided under subsection (1) must be provided free of charge.

(5) In considering what arrangements it is necessary to make under subsection (1) in relation to relevant young adults, a local authority must have regard to what they are required to do under section 15ZA(1)³² in relation to those persons.

(6) In considering whether they are required by subsection (1) to make arrangements in relation to a particular adult, a local authority must have regard (among other things) to the age of the adult and the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the adult could reasonably be expected to take.

³¹ If a section number is followed by ... this denotes previous text in legislation has been repealed.

³² 15ZA Duty in respect of education and training for persons over compulsory school age: England

(1) A [local authority] in England must secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of—

- (a) persons in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and
- (b) persons in their area who are aged 19 or over but under 25 and are subject to special educational needs and disabilities learning difficulty assessment.

(7) Arrangements made under subsection (1) by virtue of subsection (3) to facilitate full-time education or training at an institution outside both the further and higher education sectors must be no less favourable than the arrangements made for relevant young adults of the same age for whom the authority secure the provision of education at another institution.

(8) A local authority in England may pay all or part of the reasonable travelling expenses of an adult —

- (a) receiving education or training at an institution mentioned in subsection (2) or (3), and
- (b) for whose transport no arrangements are made under subsection (1)

(9) In this section —

“adult” means a person who is neither a child nor a person of sixth form age,

“sixth form age” is to be construed in accordance with section 509AC(1), and

“relevant young adult” means an adult who is aged [for whom an EHC plan is maintained]

508G Local authorities in England: transport policy statements etc. for young adults subject to learning difficulty assessment

(1) A local authority in England making arrangements, or proposing to pay travelling expenses, under section 508F in relation to relevant young adults must consult —

- (a) any other local authority that they consider it appropriate to consult;
- (b) governing bodies of institutions within the further education sector in the authority's area;
- (ba) proprietors of 16 to 19 Academies in the authority's area;
- (c) persons in the local authority's area who will be relevant young adults when the arrangements or payments have effect, and their parents;
- (d) the Secretary of State; and
- (e) any other person specified by the Secretary of State.

(2) The authority must prepare for each academic year a transport policy statement complying with the following requirements.

(3) The statement must specify any transport or other arrangements, and any payment of travelling expenses, made or to be made in relation to the year under section 508F in relation to relevant young adults.

(4) The statement must also specify any travel concessions (within the meaning of Part 5 of the Transport Act 1985)³³ which are to be provided under any scheme established under section 93 of that Act to relevant young adults receiving education or training at an institution mentioned in subsection (2) or (3) of section 508F.

(5) The authority must publish the statement by the end of May in the year in which the relevant academic year begins.

(6) In preparing and publishing the statement, the authority must have regard (among other things) to the need to —

- (a) include in the statement sufficient information about the matters that the statement must specify; and
- (b) publish the statement in time to enable relevant young adults and their parents to take reasonable account of those matters when choosing between different institutions at which education or training is provided.

(7) The publication of a statement under this section in relation to an academic year does not prevent an authority from —

- (a) making additional arrangements or payments under section 508F in relation to the academic year, or
- (b) providing additional travel concessions in relation to the academic year.

(8) The Secretary of State may amend subsection (5) by order to change the time by which the statement must be published.

(9) In this section —

“academic year” has the meaning given in section 509AC;

“governing body” has the meaning given in section 509AC; and

“relevant young adult” has the meaning given in section 508F.

508H Guidance: sections 508F and 508G

In making arrangements under section 508F(1) and preparing and publishing a statement under section 508G, a local authority must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State under this section.

³³ [The Transport Act 1985](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) can be viewed on www.legislation.gov.uk.

508I Complaints about transport arrangements etc. for young adult for whom EHC plan is maintained

(1) A local authority may revise a statement prepared under section 508G to change any matter specified under subsection (3) of that section if, as a result of a relevant young adult transport complaint, they have come to consider the change necessary for a purpose mentioned in section 508F(2) or (3).

(2) A local authority must revise a statement prepared under section 508G to change any matter specified in subsection (3) of that section if, as a result of a relevant young adult transport complaint, the Secretary of State has directed them to do so.

(3) An authority that revise a statement under subsection (1) or (2) must publish the revised statement and a description of the revision as soon as practicable.

(4) The Secretary of State need not consider whether to exercise any power under sections 496 to 497A (powers to prevent unreasonable exercise of functions, etc.) or subsection (2) of this section in response to a matter that is, or could have been, the subject of a relevant young adult transport complaint made to him or her unless satisfied that —

(a) the matter has been brought to the notice of the local authority concerned; and

(b) the authority have had a reasonable opportunity to investigate the matter and respond.

(5) In this section “relevant young adult transport complaint” means a complaint that is —

(a) about a local authority's exercise of, or failure to exercise, a function under section 508F or 508G in relation to relevant young adults; and

(b) made by a person who is, or will be, a relevant young adult when the matter complained of has effect, or by a parent of such a person

and “relevant young adult” has the meaning given in section 508F.

(6) For the purposes of sections 508G(7) and 508H, the revision of a statement under this section is to be treated as the preparation of a statement under section 508G.

(7) Where a local authority have published in a single document a statement prepared under section 509AA and a statement prepared under 508G, the requirement to publish a revised statement under subsection (3) is to be treated as a requirement to publish a version of the document that includes the revised statement.

509AA Local authorities in England: provision of transport etc. for persons of sixth form age

(1) A local authority in England shall prepare for each academic year a transport policy statement complying with the requirements of this section.

(2) The statement shall specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority consider it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training —

(a) at schools;

(b) at any institution maintained or assisted by the authority which provides further education or higher education (or both);

(c) at any institution within the further education sector;

(ca) at any 16 to 19 Academy; or

(d) at any establishment (not falling within paragraph (b), (c) or (ca)) at which the authority secures the provision of education or training under section 15ZA(1).

(3) The statement shall specify the arrangements that the authority consider it necessary to make for the provision of financial support in respect of the reasonable travelling expenses of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training at any establishment such as is mentioned in subsection (2).

(4) The statement shall specify the arrangements proposed to be made by the governing bodies of —

(a) schools maintained by the authority at which education suitable to the requirements of persons over compulsory school age is provided; and

(b) institutions within the further education sector in the authority's area

for the provision of transport for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training at the schools and institutions and for the provision of financial support in respect of the travelling expenses of such persons.

(5) Those governing bodies shall co-operate in giving the local authority any information and other support that is reasonably required by the authority for the performance of their functions under this section and section 509AB.

(6) The statement shall specify any travel concessions (within the meaning of Part 5 of the Transport Act 1985 (c. 67)) which are to be provided under any scheme established under section 93 of that Act to persons of sixth form age receiving education at any establishment such as is mentioned in subsection (2) above in the authority's area.

(7) The authority shall —

(a) publish the statement, in a manner which they consider appropriate, on or before 31st May in the year in which the academic year in question begins; and

(b) make, and secure that effect is given to, any arrangements specified under subsections (2) and (3).

(8) Nothing in this section prevents a local authority from making, at any time in an academic year, arrangements —

(a) which are not specified in the transport policy statement published by the authority for that year; but

(b) which they have come to consider necessary for the purposes mentioned in subsections (2) and (3).

(9) The Secretary of State may, if he considers it expedient to do so, direct a local authority to make for any academic year —

(a) arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training at establishments such as are mentioned in subsection (2); or

(b) arrangements for providing financial support in respect of the reasonable travelling expenses of such persons

which have not been specified in the transport policy statement published by the authority for that academic year.

(10) The Secretary of State may by order amend subsection (7)(a) to change the time by which the statement must be published.

(11) Subsection (9) is subject to section 509AE (complaints about transport arrangements etc. for persons of sixth form age in England).

509AB Local authorities in England: further provision about transport policy statements for persons of sixth form age

(1) A statement prepared under section 509AA shall state to what extent arrangements specified in accordance with subsection (2) of that section include arrangements for facilitating the attendance at establishments such as are mentioned in that subsection of disabled persons and persons with learning difficulties.

(2) A statement prepared under that section shall —

(a) specify arrangements for persons receiving full-time education or training at establishments other than schools maintained by the local authority which are no less favourable than the arrangements specified for pupils of the same age attending such schools; and

- (b) specify arrangements for persons with learning difficulties [or disabilities] receiving education or training at establishments other than schools maintained by the authority which are no less favourable than the arrangements specified for pupils of the same age with learning difficulties [or disabilities] attending such schools.

(3) In considering what arrangements it is necessary to make for the purposes mentioned in subsections (2) and (3) of section 509AA the local authority shall have regard (amongst other things) to —

- (a) the needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
- (b) the need to secure that persons in their area have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
- (ba) what they are required to do under section 15ZA(1) in relation to persons of sixth form age;
- (c) the distances, and journey times, between the homes of persons of sixth form age in their area and establishments such as are mentioned in section 509AA(2) at which education or training suitable to their needs is provided; and
- (d) the cost of transport to the establishments in question and of any alternative means of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education or training there.

(3A) In considering whether or not it is necessary to make arrangements for those purposes in relation to a particular person, a local authority in England shall have regard (amongst other things) to the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which he could reasonably be expected to take.

(4) ...

(5) In preparing a statement under section 509AA a local authority shall have regard to any guidance issued under this section by the Secretary of State.

(6) In preparing a statement under that section a local authority shall consult—

- (a) any other local authority that they consider it appropriate to consult,
- (b) the governing bodies mentioned in subsection (4) of that section,
- (c) ...
- (ca) persons in the local authority's area who will be of sixth form age when the statement has effect, and their parents, and
- (d) any other person specified for the purposes of this section by the Secretary of State.

(7) In preparing a statement under that section a local authority shall also consult —

- (a) where they are a district council for an area in a metropolitan county, the Integrated Transport Authority for that county; and
- (b) where they are a London borough council or the Common Council of the City of London, Transport for London.

(7A) In preparing and publishing a statement under section 509AA, a local authority must have regard (among other things) to the need to —

- (a) include in the statement sufficient information about the matters that the statement must specify; and
- (b) publish the statement in time

to enable persons who will be of sixth form age when the statement has effect and their parents to take reasonable account of those matters when choosing between different establishments at which education or training is provided.

(8)...

509AC Interpretation of sections 509AA and 509AB

(1) For the purposes of sections 509AA and 509AB a person receiving education or training at an establishment is of sixth form age if he is over compulsory school age but —

- (a) is under the age of 19; or
- (b) has begun a particular course of education or training at the establishment before attaining the age of 19 and continues to attend that course.

(2) ...

(3) ...

(4) References in section 509AB to persons with learning difficulties [or disabilities] are to be construed in accordance with section 15ZA(6) and (7).

(5) In sections 509AA and 509AB and this section —

“academic year” means any period commencing with 1st August and ending with the next 31st July;

“disabled person” has the same meaning as in the Equality Act 2010;

“establishment” means an establishment of any kind, including a school or institution; and

“governing body”, in relation to an institution within the further education sector, has the same meaning as in the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

(6) The Secretary of State may by order amend the definition of “academic year” in subsection (5).

509AD Local authorities in England: duty to have regard to religion or belief in exercise of travel functions

(1) A local authority in England must have regard, amongst other things, in exercising any of their travel functions in relation to or in connection with the travel of a person or persons to or from a school, institution or other place —

- (a) to any wish of a parent of such a person for him to be provided with education or training at a particular school, institution or other place where that wish is based on the parent's religion or belief; and
- (b) in a case where the person in question (or any of the persons in question) is of sixth form age (within the meaning given in section 509AC(1)), to any wish of that person to be provided with education or training at a particular school, institution or other place where that wish is based on the person's religion or belief.

(2) The “travel functions” of a local authority in England are their functions under any of the following provisions—

- section 508A (duty to promote sustainable modes of travel etc.);
- section 508B (travel arrangements for eligible children);
- section 508C (travel arrangements etc. for other children);
- section 508E and Schedule 35C (school travel schemes);
- section 508F (local authorities in England: provision of transport etc. for adult learners); and
- section 509AA (transport etc. for persons of sixth form age).

(3) For the purposes of this section—

- (a) “religion” means any religion;
- (b) “belief” means any religious or philosophical belief;
- (c) a reference to religion includes a reference to lack of religion; and
- (d) a reference to belief includes a reference to lack of belief.

509AE Complaints about transport arrangements etc. for persons of sixth form age in England

(1) A local authority may revise a statement prepared under section 509AA to change the arrangements specified under subsection (2) or (3) of that section if, as a result of a sixth form transport complaint, they have come to consider the change necessary for the purpose of the arrangements specified under the subsection in question.

(2) A local authority must revise a statement prepared under section 509AA to change the arrangements specified under subsection (2) or (3) of that section if, as a result of a sixth form transport complaint, the Secretary of State has directed them to do so.

(3) An authority that revise a statement under subsection (1) or (2) must publish the revised statement and a description of the revision as soon as practicable.

(4) The Secretary of State need not consider whether to exercise any power under sections 496 to 497A (powers to prevent unreasonable exercise of functions, etc.), section 509AA(9) (power to require local authority to make additional transport arrangements), or subsection (2) of this section in response to a matter that is, or could have been, the subject of a sixth form transport complaint made to him or her unless satisfied that —

(a) the matter has been brought to the notice of the local authority concerned; and

(b) the authority have had a reasonable opportunity to investigate the matter and respond.

(5) In this section “sixth form transport complaint” means a complaint that is—

(a) about a local authority's exercise of, or failure to exercise, a function under sections 509AA to 509AD in relation to persons of sixth form age; and

(b) made by a person who is, or will be, a person of sixth form age when the matter complained of has effect, or by a parent of such a person;

and “sixth form age” is to be construed in accordance with section 509AC(1).

(6) For the purposes of sections 509AA(8) and (9), 509AB(1) to (5), 509AC and 509AD, the revision of a statement under this section is to be treated as the preparation of a statement under section 509AA.

(7) Where a local authority have published in a single document a statement prepared under section 508G and a statement prepared under 509AA, the requirement to publish a revised statement under subsection (3) is to be treated as a requirement to publish a version of the document that includes the revised statement.

Appendix B – Model policy template

XXXX Council

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 20xx – 20xx

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement - Academic Year 20xx – 20xx

Transport policy statement for young people aged 16-18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19 – 24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Department Responsible: xxxxx

Contact details: xxxxx

Document first release: xxxxx

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Introduction

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 policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support.

‘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 **xxxxx** 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 lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Aims and Objectives

The council has the following aims and objectives when assessing transport / travel support:

To include the council's high level objectives

Transport and travel support

Concessionary tickets for young people 16 – 25 from public transport providers

Overview of Concessionary schemes available from Public transport providers

- Page 12 onwards provides examples of other concessionary schemes that are available from bus companies and those provided by schools and colleges.

Travel support from schools and colleges

Details of any transport or support available from specific institutions

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - in care
 - care leavers
 - in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
 - discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment
2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 20xx or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 20xx and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 20xx and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or the local authority

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/ search for post 16 bursaries.

Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related

travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

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

Types of child care

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

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

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a [European Economic Area \(EEA\) country](#)
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 – 25 card.

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

LA support

LA support for young people without special educational needs or disabilities

Details of support available from the council for young people on their area including any criteria used to decide eligibility.

Contribution required **(delete if N/A)**

Details of any charging policy for young people without special educational needs or disabilities including details of any concessions for low income families. (It may also be useful to detail how much the transport costs the council)

LA support for Learners with special educational needs or a disability

Details of support available from the council for young people with SEND including age ranges considered, criteria for eligibility, review information, types of transport available etc.

Contribution required **(delete if N/A)**

Details of any charging policy for SEND young people including details of any concessions for low income families. (It may also be useful to detail how much the transport costs the council)

Refunds

Details of the council's refund policy

Travel training

Details of the council's travel training policy.

Apprenticeships

Details of any specific provision in place for apprentices

Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Details of any specific provision in place for those NEET or at risk of becoming so.

LA support in other circumstances

Details of any help available the LA has decided to provide in specific circumstances for example where an LA has placed a student outside of the LA area or a student is in a residential setting.

Additional eligibility criteria

Details related to the categories below and of other considerations the LA wishes to include such as rules on residence or where young people are travelling outside the LA boundary.

Applying for LA transport support

Details of how to apply including contact details of the department responsible and dates of when applications can be accepted.

Appeals

Details of the LAs appeals procedure.

Details of concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards including any charges available for Post 16 young people.

This should include contact details for more information

May 20xx					
Concessionary Fares (Commercial and Concessionary Passes available to young people in the XXXX Area for use on Public Transport). Charges may change without notice.					
Scheme	User group	Concession	Times available	Registration cost	Journey cost/concession
The information contained below details how some schools and colleges provide extra transport help. If your school or college is not listed below please contact them directly for information.					

Appendix C – DfE annual compliance checks

The DfE will conduct compliance checks from June onwards on all local authority post 16 transport statements. In order for a statement to be deemed compliant it must:

- Be available on the local authorities website;
- Be clearly dated with the forthcoming academic year;
- Have a working link to the web page housing it from the gov.uk postcode search;
- Set out any arrangements available from educational institutions, including the 16-19 bursary fund;
- Set out any concessionary fares available from transport providers and other providers; and
- Detail the complaints process that a parent or young person should follow if they are not happy with the local authority's decision.

DfE will contact all local authorities with non-compliant statements and request that changes be made.

Appendix D – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why isn't post 16 transport free for everyone, in the same way as it is for school age pupils?

A: We expect local authorities to make reasonable decisions about what support should be available based on the needs of their population, local transport infrastructure and the resources they have available. It is, however, recognised that the cost of transport can be an issue for some young people and to help with this there is further support available. Information about what support is available locally is available from the local authority in their post-16 transport policy statement. The statement can be accessed on the LA website or through the postcode search at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

The Bursary Fund for 16-19 year olds has the flexibility to help meet transport costs for those young people who need this support most. You can find out more about the 16-19 Bursary Fund [here](#).

In addition, most transport companies also give some kind of discount for young people such as discounted fares or subsidised travel passes.

Some education and training providers also provide subsidised or free transport for example college buses, and travel subsidies from private training providers.

Q: What support is available for young people with special educational needs?

A: The post-16 transport duty also applies to young people with special educational needs aged up to age 25 (who have an EHC plan and started a course before their 19th birthday). Local Authorities' post-16 transport policy statements must include specific arrangements for these young people to ensure they have the necessary support. The transport needs of young people with special educational needs should also be reassessed by their local authority when a young person moves from compulsory schooling to post-16 education so that the appropriate support is put in place in accordance with the LA's post-16 transport policy.

Q: How do the duties apply for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) as they turn age 19?

A: The duty a young person is assessed under is dependent on when they started their current course. If a young person with SEND started the course before their 19th birthday then they are assessed under the 16-18 duty. If they have started a new course after their 19th birthday then they are assessed under the adult duty.

Young people will qualify for free transport under the adult duty where the local authority assesses that in order to attend education or training they require transport arranged by the local authority, such as a specialised vehicle or minibus. If the young person's

requirements are a personal travel budget, mileage allowance or public transport pass then this does not need to be provided free by the local authority as they have not put the travel arrangements in place. However, in these circumstances the local authority has discretion to pay some or all of the travel expenses.

Young people can also receive free transport if they are attending institutions outside of the HE and FE sector and started after their 19th birthday in residential provision if the provision, boarding accommodation and transport were all arranged by the local authority. Again, in these circumstances the local authority has discretion to pay some or all of the travel expenses.

Q: What support is available to young people who live in rural areas to get to college or another type of education provider?

A: It is the responsibility of local authorities to put in place transport arrangements to help young people aged 16 to 18 to access education or training, using funds they have available locally.

The transport provided by local authorities varies in accordance with local needs, for example it sometimes involves giving 16-18 year olds access to school transport or to bus travel for payment of a flat fee.

Most young people in rural areas have access to a discount or concession on local bus or train travel, either from their local authority or local transport providers. The government also supports local bus travel, including in rural areas, through the Bus Service Operators Grant.

Guidance makes it clear that local authorities need to look at the transport needs of those who live in particularly rural areas where the transport infrastructure can be limited.

Appendix E – Further sources of information

Associated resources (external links)

- **Sustainable transport**

[Sustrans](#) is the leading sustainable transport charity that provides practical advice that can be passed on to parents and young people to increase confidence in walking and cycling.

Other departmental advice and guidance you may be interested in

- [Home to school travel and transport statutory guidance](#) (for children of compulsory school age)

Guidance relating to home to school travel and transport for pupils up to the age of 16 and of compulsory school age is available from the Department for Education's website.

- [Participation of young people statutory guidance](#)

The purpose of this guidance is to identify the key responsibilities of local authorities in relation to raising the participation age and promoting the participation of 16- and 17-year-olds. It is available from the GOV.UK website.



Department
for Education

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool:

Title of proposal	Draft Transport Policies Review: Home to School and College Travel Policy 2025 – 2028 and Draft Post 16 Travel Policy Statement 2025 – 2026. Updated post consultation.
Name of division/service	Social Care and Education
Name of lead officer completing this assessment	Maria Coulson, Lead Commissioner, Children’s Services
Date EIA assessment commenced	28.06.2024. Updated post consultation 23.01.2025. Further update 07.02.2025
Date EIA assessment completed (<i>prior to decision being taken as the EIA may still be reviewed following a decision to monitor any changes</i>)	
Decision maker	Cllr Elaine Pantling, Assistant City Mayor, Education

EIA sign off on completion:	Signature	Date
Lead officer		
Equalities officer (has been consulted)		
Divisional director		

Please ensure the following:

- a) That the document is **understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents** and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete and based in evidence.
- b) That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- c) That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.
- d) That the equality impact assessment is started at an early stage in the decision-making process, so that it can be used to inform the consultation, engagement and the decision. It should not be a tick-box exercise. Equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process. It can be used to assess several different options.
- e) Decision makers must be aware of their duty to pay 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (see below) and 'due regard' must be paid before and at the time a decision is taken. Please see the Brown Principles on the equality intranet pages, for information on how to undertake a lawful decision-making process, from an equalities perspective. Please append the draft EIA and the final EIA to papers for decision makers (including leadership team meetings, lead member briefings, scrutiny meetings and executive meetings) and draw out the key points for their consideration. The Equalities Team provide equalities comments on reports.

1. Setting the context

Describe the proposal, the reasons it is being made, and the intended change or outcome. Will the needs of those who are currently using the service continue to be met?

- Leicester City Council provides information children and young people and their parents / carer's on its website surrounding the [support available for Transport to School and College](#).

The proposed changes

- Due to financial constraints in the 2025 / 2026 academic year it is proposed that discretionary post 16 SEND transport support is generally withdrawn. Unless very limited exceptional circumstances exist, this will affect in the region of 450 – 500 young people and their families. Although it could be beneficial for many to travel independently where possible, not all are in a position to do that. The council remain committed to doing everything possible to support young people to achieve their aspirations and policies aim to provide clarity and mitigation wherever possible.
- The law says that councils have to provide different levels of support to children and young people to help them get to school and college. Leicester City Council has three policies to help people understand the support that is available to them:

The policies

1. The Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy

- This explains what services are available to help children and young people get to school.
- It is for all children and young people who must go to school by law (this is called compulsory school age which is approximately between 5 and 16 years old).

2. The Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Home to school and College Travel Policy

- This explains what services are available to help children and young people get to school or college when they have a special educational need or disability (SEND).

- Children and young people with a SEND need often rely on additional services to access learning. The law protects them and says that they are entitled to additional support and that can extend up until the age of 25.
- Until now the council has been able to provide discretionary free transport support to young people over 16 with SEND needs, it can no longer afford to do that.
- There are limited 'exceptional circumstances' where the council will continue that support.
- It isn't the first time we have consulted on this, but the council has not implemented the change. In the 2025/2026 academic year under the proposed policy, in many cases young people who choose to stay in education will generally have to have developed some independence skills where they can, rely on parents/carers to get them to further education or in some cases leave education.
- The council understands that this will have an impact for many young people and their families. We want to understand the impact of this change so that decision makers can make a truly informed decision.
- We will use this information to understand what is within our power to do to support young people with SEND to have every opportunity available to them to lead happy and fulfilled lives. We will operate with creativity and determination to continue to develop services for that purpose.

3. The Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

- This explains what services are available to help young people continue in education when they choose to carry on. They have this choice after they finish year 11 (typically age 16).
- At this age the law different about attending school and also the transport support that the council should provide.
- This policy statement explains to all young people and their families what the different types of support are to help travel to further education.
- It includes the exceptional circumstances where council support is offered for those in further education along with other sources of travel assistance.
- Generally speaking, it is the responsibility of parents / carer's to ensure that children and young people attend school, as such the foundation principle is that the legal obligation for ensuring safe travel to school lies with parents and carers.
- The law acknowledges that there is additional hardship for those families who have a child or young person with SEND and for those who have low incomes. As such it prescribes that local authorities must provide SEND travel support for children and young people of compulsory school age and that rules consider low income.
- Many children in year 7, when they make the adjustment from primary school to high school learn to travel independently. This a natural progression as they move from childhood and closer to independence in adulthood. The [Leicester City Council Preparing for Adulthood Strategy](#) highlights the aim "to ensure all children and young people with special

educational needs and disabilities succeed in learning, achieve their goals and aspirations and transition successfully into adulthood.”

- Year 9 is a critical milestone for all young people including those with SEND. Planning must take place to support the transition to adulthood and particularly to support the young person and their family through the choices they must make as they reach the end of their compulsory education at the end of year 11, typically where a young person is 16 years old.
- All young people should plan in year 9 but this is especially important for those with SEND. Some children with SEND have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). An EHCP is the plan that parents / carer’s, schools, local authorities and health professionals work together on to ensure that, where young people need more support than is available than ‘reasonable adjustments’ in mainstream settings, those children and young people receive the best available wrap-around support that they require. Wherever possible the aspirations of the child or young person should be central to the support that is put in place.
- At year 9 (typically aged 14) the young person’s EHCP review should specifically address preparing for adulthood. Where it is within the ability of a young person, independent travel is a valuable life skill that can reduce isolation and increase life chances. As such developing these skills is an important part of these reviews.
- In year 9, a specific focus is preparing for adulthood and travel and independence are a significant factor in a young person’s future ability to live the most independent life possible for them.
- Post 16 education commences after year 11. This is the age when a young person can legally leave education. There is no distinction between whether they have SEND or not. Over the next two years there is an expectation that a young person will continue in education or be in employment, otherwise there may be financial support implications for families.
- The law also changes after year 11. There is no legal requirement on local authorities to provide transport at this age for those young people with SEND. For those aged 19-25, local authorities have to provide some support to facilitate education and a discretion as to how and when this is provided. These legal rules make it challenging to prescribe the exact circumstances when support must be provided. However, the council is committed to providing as much clarity as possible and the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2024 – 2025 is intended to do that.

Background

- The [Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities \(SEND\) Home to School and College Travel Policy April 2022](#) became Leicester City Council’s overarching policy regarding transport for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) when a decision notice, dated 25 March 2022. was issued. In line with the council’s constitution this became the policy that officers must implement. The formal implementation of this decision commenced on 1 April 2022.

- At this time the decision to discontinue travel support for young people over the age of 16 years was taken as part of this policy. It was publicly consulted upon and agreed that a two-year period for transitional arrangements would be put in place. The two-year transitional period is due to end in March 2024, but the council has agreed to withdraw the travel support at the end of the current academic school year on the 12 July 2024.
- On 22 May 2024 an interim arrangement was communicated via news release which explained that some parents have raised concerns about the consultation process and said they were not made aware of the proposals at the time of the 2021/2022 policies.
- For this reason it was agreed that both the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement and SEND Home to School and College Travel policies should be consulted upon. Permission to consult is being requested and this EIA details considerations in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty that have informed the drafting of the Draft SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy 2025/2026 to 2027/2028 which is the foundation of significant changes in the post 16 support that will be available. This support is detailed in the proposed draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/2026.
- The proposed draft policies will impact in the region of 450 – 500 young people with SEND and their families. It will disproportionately impact those with little financial resilience. The majority of post 16 young people should expect not to receive SEND transport support from the council in 2025/2026.
- The proposed draft eligibility criteria for post 16 provision will broadly be limited to the following exceptional circumstances:
 - “Each of the following is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:
 - The young person missed a significant majority of year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
 - The placement named by the local authority is a considerable distance from the young person’s home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a “parental preference”; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person’s needs; and, taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person’s parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

None of the following is (taken in isolation) likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- Single parent families.
- Parent(s)/ carers who work.

- Having other children to look after and/or at other schools.
 - Travelling to an independent school out of area.
 - Parents/carers/students unable to drive or having access to a car.
 - Students in wheelchairs.”
- If support is provided for post 16 learners it will be in the form of a personal transport budget. This might not cover the cost of taxi provision even where there are exceptional circumstances found.
 - In an effort to improve clarity surrounding operational practice there have also been updates to provisions surrounding behaviour and provisions that affect children and young people with multiple home addresses. These changes affect all ages and do not represent a reduction in service but a clarification of the policy. The council hasn’t always enforced these parts before but will do in 2025 / 2026.
 - Additionally, the policy has also been amended to say that in some instances parents will be provided with a bus pass (or expected to walk return journeys when that is reasonable) to accompany their child to school. This helps young people get used to the journey but may not be as convenient as a taxi journey paid for by the council. For all ages the council will consider the most appropriate and cost-effective transport available as it has a duty to ensure efficiency.

Post consultation update (dated 23.01.2025)

- Following analysis of the consultation responses an additional option has been developed for consideration (to be decided upon at Lead Member briefing on 4 February 2025).
- If option 3 was decided upon, the additional service support would constitute further mitigating action as personal transport budgets would be provided to eligible children and young people and council funded and arranged transport in ‘exceptional circumstances’.

Post consultation update (dated 06.02.2025)

Under the Equality Act 2010 (including the local authority and schools), have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

SEND children and young people and young adults are likely to face challenges when integrating into some aspects of social life and whilst independence can be beneficial, without support it may also be detrimental to their growth. Suitable school transport is often crucial for children who have additional needs, it is a key part of enabling them to attend school regularly and benefit from their educational experience. Local authorities must comply with the public sector equality duty. They must consider the potential effect of their transport policy on disabled people, both disabled children and disabled parents.

The report seeks a decision regarding which version of the Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Home to School and College Travel Policy 2025/2026 to 2027/2028 - and Post 16 Travel Policy Statement 2025/2026 should be adopted. These proposed policies include the effect of a withdrawal of post 16 SEND Transport provision from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year unless there are very limited 'exceptional circumstances'. Families will have the right to appeal, and cases would be considered on an individual basis.

The report considers the following:

Option 1: do nothing/retain the current service

Under this option there will be no equality implications as the service will continue as at present.

To ensure that equality implications of the following options have been taken into account, an EIA has been carried out and has been updated to include findings from the consultation, students with Special Educational Needs, particularly those with an EHCP are likely to be adversely affected by the proposal.

Option 2: Change the service as per the consulted upon draft proposed procedures, including the general withdrawal of Post 16 SEND transport support unless limited 'exceptional circumstances' exist.

This option broadly removes post 16 SEND transport unless there were very limited 'exceptional circumstances', this will impact on children and young people with SEND, most relevant would be the protected characteristics of age and disability.

Option 3: As Option 2 but with extended 'exceptional circumstances' to families with multiple children with SEND at different schools

Feedback from the consultation has led to an additional option 3 being developed. The consultation was on a proposed policy which broadly removed post 16 SEND transport unless there were very limited 'exceptional circumstances'. The newly developed option still reduces support significantly but provides some increased support in certain circumstances. It is not possible to entirely mitigate the impact of this proposal for all young people, most relevant would be the protected characteristics of age and disability.

2. Equality implications/obligations

Which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes.

a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?
- The policy seeks to ensure clarity surrounding what is available to all learners, regardless of their protected characteristic. Work has been completed to identify the various user groups that access the provision in order to understand the full range of needs.
- Particular attention has been paid to the SEND group as it is acknowledged that there is an additional need to ensure their safety in line with expectations for all young people.
- Families have the right to appeal and cases will be considered on an individual basis.

b. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- How does the proposal/service ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for people?
- Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).

- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?
- The policy provides clarity surrounding what support is, and is not, available to learners who are in post-16 education. It is the point where the available options for those young people are conveyed and parents / carer's can evaluate the options available to them to support their young person's education and choices.
- The legal requirement to consider exceptional circumstances is contained within this policy. Leicester City Council has embedded systems in place to ensure that each young person's situation is evaluated at a senior level with cross-team support to ensure effective communication.
- A key reason for implementing the overarching 2022 travel policy was to ensure that the council can continue to provide statutory services within available budgets. The draft proposed policies does not alter any principles in this regard as there is not funding available to revisit eligibility.
- Despite changes in financial projections and cost implications there remains an ongoing challenge re cost control and how the general fund can afford this service. Option 3 has been developed and does still demonstrate cost control opportunities, but it remains the case that the council faces severe financial pressure surrounding this service.

c. Foster good relations between different groups

- Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives?
- How does it achieve this aim?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?
- As the council planned ahead in 2021 to be able to continue to deliver services within the available budgets there has been close work with a group that represents parents called the Parent Carer Forum. Additionally, at this time officers worked with a group of young people that support the council to understand the views of young people (named the Big Mouth Forum).
- It was acknowledged at the time, that the withdrawal of post-16 SEND transport support meant that a cultural shift in approach was needed and over the past two years the council has worked with those who represent learners, parents and carers to determine how best to prepare for adulthood.

- However, this cultural shift means that in many cases families will need to provide support where the council has previously been in a position to do so. Some families may not have a great deal of resilience to do this in the current economic climate. This associated Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/2026 explains the different options, including financial support through college bursaries for travel and other funds, that might be available to them.
- By providing information surrounding eligibility, in principle this policy will empower more young people to travel independently wherever possible and support families to plan ahead.
- To try and make consultation questions as clear as policy the Director of SEND and Education and Lead Commissioner have met with a group of parents of young people impacted by the proposed changes. They have kindly given their time to help shape the consultation questions.
- The Lead Commissioner has attended the Big Mouth Forum to hear the views of young people with SEND who represent their peers surrounding the issue of transport.

3. Who is affected?

Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include people who currently use the service and those who could benefit from, but do not currently access the service.

- Current and new learners, including Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Children Looked After (CLA), Children in Need (CIN).
- Families of those children
- However, although the changes to eligibility are lawful it is acknowledged that for some young people with SEND, their options will reduce given that the council can no longer continue funding at current levels.
- It is not possible to entirely mitigate the impact of the proposals for all young people if there is a decision to change the current policy.

- There is a risk that young people in post 16 education and above may not continue in education, employment or training and become NEET.

4. Information used to inform the equality impact assessment

What **data, research, or trend analysis** have you used?

Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you

Are there any gaps or limitations in the information you currently hold, and how you have sought to address this? E.g. proxy data, national trends, equality monitoring etc.

- Overview of current service user groups (e.g. how many come through the SEND route, the LAC/CIN route)
- Research with other LA's to understand their SEND Transport arrangements.
- Research with post – 16 providers to understand the available support from them to learners.
- Research into the level and quality of independent travel training
- Lead Commissioner attendance at Big Mouth Forum to hear the views of young people with SEND who represent their peers.
- Engagement with some parents of young people who are affected by the changes to support the drafting of the consultation questions
- A consultation was carried out – please see section 5 below.

Intended work includes:

- A project looking at the way in which SEND transport is currently provided and with the specific purpose of identifying opportunities for service improvement and efficiency. This will factor in journey time for young people, the impact of taxi's arriving separately outside schools, vehicle emissions and financial efficiency.
- Continued engagement with a range of professionals to ensure that exceptional circumstances are communicated to the council so that arrangements can be put in place where necessary.

5. Consultation

What **consultation** have you undertaken about the proposal with people who use the service or people affected, people who may potentially use the service and other stakeholders? What did they say about:

- What is important to them regarding the current service?
- How does (or could) the service meet their needs? How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)?
- Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?
- Although developing independence skills is a valuable life skill a significant reason for the policy change is the fact that the service is discretionary and the council does not have the budget to continue providing it.
- Based on feedback and analysis to date it is apparent that impact is not necessarily always due to the protected characteristic itself but the knock-on consequences to parents / carers. This emphasises the need to ensure a continued and consistent focus on preparing for adulthood and in particular, independence surrounding travel arrangements at an early stage (year 9 onwards at the latest) wherever possible.
- The above, known considerations were part of the rationale for the two-year lead in period for the 2022 policy and the extended notice period from March 2024 until the start of the 2024 / 2025 academic year.
- Some parents have raised concerns about the consultation process and said they were not made aware of the proposals at the time of the 2021/2022 policies.
- A full, public 8 week consultation on Citizen Space was undertaken between 7 November 2024 and 2 January 2025 as authorised by the Strategic Director of Social Care and Education.

- There were 348 responses to the consultation. The proposed policy was not agreed with significantly. 81% of children and young people did not think the proposed policies were a good idea. 88% of adults did not think the proposed policies were a good idea.
- Additionally, there was a consensus of strongly held views from respondents.
- Summary: The main call from CYP is to continue providing accessible transportation services for students with special needs, to ensure they can access education and maintain their safety, independence, and social connections.
- Summary: Overall, parents / carers are calling for a more flexible, individualised approach to transport support, ensuring that children with SEND have equal opportunities for education, safety, and social development. They argue that the proposed changes could lead to further financial strain on families and increased costs for public services in the long run.
- Those out of Leicester City also conveyed similar sentiments and so the summary is representative.
- An associated communications plan has been completed and is appended to the decision report.
- If option 3 was decided upon, the additional service support would constitute further mitigating action as personal transport budgets would be provided to eligible children and young people and council funded and arranged transport in 'exceptional circumstances'.

6. Potential Equality Impact

Based on your understanding of the service area, any specific evidence you may have on people who use the service and those who could potentially use the service and the findings of any consultation you have undertaken, use the table below to explain which individuals or community groups are likely to be affected by the proposal because of their protected characteristic(s). Describe what the impact is likely to be, how significant that impact is for individual or group well-being, and what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove negative impacts. This could include indirect impacts, as well as direct impacts.

Looking at potential impacts from a different perspective, this section also asks you to consider whether any other particular groups, especially vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected by the proposal. List the relevant groups that may be affected, along with the likely impact, potential risks and mitigating actions that would reduce or remove any negative impacts. These groups do not have to be defined by their protected characteristic(s).

Protected characteristics

Impact of proposal:

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. Why is this protected characteristic relevant to the proposal? How does the protected characteristic determine/shape the potential impact of the proposal? This may also include **positive impacts** which support the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Risk of disproportionate negative impact:

How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be disproportionately negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

Mitigating actions:

For disproportionate negative impacts on protected characteristic/s, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove the impact? You may also wish to include actions which support the positive aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. All actions identified here should also be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.

a. Age

Indicate which age group/s is/ are most affected, either specify general age group - children, young people working age people or older people or specific age bands

What is the impact of the proposal on age?

This policy affects young people with SEND after year 11 (typically post 16 up to age 25) and those in years 9 and 10 in preparation for changes.

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on age?

Appropriate support for children to develop through education is required.

Inherently younger people have less experience of independent living and therefore if there is inadequate travel skill development and / or parental support the confidence and progression of young people is likely to be impeded.

What are the mitigating actions?

The work developed and published as part of the preparing for adulthood strategy and the 'exceptional circumstances' notification part of the policy.

The 'exceptional circumstances' element as part of Strategic Director discretion is the way in which the policy ensures that there is a 'safety net' for cases where there is a need and there is a legal requirement to do so.

The Preparing for Adulthood Strategy is of critical importance to ensure that in the years coming up to post 16 further education, young people are equipped with independence skills and confidence to ensure that the transition to adulthood is as supported as possible.

- If option 3 was decided upon, the additional service support would constitute further mitigating action as personal transport budgets would be provided to eligible children and young people and council funded and arranged transport in 'exceptional circumstances'.

b. Disability

If specific impairments are affected by the proposal, specify which these are. Our standard categories are on our equality monitoring form – physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability, long standing illness or health condition.

What is the impact of the proposal on disability?

- Young people with SEND are affected by this policy. It is felt that detailing the nature of specific disabilities that do or do not meet exceptional circumstances could in and of itself be overly simplistic and discriminatory.
- Where there is any room for error with an application a panel of subject matter experts convene to feed into a holistic analysis and support effective decision making.
- In the region of 450 – 500 young people are likely to be impacted by the policy. This is likely to result in an increased need for them to travel independently or for parents / carers to make arrangements to support them.
- The consultation responses support the above assertions

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on disability?

- There is a risk that young people with SEND will not be able to continue in post 16 further education if learners, parents / carers and educational establishments do not work with the council to plan practically for post 16 further education.
- There is a risk that the council not being in a position to continue to provide support at previous levels could impede the options and progress of young people with SEND.

What are the mitigating actions?

- A review of SEND placement sufficiency is underway to provide greater educational choice for learner's, parents and carers is available within Leicester City.

- The Preparing for Adulthood Strategy has been developed and implemented to ensure an adequate focus is placed upon independence skills.
- A Post 16 SEND Education Strategy is being developed to support the right education being available at the right time for the learner.
- 'Exceptional circumstances' are investigated thoroughly on every occasion that they are raised to ensure that a detailed and holistic approach is adopted. Detailed work developing the definition of exceptional circumstances has taken place to provide improved clarity.
- Travel training has been offered to educational institutions and other adult stakeholders to equip them to teach young people. A communication plan to support engagement with key stakeholders has been developed.
- If option 3 was decided upon, the additional service support would constitute further mitigating action as personal transport budgets would be provided to eligible children and young people and council funded and arranged transport in 'exceptional circumstances'.

c. Gender reassignment

Indicate whether the proposal has potential impact on trans men or trans women, and if so, which group is affected.

What is the impact of the proposal on gender reassignment?

- None identified

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on gender reassignment?

- None anticipated

What are the mitigating actions?

- Not applicable as no negative impacts are anticipated.

d. Marriage and civil partnership

What is the impact of the proposal on marriage and civil partnership?

- None identified

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on marriage and civil partnership?

- None anticipated

What are the mitigating actions?

- Not applicable as no negative impacts are anticipated.

e. Pregnancy and maternity**What is the impact of the proposal on pregnancy and maternity?**

- None identified

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on pregnancy and maternity?

- None anticipated

What are the mitigating actions?

- Not applicable as no negative impacts are anticipated.

f. Race**What is the impact of the proposal on race?**

- None identified

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on race?

- None anticipated

What are the mitigating actions?

- Not applicable as no negative impacts are anticipated.

g. Religion or belief

If specific religious or faith groups are affected by the proposal, our equalities monitoring form sets out categories reflective of the city's population. Given the diversity of the city there is always scope to include any group that is not listed.

What is the impact of the proposal on religion or belief?

- None identified

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on religion or belief?

- None anticipated

What are the mitigating actions?

- Not applicable as no negative impacts are anticipated.

h. Sex

Indicate whether this has potential impact on either males or females

What is the impact of the proposal on sex?

- None identified

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sex?

- None anticipated

What are the mitigating actions?

- Not applicable as no negative impacts are anticipated.

i. Sexual orientation

What is the impact of the proposal on sexual orientation?

- None identified

What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sexual orientation?

- None anticipated

What are the mitigating actions?

- Not applicable as no negative impacts are anticipated.

7. Summary of protected characteristics**a. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have commented on, are relevant to the proposal?**

- This is a policy that outlines arrangements for learners over 16 specifically. The policy results in a withdrawal of service in 2025/2026 for hundreds of families (350-450). Additionally, the law reflects additional hardship for those young people with SEND who travel to education (this is why transport support is a legal requirement during compulsory school age). Mitigating actions have therefore been proposed for these groups.

b. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have not commented on, are not relevant to the proposal?

- They do not have a bearing on the material facts for consideration or mitigations required for young people.

8. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

The Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to ‘have due regard’ to the principles of the Covenant and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community.

When Leicester City Council exercises a relevant function, within the fields of healthcare, education, and housing services it must have due regard to the aims set out below:

a. The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces

These include danger; geographical mobility; separation; Service law and rights; unfamiliarity with civilian life; hours of work; and stress.

b. The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces

A disadvantage is when the level of access a member of the Armed Forces Community has to goods and services, or the support they receive, is comparatively lower than that of someone in a similar position who is not a member of the Armed Forces Community, and this difference arises from one (or more) of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life.

c. The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces

Special provision is the taking of actions that go beyond the support provided to reduce or remove disadvantage. Special provision may be justified by the effects of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, especially for those that have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and the injured (whether that injury is physical or mental).

Does the service/issue under consideration fall within the scope of a function covered by the Duty (healthcare, education, housing)? Which aims of the Duty are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes. Are members of the Armed Forces specifically disadvantaged or further disadvantaged by the proposal/service? Identify any mitigations including where appropriate possible special provision.

This policy falls within the scope of the armed forces covenant duty. While there is no specific distinction between families and the individual child's needs are central, the inherent scope of the policy provides details of the different types of support available to those owed this duty and the approach that will be taken.

9. Other groups

Other groups

Impact of proposal:

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on children in poverty or any other people who we may consider to be vulnerable, for example people who misuse substances, ex armed forces, people living in poverty, care experienced young people, carers. List any vulnerable groups likely to be affected. Will their needs continue to be met? What issues will affect their take up of services/other opportunities that meet their needs/address inequalities they face?

Risk of disproportionate negative impact:

How likely is it that this group of people will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

Mitigating actions:

For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact for this vulnerable group of people? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA. You may also wish to use this section to identify opportunities for positive impacts.

a. Care Experienced People

This is someone who was looked after by children's services for a period of 13 weeks after the age of 14', but without any limit on age, recognising older people may still be impacted from care experience into later life.

What is the impact of the proposal on Care Experienced People?

- Children who are looked after have often experienced trauma. This can be known to affect SEMH needs and behaviours during travel and school.

What is the risk of negative impact on Care Experienced People?

- The policy affects those in post 16 education and above. It is when the young person legally becomes an adult that statutory social care support is often reduced and young adults in learning may experience hardship where there is not broader family support available.

What are the mitigating actions?

- The review of exceptional circumstances (when highlighted) as part of a holistic analysis of need. Sign posting to financial support where available in the associated Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/2026.
- If option 3 was decided upon, the additional service support would constitute further mitigating action as personal transport budgets would be provided to eligible children and young people and council funded and arranged transport in 'exceptional circumstances'.

b. Children in poverty

What is the impact of the proposal on children in poverty?

- Children in poverty are likely to be from families with less financial resilience. This is likely to affect the options to transport their children to school.
- Those in post 16 education who become NEET (not in employment education or training) do not have benefit entitlements.

What is the risk of negative impact on children in poverty?

- Those with legal parental responsibility may not have as many available options to transport their young person.

What are the mitigating actions?

- Express provision within the policy – extended rights eligibility for low income families.
- The review of exceptional circumstances (when highlighted) as part of a holistic analysis of need. Sign posting to financial support where available in the associated Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/2026.
- If option 3 was decided upon, the additional service support would constitute further mitigating action as personal transport budgets would be provided to eligible children and young people and council funded and arranged transport in ‘exceptional circumstances’.

c. Other group

What is the impact of the proposal on any other groups?

- All service users accessing this provision are vulnerable in some way. Children who are looked after are another group that is likely to be specifically affected

What is the risk of negative impact on any other groups?

- Children who are looked after have already experienced adversity during childhood and may be experiencing or recovering from trauma. They may require additional parental support to continue in post-16 education.

What are the mitigating actions?

- Partnership working between council teams to ensure arrangements adequately mitigate required needs.
- A robust approach to safety in the consideration of applications.

10. Other sources of potential negative impacts

Are there any other potential negative impacts external to the service that could further disadvantage service users over the next three years that should be considered? For example, these could include:

- Other proposed changes to council services that would affect the same group of service users;
- Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that would negatively affect residents;
- external economic impacts such as an economic downturn.
- Possible further economic downturn increasing financial pressures on families and particularly those where young people are in poverty.
- The ability of the council to continue to fund other non-statutory services that may be providing support to this group of young people (due to the current financial situation across all local authorities all non-statutory services are regularly being reviewed).

11. Human rights implications

Are there any human rights implications which need to be considered and addressed (please see the list at the end of the template), if so please outline the implications and how they will be addressed below:

First Protocol Article 2 – the right to education

- Failure to implement policy consistently and clearly will mean that barriers to this right will exist.

Part 1: The convention rights and freedoms

Article 14: Right not to be discriminated against

- Young people with SEND are entitled to access education and the law affords specific protections to ensure that this is the case.
- However, as the law affords an element of discretion to local authorities it is critical that operational processes are robust and consistent to ensure access to transport support services are available where there is a need.

12. Monitoring impact

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered.

If you want to undertake equality monitoring, please refer to our [equality monitoring guidance and templates](#).

- As part of a project to ensure that SEND transport is delivered as effectively as possible in the City there is a strong focus on looking at the cost and benefit of journeys for children and young people. This is built into operational processes and management information will be reported at Director level regularly.

13. EIA action plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from this assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
Greater educational choice for students with SEND to continue to be developed within Leicester City.	A review of SEND placement sufficiency	Michael Wilsher – Head of Education Sufficiency and Admissions	April 2026
To ensure that engagement with stakeholders takes place to continue to monitor the impacts of the required changes.	To develop an engagement strategy to ensure this takes place	Caroline Joliffe – Head of SEND Integrated Services	April 2026
Improved independence skills for young people post-16	Continued implementation of the Preparing for Adulthood Strategy including travel training.	Caroline Joliffe – Head of SEND Integrated Services	March 2026
The right SEND transport options are provided to those most in need.	‘Exceptional circumstances’ are investigated thoroughly on every occasion that they are raised to ensure that a detailed and holistic approach is adopted.	Sophie Maltby – Director of SEND and Education.	Business as usual activity with no end date.

This EIA will be updated pending the outcome of the Lead Member's decision.

Human rights articles:

Part 1: The convention rights and freedoms

Article 2: Right to Life

Article 3: Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way

Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour

Article 5: Right to liberty and security

Article 6: Right to a fair trial

Article 7: No punishment without law

Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life

Article 9: Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Article 10: Right to freedom of expression

Article 11: Right to freedom of assembly and association

Article 12: Right to marry

Article 14: Right not to be discriminated against

Part 2: First protocol

Article 1: Protection of property/peaceful enjoyment

Article 2: Right to education

Article 3: Right to free elections



Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

DRAFT Home to School and College Travel Policy

November 2024

V0.3

This policy is applicable from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year to the end of the 2027/2028 academic year.

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DRAFT

1. Introduction

It is parents and carers responsibility to ensure their child or young person attends the education provision identified for them. Within this policy we aim to promote and support parental duties further through offering different travel options (where eligible).

Local authorities have a responsibility to encourage, enable, support and assist young people with learning difficulties/ disabilities to participate in education and training. This policy looks to promote and encourage the independence and social inclusion for children and young people. It also promotes the council's commitment to support children and young people to develop their independence, enabling them to prepare for adulthood.

This policy sets out how Leicester City Council will meet its obligations to provide home to school and college travel to children and young people with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities, living in Leicester who are eligible to receive it. The policy also gives advice on the support available and the commitment to encourage independent travel to and from school or college.

When considering whether to provide home to school travel assistance, Local Authorities (LA's) are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Education Act 1996 and Schedule 35B of the Act which was inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 508B and 508C of the Act makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. Leicester City Council has developed its travel policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty.

It is important that families understand the eligibility criteria and whether their child is likely to meet this before taking the time to make an application. In most instances, children will not meet the statutory conditions for travel assistance.

It is strongly recommended that all parents read this guidance carefully along with the information on our website at [Travel to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/travel-to-school-and-college/)

2. Travel principles and policy

Leicester City Council is committed to working together with young people, families, schools and colleges to ensure that:

- Children and young people are safe and supported to access education.
- Young people and families have confidence in the travel offer.

Parents and carers have a duty to:

- Ensure their child(ren) receive an education via ensuring they attend school or college.
- Make the necessary travel arrangements for their child(ren) to attend regularly.
- Ensure their child attends the educational establishment identified for them.

The council recognises that:

- The travel offer should respond to and be based on the needs of children and young people as they develop and progress and should promote and encourage their independence and social inclusion.
- Any travel assistance provided by the council is based on the needs of the child or young person and is provided to support young people and children to follow an appropriate educational course. The needs of the child and the travel provision will be periodically reviewed to ensure the child or young person is still accessing the most appropriate travel method.
- The council has a duty to support and enable young people to develop and achieve independence to enable them to prepare for adulthood.
- Encouraging young people's independence will develop their skills for better experience in adult life, their confidence and social skills, and increase their opportunities for continuing education, training and social inclusion.

The council also has a duty to:

- Manage public money responsibly.
- Provide value for money services.
- Promote the use of sustainable transport and travel.

If eligible for travel assistance, this will only be provided from the child's home to the school or college at which they are on roll at the beginning and end of the normal school day (as published on the school or college's website).

If the child attends another school or establishment that is arranged through their school as off-site provision, it will be the school/parent's responsibility to arrange travel to and from that school or establishment, for their off-site learning.

The child's address will normally be the one that they spend the most school nights at, and any travel arrangements to or from an alternative address will be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.

Parents regular work commitments or domestic arrangements will not normally be taken into account when deciding the eligibility of a child or young person or the type of assistance offered.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child is prepared and ready to travel, at their pickup points at the right time, and that any behavioural concerns whilst travelling are positively managed. In very rare instances where there are serious safeguarding concerns travel will be denied.

Travel assistance will not be provided for any medical appointments or domestic arrangements, or for the child to go to or from a different address other than their main residence. Travel assistance is not provided for breakfast or after school clubs or activities.

Eligibility criteria

3. Pre-school children with SEND

Travel assistance for children under the age of five is discretionary as council's have no legal duty to provide or arrange travel for children who have not yet reached the statutory school age. However, travel applications will be considered for children below statutory school age in exceptional circumstances.

In considering these circumstances, the council will need to be satisfied that, without such assistance, the child would be prevented from attending an appropriate nursery or early years' education setting.

In considering assistance for pre-school children, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The age of the child.
- The distance between home and nursery.
- The SEN and disabilities of the child.
- The reasons for the pre-school placement.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form to demonstrate that the child has a special educational need, disability or mobility need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

4. Compulsory school-aged children aged 5-16 with SEND

Compulsory school age begins at the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June of the school year in which a child or young person turns 16.

There are four factors which may determine if children and young people aged 5-16 are eligible for travel assistance:

- Statutory walking distance eligibility.
- SEND or significant mobility problems eligibility.
- Unsafe route eligibility.
- Extended rights eligibility.

4.1 Eligibility Review

Eligibility will be reviewed each academic year and the type of travel will be reviewed annually. This review will determine whether a child or young person continues to be eligible for travel assistance, and where eligible, that the type and level of assistance is most appropriate to their needs as they develop independence and transition into adulthood.

Set out in law/legislation and with our Mainstream Travel Policy children are eligible for travel in the following circumstances.

4.2 Statutory Walking Distance

The council is required to provide free travel assistance options for all children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16). This will be assessed using the distance to the nearest qualifying school to their home when they are unable to walk the statutory distance to school safely, even when accompanied by an adult, if their nearest suitable school is:

- Beyond 2 miles, if below the age of 8; or
- Beyond 3 miles, if aged between 8 and 16.

The nearest suitable school is defined as the nearest school with places available and which the council deems to provide education appropriate to the age, aptitude and

ability of the young person, and any special educational needs or disability they may have.

When establishing whether the nearest suitable school is within walking distance, the distance between home and school will be measured by the shortest available safe walking route, accompanied as necessary. The route may include footpaths and other pathways as long as it is safe to walk along them.

4.3 SEND or mobility difficulties

In circumstances where a child with a special educational need, disability or mobility need is able to use public travel, even when accompanied, they will be assessed using the same criteria as all other children.

The council is required to provide travel assistance for children and young people unable to walk to school by reason of their special educational needs, disability or significant mobility difficulty.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form in order to demonstrate that the child has a special travel need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

4.4 Unsafe walking route

The council is required to make travel assistance arrangements for children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk even when accompanied by an adult.

4.5 Extended rights eligibility (for low-income families)

For low-income families i.e. for children entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, eligibility for free travel assistance is extended as follows:

- For children aged between 8 and 11, the walking distance is reduced from 3 to 2 miles.

- Secondary age children (11 – 16) can receive free travel assistance to any of their three nearest suitable schools but only where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles but less than 6 (Note: schools below 2 miles are included when assessing which are the 3 nearest).
- For secondary age children (11 – 16), the council will provide free travel assistance to the nearest suitable school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief (including any single sex school in the city), If it is over 2 miles and under 15 miles from the home address. The council will normally seek documentary evidence of faith or belief e.g. a minister's letter.

The council will review travel assistance under the extended rights eligibility rules on an annual basis. Free travel may be withdrawn in subsequent years if a child ceases to qualify under low income extended rights.

Travel will not be provided where suitable arrangements have been made by the council to enable the child to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to the child's home.

4.6 Preparing for Travel arrangements once your child reaches age 14

When your child reaches the age of 14 / during academic year 9, the council will write to parents and carers who have a child currently receiving a form of council travel assistance. We will reiterate the responsibility of the parent and carer to arrange travel from home to school, and provide the date that travel provided by the council will stop. The council does not have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18. This two-year transition period will give parents and carers the opportunity to make suitable arrangements for transporting their child to their chosen educational establishment once they reach age 16.

Due to the timeframes involved, for the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 academic years it will not be possible to provide this two-year notice period. As soon as practicably possible families will be notified and as much notice as is reasonably possible will be provided going forward. At a minimum general notice of 4 weeks will be provided in line with the standard, all age notice period in section 10 below. Where this causes hardship to individuals who have already commenced courses this can be highlighted as part of the holistic review of exceptional circumstances but will not in its own right constitute an exceptional circumstance.

5. Post 16 (young people 16-19) with SEND

The council does not have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18.

Schools with sixth form provision and colleges of further education have some funding known as bursary funding available to help students age 16-19 with expenses connected with their study, including travel costs.

As it is not a statutory requirement to provide Post 16-year-olds travel assistance, the council expect all eligible students to apply for a bursary fund.

Bursary funding is paid to schools and colleges who decide how they allocate their funds. Enquiries about support for school or college travel expenses should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned.

Students who are in one or more of the groups below can apply for a vulnerable student bursary of up to £1,200 (if they are participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more - institutions should pay a pro-rata amount for students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks). This reflects that students in these groups may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- getting [Income Support](#) (IS), or [Universal Credit](#) (UC) in place of Income Support, in their own right
- getting [Employment and Support Allowance](#) (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or [Personal Independence Payments](#) in their own right

Enquiries about applying for a vulnerable student bursary should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned. For further details see: [Guidance: 16 to 19 education: financial support for students \(GOV.UK\)](#).

Further details of Post 16 travel support are available in the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement that the Council publishes annually. This includes more detail of the range of support available beyond that which the council provides for all learners including those with SEND. It is available on the information on our website at [Travel to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)

5.1 Council support for young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

Many young people in Post 16 Education and older with SEND are able to travel independently or accompanied by a parent, carer, or guardian, using public transport, and the council cannot offer services to replace parental responsibility.

Many young people with a special educational need (SEND) may also be able to travel with a parent or guardian accompanying them.

For those with a diagnosed SEND or as part of Preparing for Adulthood, as detailed on our [Local Offer \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk), we also support Young People with Independent Travel Training.

5.2 Young people aged 16 - 19 with SEND

In exceptional circumstances, the council may provide travel assistance (in the form of a personal transport budget) for certain Post 16-year-old students. To be considered for travel assistance, a young person must meet each of the following conditions:

- i) the young person must be resident in Leicester City; and
- ii) the young person must have started their current programme of education/training prior to their 19th birthday; and
- iii) the young person must have a complex SEND need and a placement specified in an Education Health and Care Plan. A complex SEND need for the purposes of this policy is where a young person has:
 - a) A diagnosed terminal illness that has severe impact on their current physical and / or mental health and that is likely to significantly reduce their life expectancy and/or;
 - b) When accompanied, the young person's additional needs or disability places them or others at a severe and serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school and/or;
 - c) The student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle e.g. tail-lift access that is not available to them (including on public transport where that has to be relied upon) and / or
 - d) The learner is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school;

- iv) the young person must be attending the nearest appropriate education or training provider; and
- v) either:
 - a) the education or training provider is more than 3 miles walking distance from the young person's home, or
 - b) if the walking distance is 3 miles or less, the young person is unable to walk to and from the education or training provider because of a disability or because the walking route is unsafe; and
- vi) the young person must be attending a full-time, publicly funded course (a full-time course is a programme of at least 540 study hours per year).

A young person who satisfies each of the conditions above will be eligible for travel assistance only if there are exceptional circumstances. Whether there are exceptional circumstances in a particular case will be determined by the Strategic Director of Social Care (or another officer exercising delegated authority) in the light of the specific circumstances of that case. In each case, the Council will require appropriate evidence as to any claimed exceptional circumstances. Each of the following is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- The young person missed a significant majority of year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
- The placement named by the local authority is a considerable distance from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs; and, taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

'Considerable distance' is defined for the purposes of this policy as 75 minutes each way including time to walk to any pickup point.

- Journey time is calculated using the most effective means of transport available. For example, if it is more efficient to travel by car than by bus then the journey time in a car will be used as the foundation of the calculation or, if it is more effective to travel by train than car then the journey time by train will be used as the foundation for the calculation.
- For journey calculation purposes two changes on public transport is considered reasonable.

None of the following is (taken in isolation) likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- Single parent families.
- Parent(s)/ carers who work.
- Having other children to look after and/or at other schools.
- Travelling to an independent school out of area.
- Parents/carers/students unable to drive or having access to a car.
- Students in wheelchairs.

The fact that transport or travel assistance may have been provided in previous years does not indicate that the young person will be provided with travel assistance under this policy. Accordingly, any planning that a young person and/or their family makes for future arrangements should take this into account.

Where it is decided that a young person is to be provided with travel assistance, that assistance will be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget only.

6. Young people aged 19 - 25 with SEND

The same arrangements for young adults aged 19-25 with SEND apply to young people with SEND aged between 16 and 19 years old.

Section 5 applies to young adults with SEND aged between 19-25 years old.

7. Assessments

As part of the statutory assessment process, which may lead to an EHCP the council receives written reports from a range of professionals, such as a school, educational psychologist and medical or clinical professionals. When an application for travel support is received, if they are available the local authority will consider the information contained in these reports to determine whether pupils meet the SEND Travel / Personal Travel Budget eligibility criteria.

Further evidence may be requested and the council reserves the right to make reasonable enquiries of the council's electoral services and other teams, and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority to investigate applications.

8. Type of travel assistance available

8.1 Personal travel budget (PTB)

Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) are designed to give families the freedom and to flexibility to make travel arrangements that best meet their family's needs. They enable parents to retain responsibility for ensuring their child attends school whilst providing the means to do so when the child is eligible.

For further information and to apply please see [Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/family-information/personal-travel-budget/)

Those young people over compulsory school age who are determined to meet the exceptional circumstance criteria will be provided with a personal transport budget as part of the discretionary support available.

8.2 Independent travel training (ITT)

Independent travel training provides young people with tailored and practical assistance to travel safely by public travel, on foot or by bicycle to their school, college and placement. It also supports young people socially, to access other key services and connect with friends and family.

Independent travel is an essential life skill, and helps to better prepare young people for adulthood, and for accessing further education and employment by raising their confidence in their abilities.

The council's Independent Travel Trainer's will work with schools and colleges to be able to deliver travel training to their students.

If a young person is identified as potentially suitable for travel training, their parent/carer will be contacted by the council or their school to arrange a consultation with the nominated travel trainer.

Following the consultation, the young person and family (where appropriate) will then be supported to undertake the training programme. If they are not ready or suitable for training, a future review date will be set, and they will continue to be provided with travel assistance if they remain eligible.

Further information about [Independent Travel Training](#) can be found on our Local Offer page.

8.3 Public transport bus pass

Some 5–16-year-olds will qualify for free home to school travel assistance to their primary or secondary school. Where children and young people are eligible and the

method of transport is determined to be appropriate to offer but the child or young person requires accompanying, the council may offer a public transport bus pass to a parent / carer to meet its obligation to provide free home to school travel assistance [View details of eligibility and how to apply \(leicester.gov.uk website\)](http://leicester.gov.uk website).

8.4 Contracted minibus, private hire vehicle or taxi

This includes but may not be limited to:

- Pick up and drop off from/to a collection point or central location locally
- Shared or individual, private hire vehicle or minibus for groups of young people
- Individual taxi, private hire vehicle or minibus for solo travellers (exceptional circumstances only)

9. Travel service provision

Leicester City Council aims to make travel arrangements that allow eligible pupils to travel in safety and reasonable comfort, without the journey being unreasonably long or complicated, and to arrive at school without such stress, strain, or difficulty that they are prevented from benefitting from the education provided.

It is the council's policy to review travel assistance arrangements annually or at times of transition, in consultation with service providers, to minimise surplus places on vehicles and the total number of vehicles used. The council will endeavour to coordinate dedicated school travel journeys and local public bus services to ensure that best value for money and efficiency of service is achieved.

The council is committed to minimising disruption to children and young people but retains the right to review eligibility at any time, if ineligibility is determined the council may withdraw travel assistance during an academic year.

The council will determine the overall level of service, the number and type of vehicles, and the seating capacity requirements to meet the travel needs of pupils and students, taking the following into account:

- the regulations relating to the provision of passenger travel services.
- that a single journey to or from school should ideally not exceed 75 minutes including the time taken for a change of bus – though this is not always possible where services operate to more than one school or site.
- that pupils should not be expected to change buses more than once within a single journey to or from school.

- that it is desirable in the interests of safety and comfort to provide a seat for each pupil/student – though this is not always possible when local public travel services are used.
- that services coordinate with school or college session times (provided that the appropriate notice and procedures required by education legislation have been followed). Head Teachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are requested to consult with the council as soon as possible on proposed changes to session times, so that the effect of any change can be assessed.
- that Head Teachers, parents and other interested parties must be consulted regarding proposed changes to the SEND Home to School Travel policy.
- that service delivery must be monitored, and complaints dealt with as soon as possible to ensure quality, efficiency and reliability.
- the promotion of the use of sustainable travel and travel modes.
- the promotion of equal opportunities.

9.1 Passenger Assistants

The council will determine whether it is necessary to provide a passenger assistant, supervisor or other facilities (e.g., on-bus communication facilities) on any of the vehicles used based on individual needs.

Some pupils with special travel needs may require a passenger assistant for the home to school journey. The council will decide if a passenger assistant is necessary, taking individual circumstances into consideration:

Under these circumstances, the parent/carer may be required to act as the escort for their child. If the journey is beyond the maximum walking distance, the parent would be provided with transport support home from the morning school drop off journey and picked up in the afternoon for the return journey. If the journey is less than the maximum walking distance, the parent would be expected to walk home after the morning drop and walk back to the school for the afternoon pick-up.

9.2 Travel to and from pick-up / drop-off points

In most cases parents/carers will be expected to accompany their child to a pick-up point identified by the council. Pick-up points will be safe and appropriate places for vehicles to pull up and wait. Every effort will be made to minimise the distance to and from pick-up and drop off points but the nearest pick-up point may be up to half a mile away from home for primary age pupils and up to 1 mile away from home for secondary age pupils.

The pick-up points and times may change throughout the year, as routes will be regularly reviewed following changes to passenger lists. The council will endeavour to give reasonable notice (4 weeks) of any such changes.

Parents/carers must ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place for their child's walk between home and the pick-up point at the beginning and end of the school day.

9.3 Travel to and from home addresses

The duty placed on the council does not extend to the provision of a "door to door" service, however, for a very few applicants, exceptional circumstances may result in travel arrangements being made to and from the home address.

9.4 Multiple home addresses

If a pupil has more than one place that may be considered a home address, parents/carers must nominate a primary address for travel purposes. Home addresses should be for primary carers and travel to the homes of extended family members will not usually be considered a home address.

The council acknowledges that families need flexible arrangements and will support travel to multiple addresses where it is specifically highlighted and agreed at the point of application. In year arrangements for changes will require a new application.

Where there are multiple home addresses being requested the home address closest to the child or young person's school or college will be considered the primary home address. That primary home address will be used to determine eligibility.

The council will not generally support applications which mean that travel to multiple addresses will result in increased journey time or cost of provision. Personal Transport Budgets may be the best option to meet need in these situations.

10. Review of travel Arrangements

All travel arrangements will be reviewed annually or at times of transition to assess whether the basis for entitlement has changed or whether the mode of travel assistance provided remains appropriate. Travel assistance entitlement will be re-assessed if the home address, pupil needs, educational establishment or course details change.

Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students will be given reasonable notice (4 weeks) if it is decided to withdraw or significantly alter the means of travel assistance.

If parents/carers and/or Post-16 students request a variation to the current travel arrangements, the council will require reasonable notice (3 weeks) of the change and

will apply the relevant assessment criteria. Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students may be required to make and pay for their own interim travel arrangements in the period between application and, if approved, the receipt of any travel assistance provided under this policy.

Post-16 students will be expected to maintain both satisfactory attendance and progress, and these factors will be taken into account when reviewing entitlement to travel assistance.

Any amendment to, or withdrawal of, travel assistance does not excuse a child of compulsory school age from attending school and it will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child's continued attendance at school.

11. Behaviour whilst travelling

The health and safety of drivers and passengers is dependent on good pupil behaviour, alongside positive management of behaviours from drivers and passenger assistants, in line with legislation and the council's safeguarding policies. The council takes a serious view of incidents of poor conduct.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers head teachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises. Persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school can be grounds for exclusion.

In some cases, if either the council or a travel operator refuses to allow a pupil to continue to access a particular vehicle due to the pupil's poor conduct, an alternative arrangement may be offered, but only after an assessment of the nature and seriousness of the case. In the event of a serious incident of indiscipline, vandalism, or anti-social behaviour, or persistent offences of this nature, travel provision may be permanently withdrawn. In these cases the LA would not be implying that travel arrangements were not necessary and should not be provided, but rather that travel arrangements were necessary and had been made but the pupil's behaviour was such that they were unable to take advantage of them. If these circumstances arise, no alternative travel assistance arrangements will be made.

If travel is temporarily or permanently withdrawn parents would be responsible for getting their children to school and for any costs incurred.

12. Our commitment to promoting independence and choice

Alongside the existing schemes detailed in this policy, Leicester City Council will continue to explore and promote additional ways of promoting independence and choice for children in the City with home to school travel. We will work with families and schools to develop and promote new ideas and pilot schemes where appropriate.

13. How to apply

Applications for travel for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities should be made via the website:

[Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/family-information/personal-travel-budget)

Applications for travel assistance for students age 16 and above in colleges of further education to commence at the start of the Autumn Term should be made wherever possible by the last day of the summer term prior to the start of the new academic year. The LA cannot guarantee to provide travel assistance from the first day of the Autumn Term if applications are received after this date. Where late applications are submitted, parents/carers and/or sixth form students may have to make their own interim travel arrangements, the cost of which cannot normally be reimbursed.

Young people attending Further Education establishments will need to re-apply annually, providing evidence of both satisfactory attendance and progress.

14. How decisions are Made

For all children and young people with SEN and disabilities, a travel eligibility assessment will be undertaken by the Special Educational Needs Service at the point of application, and reviewed yearly or when circumstances change, e.g. a change of educational establishment, change of home address.

The information used for the assessment is gathered from various sources including:

- School reports
- Parents
- The young person
- Medical reports (including CAMHs)
- Social care
- Education, health and care plans

The travel assistance eligibility assessment or review will consider the individual needs of the child or young person in 6 key areas:

- Mobility
- Medical needs
- Behavioural issues
- Vulnerability
- Practicality
- Independence and Independent Travel Training suitability

When the assessment is completed, the SEN Service will decide whether or not a child or young person is eligible as a result of their SEN and disability to travel assistance, the type of travel assistance to be offered, and whether or not it is appropriate to offer Independent Travel Training.

15. How to appeal if you are unhappy with a decision

Appeals Process for pupils with a special educational need or disability

Should parents/carers wish to appeal against the council's decision not to provide travel or against the mode of travel provided they should email SEND.approvals@Leicester.gov.uk or write to:

Transport Appeals
Special Education Needs Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

The council has a 2-stage review and appeals process as recommended by the Department for Education. The timings for responses may be extended if additional time is required to gather supporting information or delayed by school/college holidays.

Please note that whilst the review and appeal process takes place the parent/carer will remain responsible for arranging and funding for any travel arrangements that a parent/carer may feel is necessary. Throughout the appeals process parents may wish to seek independent advocacy support and advice

The appeals procedure is in two stages:

Stage 1: Review by a Senior Officer of the council.

- A parent/carer has 20 working days from the date of the travel decision letter, to make a formal written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent/carer or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances, including medical evidence, they believe should be considered when making the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of a written request, a Senior Officer will review the original decision and send a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, including information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate)

Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel:

- If a parent/carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their case, they have 20 working days from the receipt of their decision letter to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer's written request an Independent Appeal Panel will be arranged to consider both written and (if the parent /carer wishes to attend the panel hearing) verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in their case.

The Independent Appeal Panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process (but not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced, to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of the parent/carers and the local authority.

If a parent/carer or student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, there is no further right of appeal to the council. However, there is still the right to appeal to the Secretary of State or to take independent legal action.

If a parent/carer or young person feels that their appeal has not been treated fairly or in accordance with the LA's policy, the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted for help and advice on:

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: lgo.org.uk

16. The legal framework

S508B and 508C of the Education Act (the “Act”) make provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child’s attendance at school. The provisions apply to home to school travel arrangements and vice versa.

Under s444 of the same Act, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

S508B of the Act deals with the duty on local authority to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5 – 16) in an authority’s area for whom free travel arrangements will be required.

The categories of eligible children include those who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special education needs or disability. Eligibility, for such children, should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular travel arrangements.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk the local authority will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied, and if so, whether the child’s parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.

The council has a statutory duty under Section 10 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to exercise its functions so as to promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area with a view to ensuring that those persons participate in appropriate full-time education or training, an apprenticeship, or are in full time occupation and participate in sufficient relevant training, all pursuant to section 2 of the 2008 Act.

The council also has a statutory duty to publish a Post 16 Travel Policy Statement every year. This statement should set out the arrangements for the provision of travel or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age at:

- schools,
- institutions maintained or assisted by the authority which provides further education or higher education or both

- institutions within the further education sector, any 16-19 academy or any other establishment at which the authority secures the provision of education or training.

Post 16 travel to education and training statutory guidance dated February 2014 requires the council, in planning travel provision to take into account its duty to promote effective participation under the 2008 act and the duty under section 2 of that act on young people to participate in education or training up to age 18.

16.1 SEND Code of Practice 2015

The Code of Practice (Special Educational Needs and Disability 2015) indicates that transport should be recorded in an Education, Health Care Plan only in exceptional cases where the child has very specific travel needs.

16.2 Equality Act 2010

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: Equality Act 2010 section 149(1).

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7)

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

- Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

DRAFT



Leicester
City Council

DRAFT Post-16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2025 – 2026

V0.3

November 2024

The council's travel policy statement for young people aged 16 - 18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19 – 24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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1. Introduction

Local authorities (LAs) **do not** have to provide free or subsidised Post 16 travel support.

The council does have a duty to prepare and publish an annual travel policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of travel or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make, to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support via the council's local offer pages. These will only be approved under exceptional circumstances. This is significantly different practice to previous years and is likely to affect rights to travel support even where currently being received on existing courses.

'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 Leicester City 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 can lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

2. Aims and Objectives

This document describes the support available to young people of Leicester entering or continuing with full-time Post 16 Education. It 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 support available from various sources to encourage participation and prevent travel being a barrier to young learners.

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

3. Travel and travel support

Concessionary tickets for young people 16 – 25 from public transport providers

Many local operators have student season tickets available offering discounts compared to normal adult fares and/or at cheaper rates when bought on a termly or academic year basis. It is advised students contact the bus-operators directly as below:

Bus Operators

- Arriva website: arrivabus.co.uk
- Kinchbus website: kinchbus.co.uk
- First Bus website: firstbus.co.uk
- Centrebus website: centrebus.info

Train Services

Train services are available throughout Leicester and Leicestershire, with the option to purchase either a 16 - 17 saver railcard or 16 - 25 railcard to receive up to 1/3 off the price of eligible train tickets.

Website: eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk

Dedicated school buses

Similarly, some of Leicester and Leicestershire's mainstream schools have commercial school special services operating to them. More information can be found directly from your school and the main operators of such services are:

- Confidence buses: confidencebus.co.uk/school-bus-routes
- Beaver Buses: beaver-bus.co.uk/school-buses
- Roberts Coaches: buspass.robertstravelgroup.co.uk
- G.H. Watts Coaches: ghwatts.co.uk/school_buses

4. Transport support from schools and colleges

Some of Leicester's secondary schools, academies and 6th Form/FE colleges have additional bus contract arrangements on which learners or their parents can purchase places. Some FE colleges also offer direct support to students. Arrangements vary between schools and colleges, so it is always best to check directly with the individual schools/colleges for details.

You can find details of all Leicester schools on the council's website (this will also give you a link to the school's individual website): [Schools Directory \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/schools-directory/)

Contact details and websites for all the Leicester and Leicestershire FE Colleges are shown below:

Brooksby Melton College (Leicestershire):

Contact the Travel Department on:

Telephone: 0166 485 5211

E-Mail: travel@brooksbymelton.ac.uk

Information available at interview and in 16-18 Travel Guide by visiting: brooksbymelton.ac.uk

Gateway Sixth Form College (Leicester):

Telephone: 0116 274 4500

(Student services)

E-Mail: studentservices@gateway.ac.uk

Website: gateway.ac.uk

Leicester College (Leicester):

To discuss any travel queries with a member of the Student Advice and Guidance Team:

Telephone: 0116 224 2240 or 0116 224 4048

For information regarding travel provision for students with learning difficulties contact the Travel Coordinator: Telephone: 0116 224 2240 extension 2098

For any other travel queries:

Website: leicestercollege.ac.uk

E-Mail: info@leicestercollege.ac.uk

Loughborough College (Leicestershire):

Telephone: 01509 517 140

E-Mail: dez.gentlemen@loucoll.ac.uk

Website: loucoll.ac.uk

North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College (Leicestershire):

Customer Service Team:

Telephone: 0330 058 3000

Email: enquiries@nwslc.ac.uk

Website: nwslc.ac.uk

Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College (Leicester):

Divisional administrators 'The Hub'

Telephone: 0116 255 4629

Email: enquiries@wqe.ac.uk

Website: wqe.ac.uk

Stephenson College (Leicestershire):

Telephone: 01530 836 136

Email: services@stephensoncoll.ac.uk

Website: stephensoncoll.ac.uk

5. Travel support from the government

As it is not a statutory requirement to provide Post 16 travel the Council expect all eligible students to apply for a bursary fund. Details of funds are noted below:

5.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - in care
 - care leavers
 - in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
 - discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, books and equipment
2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2022 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2022 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2022 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a government funding agency or the local authority

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information: [16 to 19 Bursary Fund \(GOV.UK website\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund)

5.2 Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

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

Types of childcare

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child, they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

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

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 – 25 card.

For more information, please visit [Care to learn how to claim \(GOV.UK website\)](#)

6. Council support for young people without special educational needs or disabilities

Please note that there are **no free bus passes available for learners aged 16-19 through the city council**. However, a flexi-ticket bus ticket is available to purchase for Leicester resident pupils over statutory school age if the student is aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of the college year.

The pass allows travel on multiple bus companies to get to school/college. Details of the pass are available on the [Choose How you Move website](#)

There are alternatives to the flexi-ticket. If you only need to use a bus from one operator, you could get better value in terms of price and flexibility by purchasing a season ticket directly from a commercial bus operator. Before you apply for any bus pass or ticket, we strongly urge you to consider all the commercially available alternatives.

7. Council support for young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

Many young people in Post 16 Education and older with SEND are able to travel independently or accompanied by a parent, carer, or guardian, using public transport, and the council cannot offer services to replace parental responsibility.

Many young people with a special educational need (SEND) may also be able to travel with a parent or guardian accompanying them.

For those with a diagnosed SEND or as part of Preparing for Adulthood, as detailed on our [Local Offer \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#), we also support Young People with Independent Travel Training.

7.1 Young people aged 16 - 19 with SEND

In exceptional circumstances, the council may provide travel assistance (in the form of a personal transport budget) for certain Post 16-year-old students. To be considered for travel assistance, a young person must meet each of the following conditions:

- i) the young person must be resident in Leicester City; and
- ii) the young person must have started their current programme of education/training prior to their 19th birthday; and
- iii) the young person must have a complex SEND need and a placement specified in an Education Health and Care Plan. A complex SEND need for the purposes of this policy is where a young person has:
 - a) A diagnosed terminal illness that has severe impact on their current physical and / or mental health and that is likely to significantly reduce their life expectancy and/or;
 - b) When accompanied, the young person's additional needs or disability places them or others at a severe and serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school and/or;
 - c) The student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle e.g. tail-lift access that is not available to them (including on public transport where that has to be relied upon) and / or
 - d) The learner is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school;
- iv) the young person must be attending the nearest appropriate education or training provider; and
- v) either:
 - a) the education or training provider is more than 3 miles walking distance from the young person's home, or
 - b) if the walking distance is 3 miles or less, the young person is unable to walk to and from the education or training provider because of a disability or because the walking route is unsafe; and
- vi) the young person must be attending a full-time, publicly funded course (a full-time course is a programme of at least 540 study hours per year).

A young person who satisfies each of the conditions above will be eligible for travel assistance only if there are exceptional circumstances. Whether there are exceptional circumstances in a particular case will be determined by the Strategic Director of Social Care (or another officer exercising delegated authority) in the light

of the specific circumstances of that case. In each case, the Council will require appropriate evidence as to any claimed exceptional circumstances. Each of the following is likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- The young person missed a significant majority of year 11 due to ill health, and the Council has agreed that they will repeat that year in full.
- The placement named by the local authority is a 'considerable distance' from the young person's home; the placement was not named by the Tribunal as a "parental preference"; there is no closer setting that can meet the young person's needs; and, taking into account the availability of public transport, caring or employment responsibilities mean that the young person's parents or carers are unable to provide transport themselves.

'Considerable distance' is defined for the purposes of this policy as 75 minutes each way including time to walk to any pickup point.

- Journey time is calculated using the most effective means of transport available.

For example, if it is more efficient to travel by car than by bus then the journey time in a car will be used as the foundation of the calculation or, if it is more effective to travel by train than car then the journey time by train will be used as the foundation for the calculation.

- For journey calculation purposes two changes on public transport is considered reasonable.

None of the following is (taken in isolation) likely to constitute an exceptional circumstance:

- Single parent families.
- Parent(s)/ carers who work.
- Having other children to look after and/or at other schools.
- Travelling to an independent school out of area.
- Parents/carers/students unable to drive or having access to a car.
- Students in wheelchairs.

The fact that transport or travel assistance may have been provided in previous years does not indicate that the young person will be provided with travel assistance under this policy. Accordingly, any planning that a young person and/or their family makes for future arrangements should take this into account.

Where it is decided that a young person is to be provided with travel assistance, that assistance will be in the form of a Personal Transport Budget only.

7.2 Young people aged 19 - 25 with SEND

The same arrangements for young adults aged 19-25 with SEND apply to young people with SEND aged between 16 and 19 years old.

Section 7.1 applies to young adults with SEND aged between 19-25 years old.

8. Apprenticeships

For students on traineeships or apprenticeships, the learning provider is responsible for ensuring that reasonable expenses are met in full where they are needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the cost of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Please contact your learning provider for more information. Students may also be eligible for a bursary (see Bursary Fund section above).

9. Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Connexions Leicester is a careers service for young people who live in Leicester City and are aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Connexions also have specialist personal advisers who are trained to work with young people with SEND to help them make decisions about their future. Please contact

Telephone: 0116 454 1770

Email: connexions@leicester.gov.uk

Website: leicesteremploymenthub.co.uk

Address:
Connexions,
2 Wellington Street,
Leicester,
LE1 6HL

10. Useful contact details

10.1 Leicester City Council

If you want information about the assistance that is provided by Leicester City Council for mainstream pupils, call Education Travel on:

Telephone: 0116 454 1009 (Option 2)

Website: [School travel \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://School travel (leicester.gov.uk))

If you need individual special needs travel assistance, call the Special Education Service on 0116 454 2050 or email ses@leicester.gov.uk

If you have any comments on this document that would assist in the policy making, including in-year changes, please contact us as follows:

SEND Transport
Special Education Needs Service
Pinder Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

10.2 Department for Education

Website: [Subsidised college travel 16 to 19 \(GOV.UK website\)](#)

10.3 Bus routes and timetable information

Telephone: 0871 200 2233 (calls cost 12p per minute plus your phone company's access charge)

Telephone: 0145 563 2719

Website: traveline.info

10.4 Learner Support Service

Residential Support Scheme

Website: [Residential support scheme \(GOV.UK website\)](#)

11. Applying for council travel support

Applications for travel support for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities should be made via the website.

Website: [Transport to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk/transport-to-school-and-college)

Applications for travel assistance for students age 16 and above in colleges of further education to commence at the start of the Autumn Term, should be made wherever possible by the last day of the summer term prior to the start of the new academic year. The LA cannot guarantee to provide travel assistance from the first day of the Autumn Term if applications are received after this date. Where late applications are submitted, parents/carers and/or sixth form students may have to make their own interim travel arrangements, the cost of which cannot normally be reimbursed.

Website: [Personal Transport Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk/personal-transport-budget)

Young people attending further education establishments will need to re-apply annually, providing evidence of both satisfactory attendance and progress.

12. Appeals

12.1 Appeals Process for pupils with a special educational need or disability

Should parents/carers wish to appeal against the council's decision not to provide travel or against the mode of travel provided they should email SEND.approvals@Leicester.gov.uk or write to:

Transport Appeals
Special Education Needs Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

The council has a 2-stage review and appeals process as recommended by the Department for Education. The timings for responses may be extended if additional time is required to gather supporting information or delayed by school/college holidays.

Please note that whilst the review and appeal process takes place the parent/carer will remain responsible for arranging and funding for any travel arrangements that a parent/carer may feel is necessary. Throughout the appeals process parents may wish to seek independent advocacy support and advice

The appeals procedure is in two stages:

Stage 1: Review by a Senior Officer of the council.

- A parent/carer has 20 working days from the date of the travel decision letter, to make a formal written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent/carer or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances, including medical evidence, they believe should be considered when making the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of a written request, a Senior Officer will review the original decision and send a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, including information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate)

Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel:

- If a parent/carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their case, they have 20 working days from the receipt of their decision letter to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer's written request an Independent Appeal Panel will be arranged to consider both written and (if the parent /carer wishes to attend the panel hearing) verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in their case.

The Independent Appeal Panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process (but not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced, to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of the parent/carers and the local authority.

If a parent/carer or student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, there is no further right of appeal to the council. However, there is still the right to appeal to the Secretary of State or to take independent legal action.

If a parent/carer or young person feels that their appeal has not been treated fairly or in accordance with the LA's policy, the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted for help and advice on:

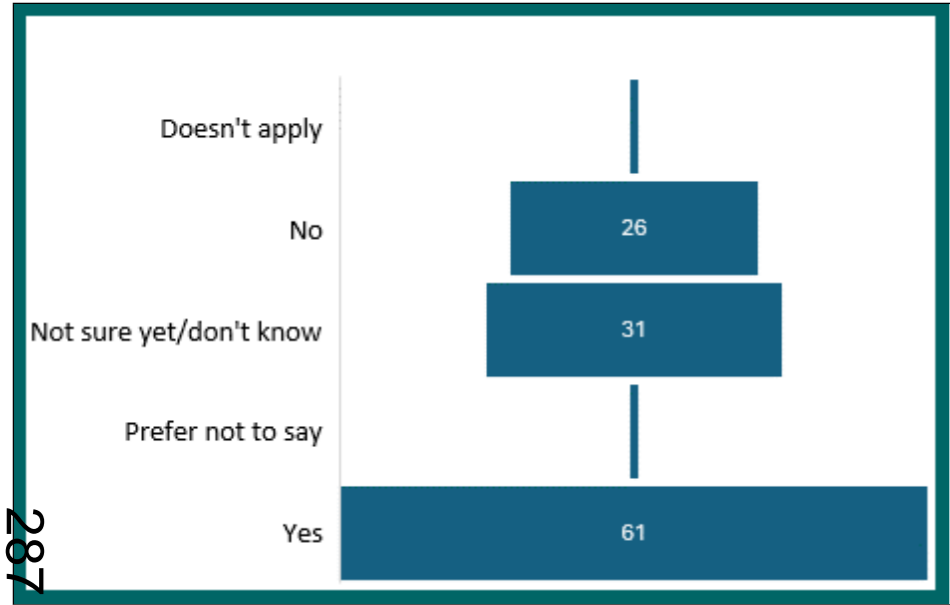
Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: lgo.org.uk

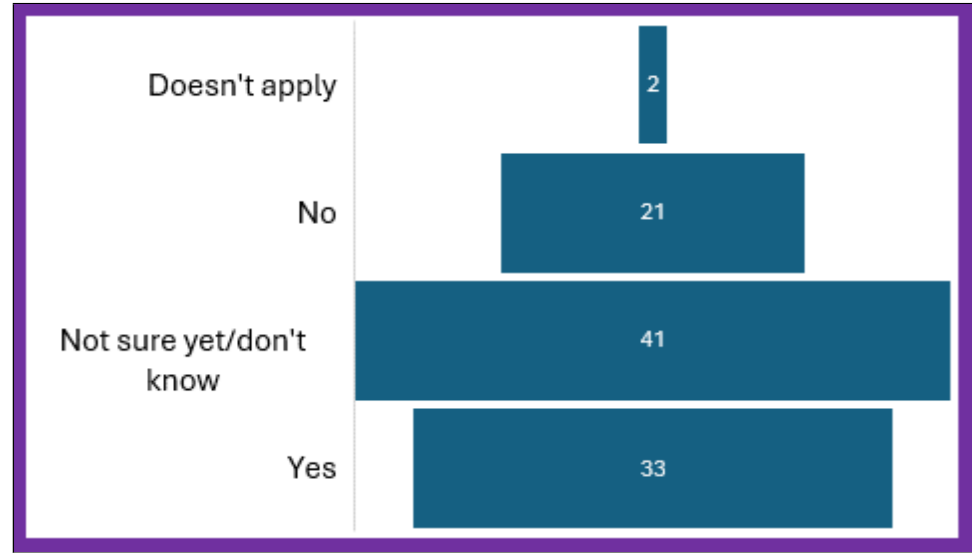
SEND Transport Policy Consultation responses to data gathering questions

1. Consultation response data summary – impact of proposed changes

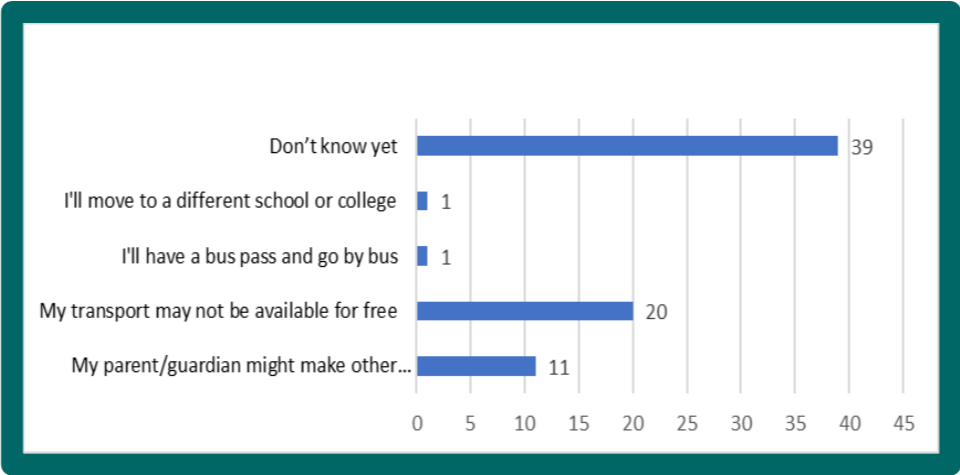
1.1. If the proposed changes happen, do you think how you'll travel to school, or college next year will change as a result? - Children and young people's responses



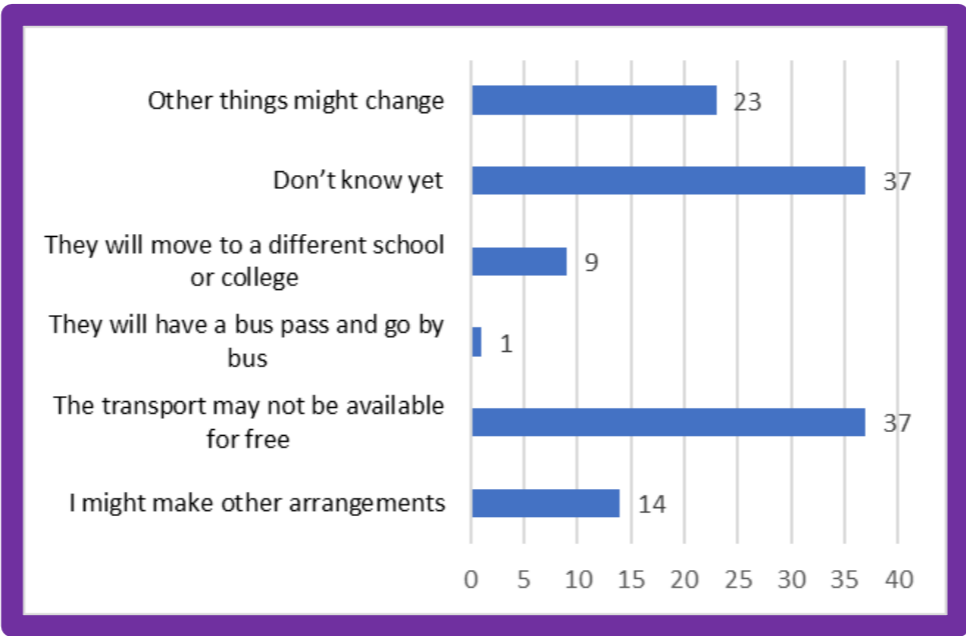
1.2. If the proposed changes happen, do you think how you'll travel to school or college next year will change as a result? - Adults responses



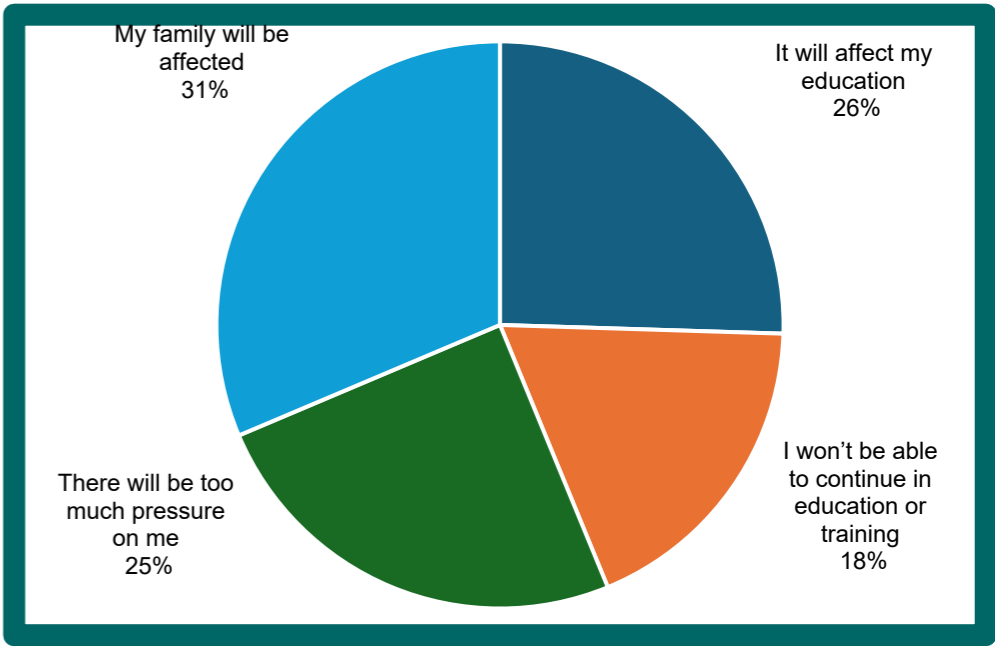
1.3. What might change? - Children and young people's responses



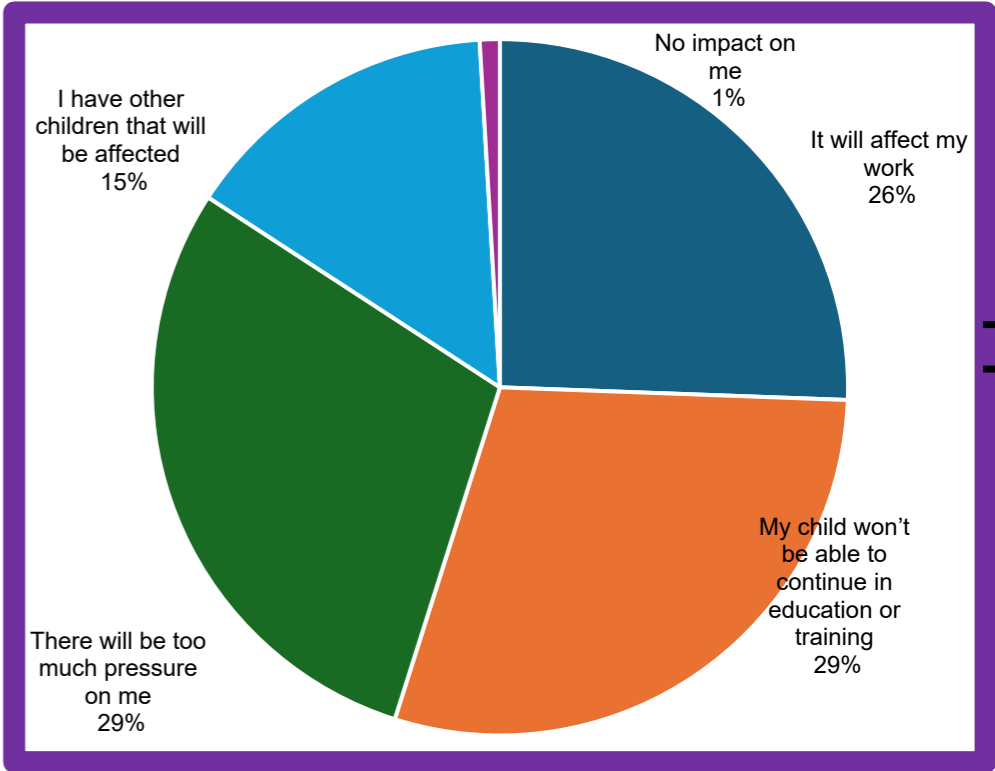
1.4. What might change? - Adults responses



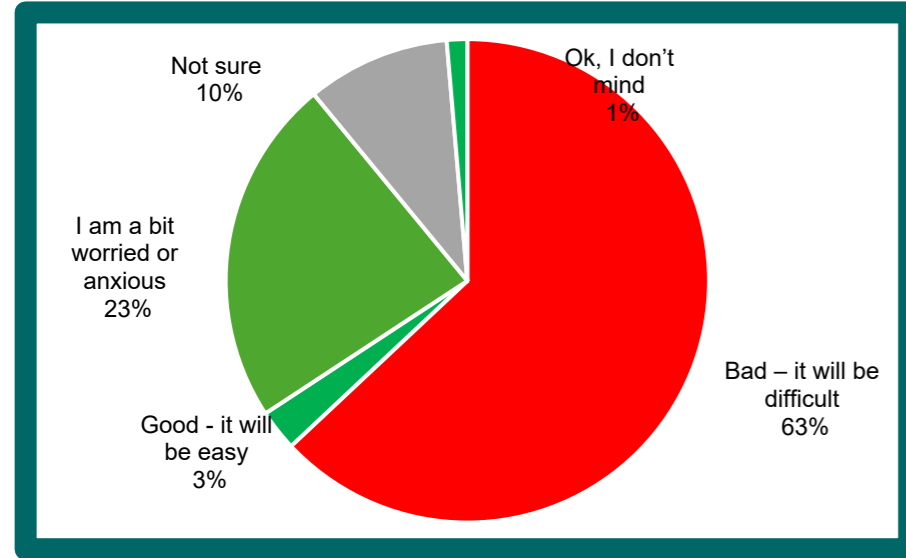
1.5. If the proposed changes to the policies happen, what would be the impact on you? - Children and young people's responses



1.6. If the proposed changes to the policies happen, what would be the impact on you? - Adults responses

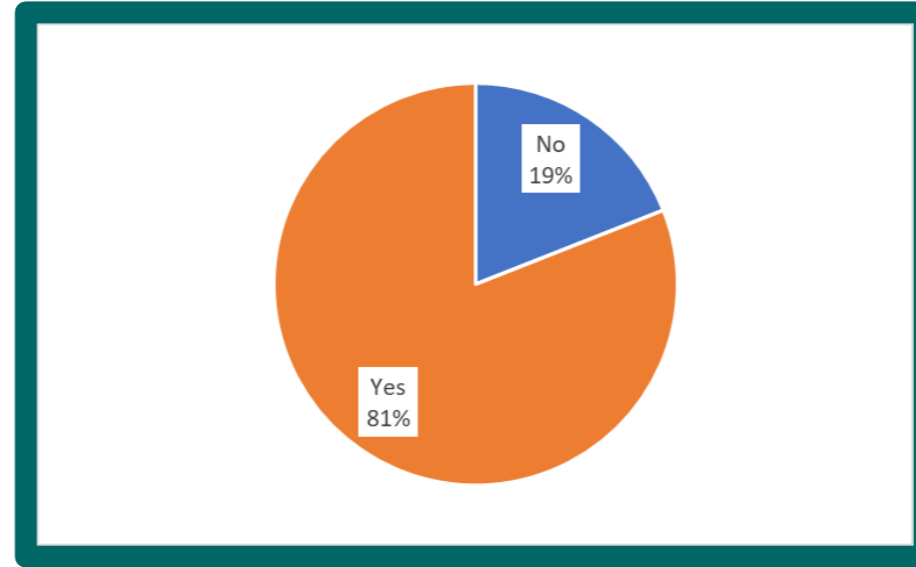


1.7. How do you feel about your journey to school/college potentially changing? - **Children and young people's responses**

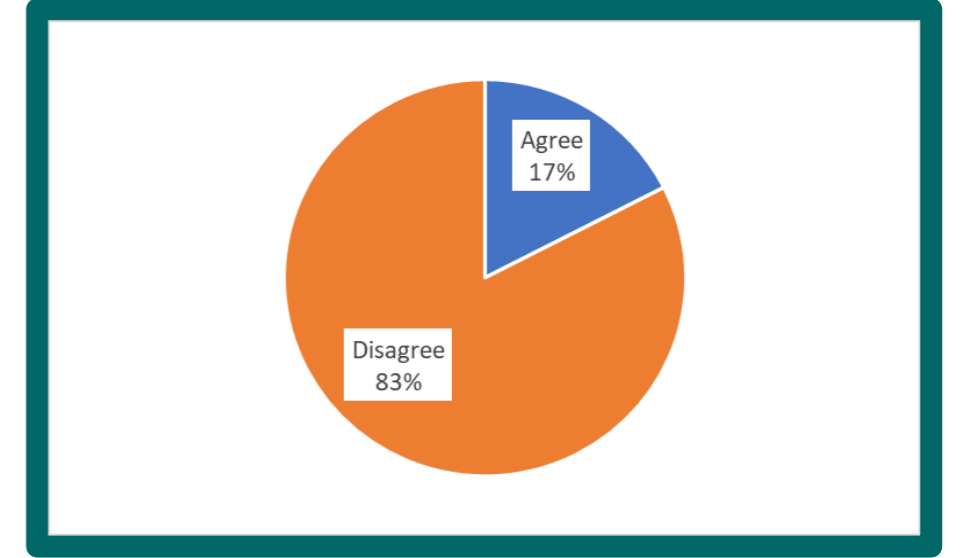


2. Consultation response data summary - Financial considerations

2.1. When I want to go somewhere, I'll have to think carefully about how much it costs - **Children and young people's responses**

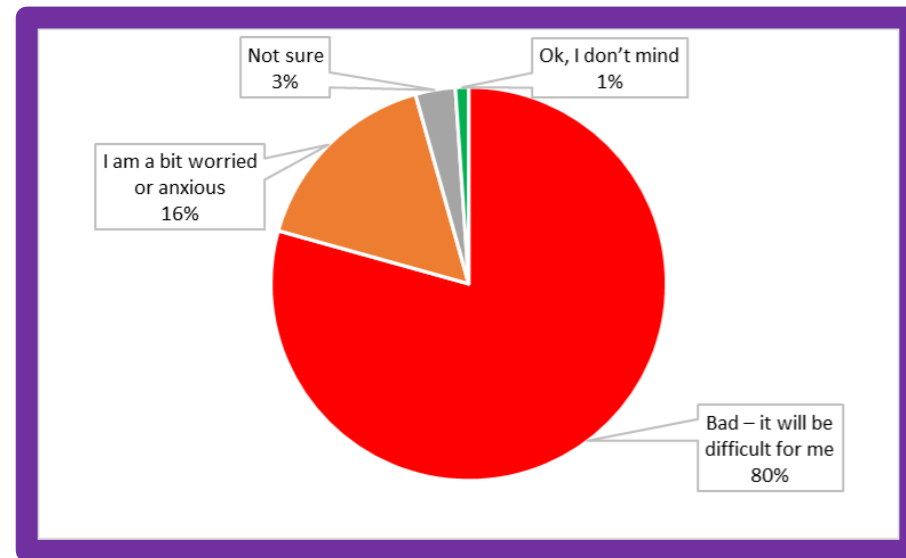


2.3. The cost of transport won't stop me doing things I want to do - **Children and young people's responses**

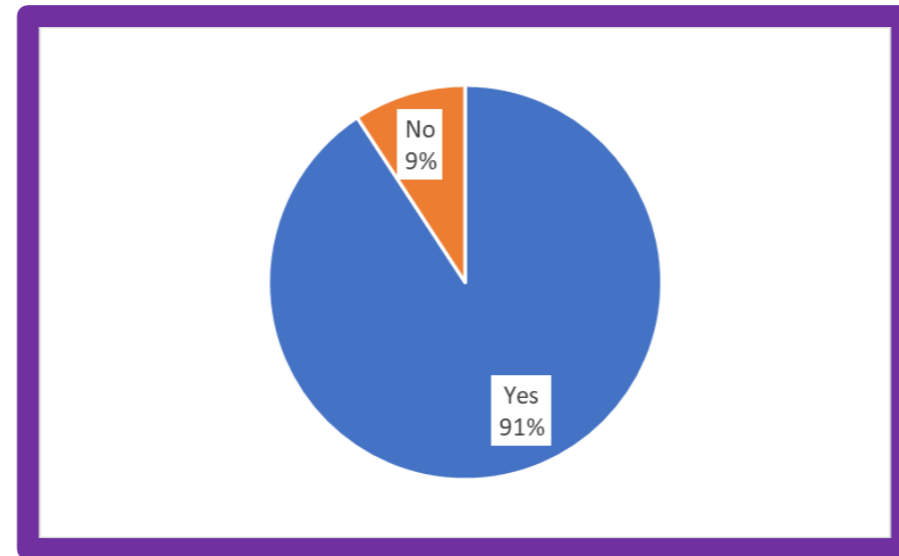


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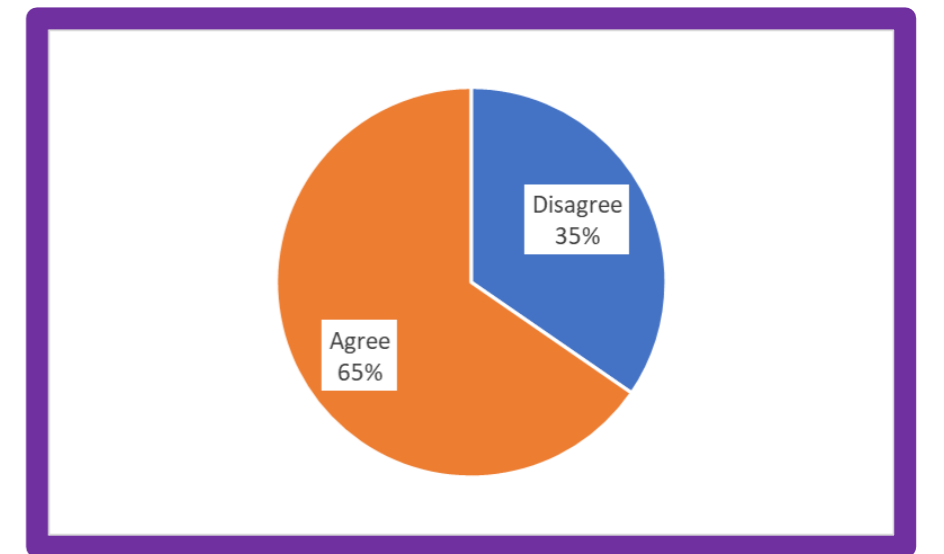
1.8. How do you feel about your journey to school/college potentially changing? - **Adults responses**



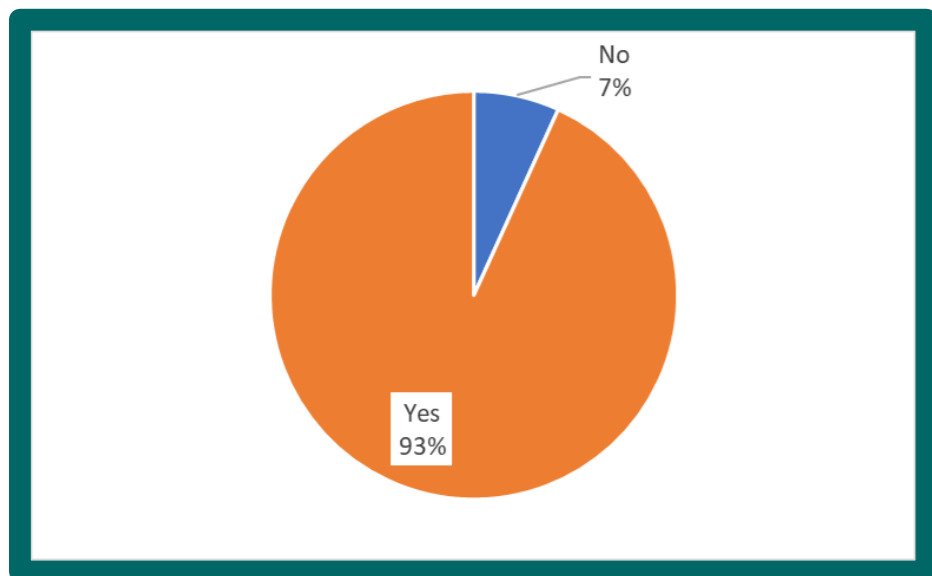
2.2. When I want to go somewhere, I'll have to think carefully about how much it costs - **Adults responses**



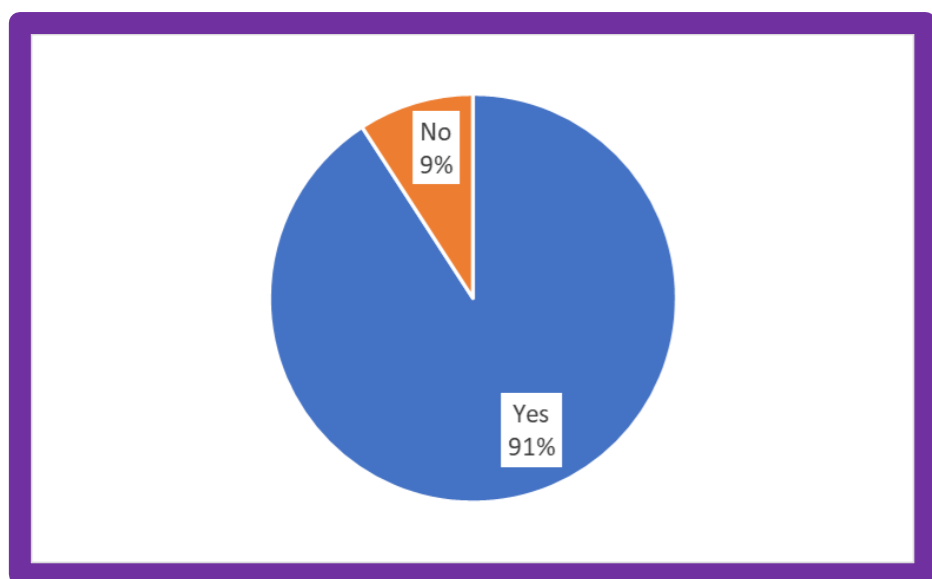
2.4. The cost of transport won't stop me doing things I want to do - **Adults responses**



2.5. I am anxious or worried about how I will afford to get to places - **Children and young people's responses**

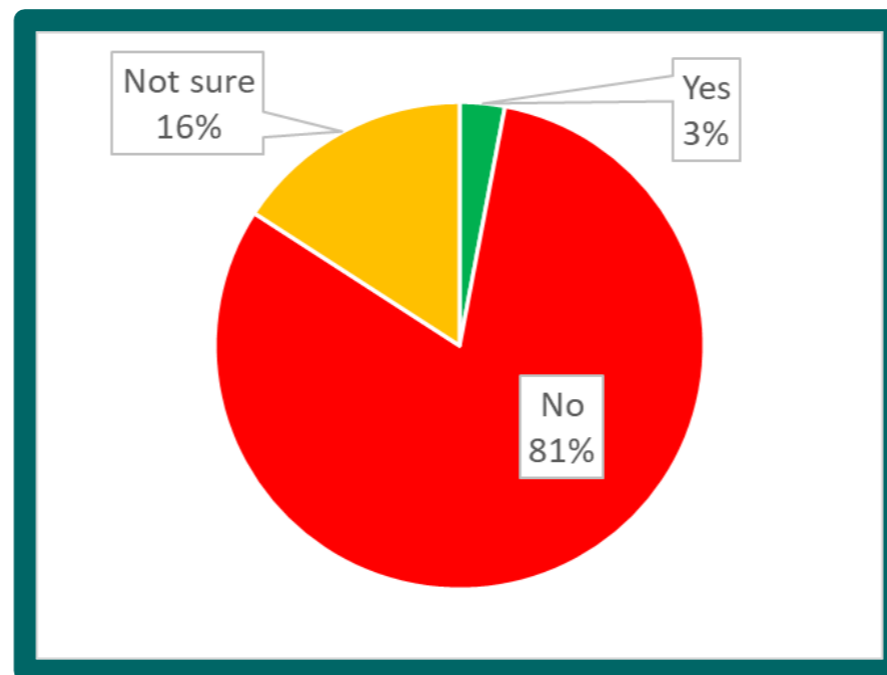


2.6. I am anxious or worried about how I will afford to get them to places - **Adults responses**

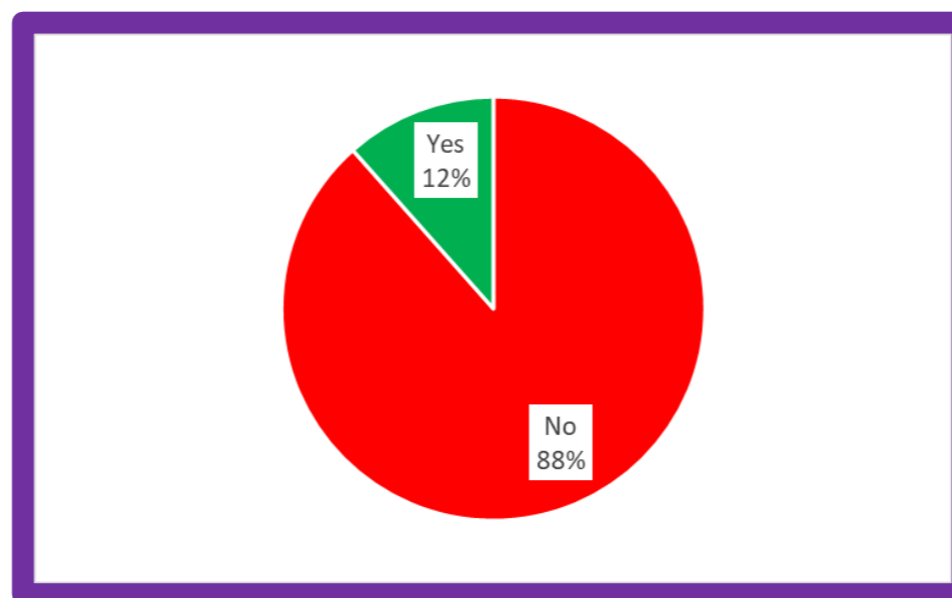


3. Consultation response data summary - Overall policy feedback

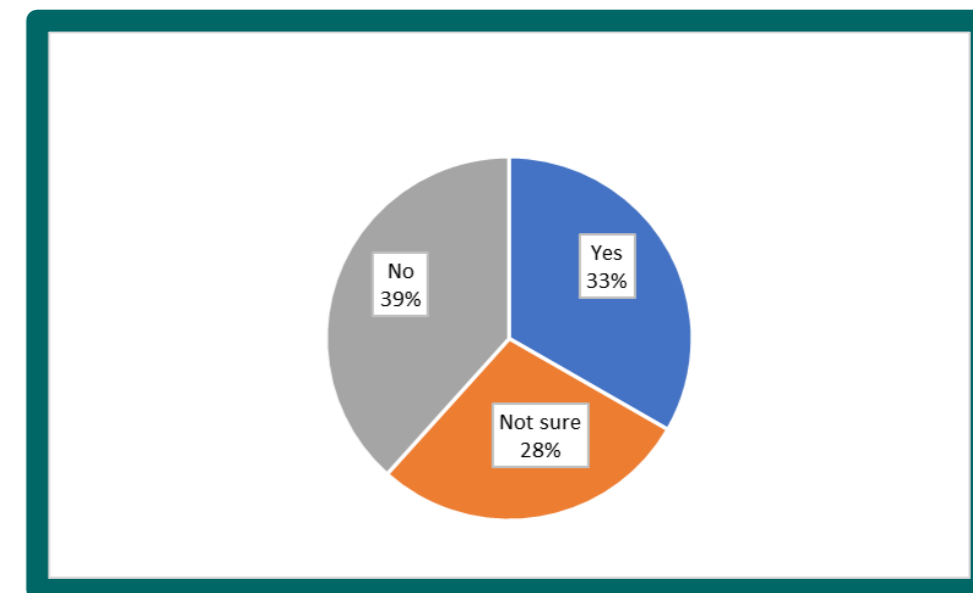
3.1. Do you think that the proposed policies are a good idea? - **Children and young people's responses**



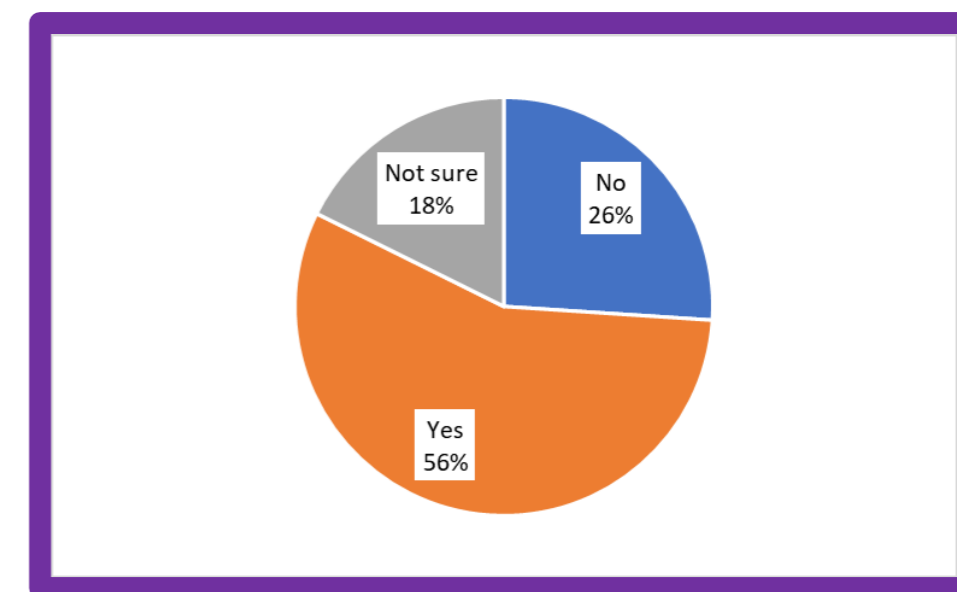
3.2. Do you think that the proposed policies are a good idea? - **Adults responses**



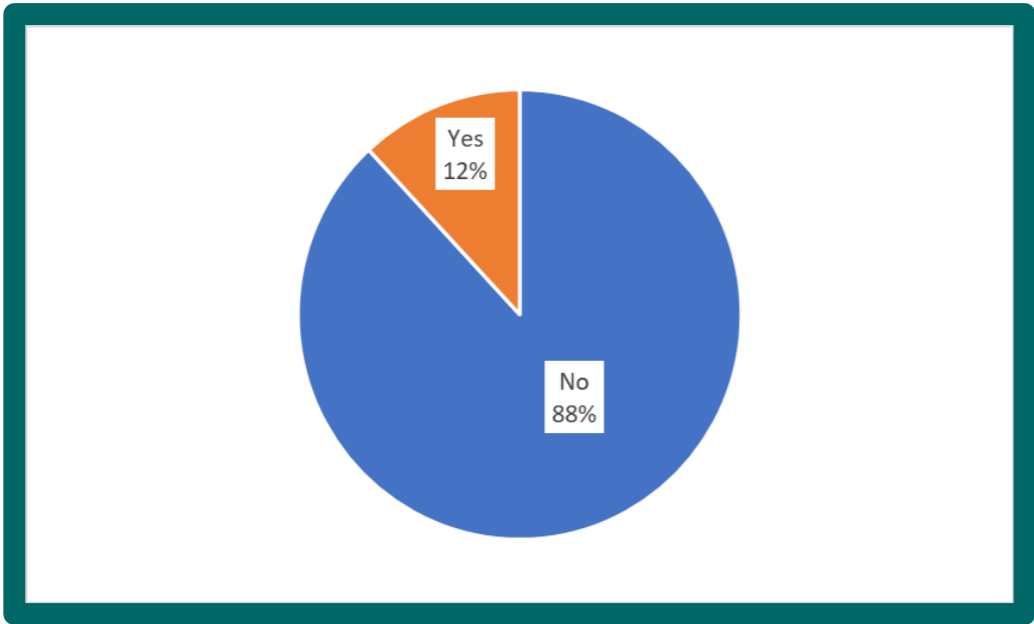
3.3. Are the policies clear? - **Children and young people's responses**



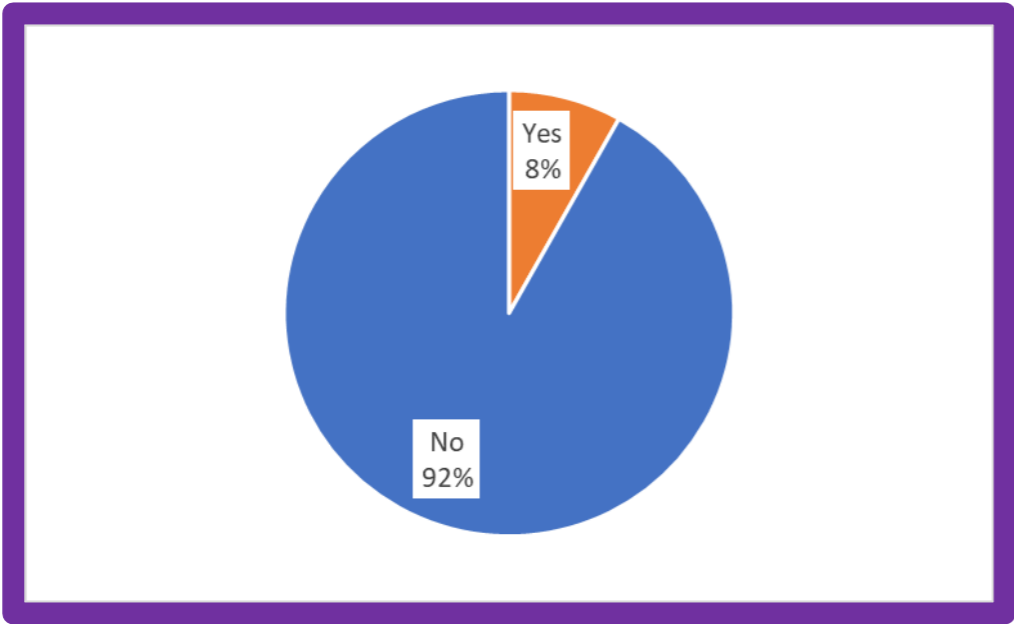
3.4. Are the policies clear? - **Adults responses**



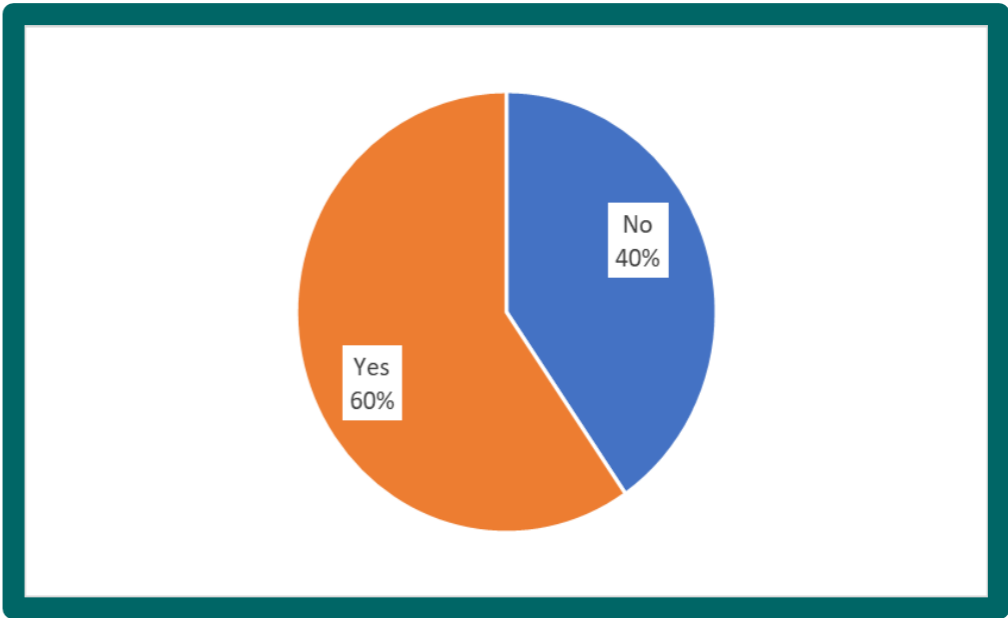
3.5. I'll be confident to travel to places like college or a workplace by myself.
- **Children and young people's responses**



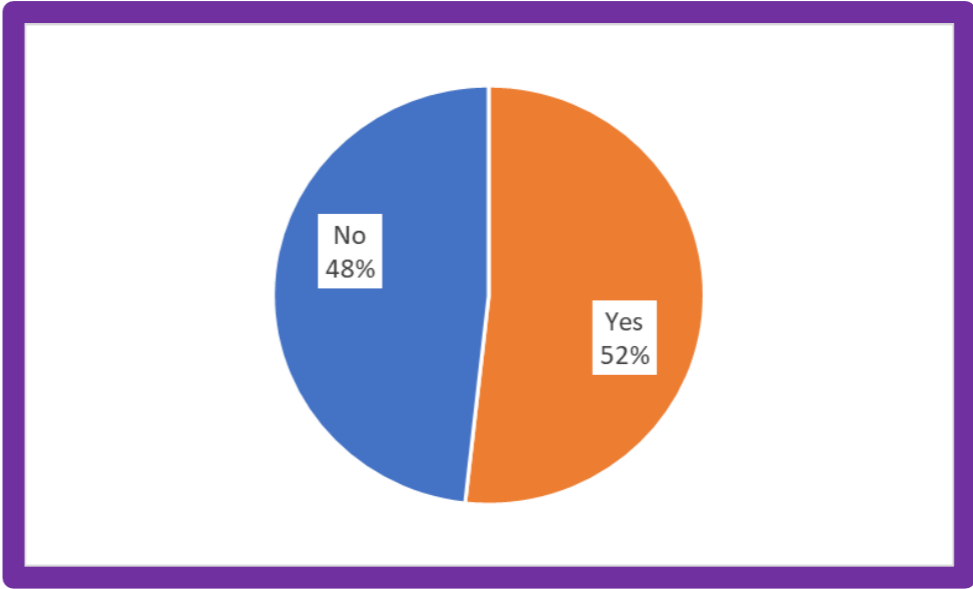
3.6. They will be confident to travel to places like college or a workplace on their own
- **Adults responses**



3.7. I will only choose college or work near home - **Children and young people's responses**



3.8. They will only choose college or work near home – **Adults responses**





**Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit
Children's Social Care and Community Safety
Social Care and Education Services**

**Local Authority Designated Officer
(LADO)**

**Annual Report
1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024**



Contents:

- 1. Introduction**
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 - d. Who are contacts about?
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 - f. Timeliness of LADO processes
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1. Introduction

The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is set out in HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) (WT) Chapter 4 Paragraph 223 and is governed by Local Authority duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. In addition, there is guidance about the role in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

The LADO function is further set out in Leicester City Children Safeguarding Partnership Inter-Agency Policy and Procedures. The LADO is employed by Leicester City Council and is supported by an experienced Independent Chairperson who specialises in LADO work, with total service hours meeting 1.8 full time equivalent.

The LADO manages the process of investigation into allegations of harm made against adults who work or volunteer in positions of trust with children and young people. The purpose of the role is to ensure all allegations of harm, whether seemingly minor or more significant are followed up efficiently to ensure a safe and fair process for children and adults involved.

The LADO operates according to the following “harm thresholds”, i.e. Responds in situations where there are grounds to believe that adults working or volunteering in positions of trust have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to a child.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children.

This annual report provides an overview of LADO activity and management of allegations in Leicester City for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

It provides opportunities for reflection and may influence or inform future action plans and service development across partner agencies to promote the safety of children and young people.

2. Overview of LADO activity: performance data analysis

a. Number of LADO contacts

The LADO maintains data regarding all allegations and concerns received which allows for targeted analysis and annual and thematic reporting.

Over the last 12 months, the LADO service has continued to promote direct discussion with employers and referring individuals via a duty system comprising a telephone advice line and generic mailbox. The accessibility of the LADO advice line engages many different agencies and employers from both voluntary and statutory sectors, and enables exploration of concerns with employers, discussion about harm thresholds and safeguarding actions required, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise about risk in organisations and from individuals. In this way the LADO assists employers to respond to individual concerns as well as to consider wider safeguarding needs within their organisations.

From February 2024 the LADO service has promoted more widespread use of an existing referral form to support referring individuals and organisations in gaining advice and guidance in a timely way and to manage throughput effectively. Feedback on the use of the referral form has suggested that some streamlining of the form would be helpful to referrers and amendments are therefore planned.

It should be noted that the LADO service is available during office hours only and that outside of these hours referrers should contact the Local Authority social care services Children's Advice, Support and Prevention (CASP) team, or, if there are worries about immediate harm, with emergency services.

The table below shows the number of contacts to the LADO service in the past 5 years:

Period	Number of contacts
2019-2020	304
2020-2021	288
2021-2022	369
2022-2023	412
2023-2024	395

There has been a slight decrease in the number of contacts from 2022 - 2023 to the current year. This may be due to guidance introduced through KCSIE in 2021 about the management of "low level concerns" in schools having become fully embedded and more confidently applied, thus possibly resulting in less recourse to the LADO service by schools seeking advice and guidance, see section 2 d. below.

Contacts do remain at a somewhat higher level than has been seen in earlier years, except for 2020 - 2021 where there was a drop in contacts: this was felt to be an anomaly resulting from the reduction in face to face social and educational opportunities for children during the Covid pandemic.

High numbers of contacts overall reflect some of the complexities in understanding the incidence and management of child safeguarding concerns in organisations. It could be that concerns about harm to children in organisations are increasing or that children, parents, workers are more confident than they may have been in the past about sharing worries or concerns, or that employers are more ready to seek advice and guidance than may have been the case previously. It may be useful to consider gathering feedback around these specific themes to better understand whether or to what extent the above considerations are reflected in contact numbers.

Furthermore, the introduction in 2020 in KCSIE of a fourth harm threshold around “suitability” (subsequently aligned with WT) may have also resulted in further contacts to the LADO service. Anecdotally, it would seem that several referring agencies contact the service in order to seek reassurance and advice as to what might be deemed as conduct suggesting “unsuitability”. Again, further interrogation of the available data could usefully satisfy or disprove this hypothesis.

Our training events are available to a range of organisations locally and ensure the LADO role is understood these also prompt contacts to the service appropriately. See also **section 4. Partnership working and training** below.

b. Outcome of LADO contacts

There is no significant variation over the last year compared with previous years with regards the outcome of contacts to the LADO service. Review of outcomes helps us to:

- understand potential themes or patterns of concern.
- ensure that our service delivery is appropriate for the needs of our referrers.
- plan how we might best meet training and support needs across the children’s workforce
- evidence consistency of response

A breakdown of the outcomes of LADO contacts for the year 2023 - 2024 is noted below:



It is notable that **48%** of initial contacts this year have concluded with **advice and guidance** to the employer. Advice and guidance is offered in situations where concerns have not met the harm thresholds noted above and results in no further LADO action after initial consideration. Advice and guidance given can include advice about

- internal employer led investigations.
- managing practice or conduct concerns.
- organisational safeguarding.
- need to signpost to other agencies e.g. other Local Authority LADOs, adult safeguarding services among others.
- listening to and giving feedback to children and parents about concerns raised.

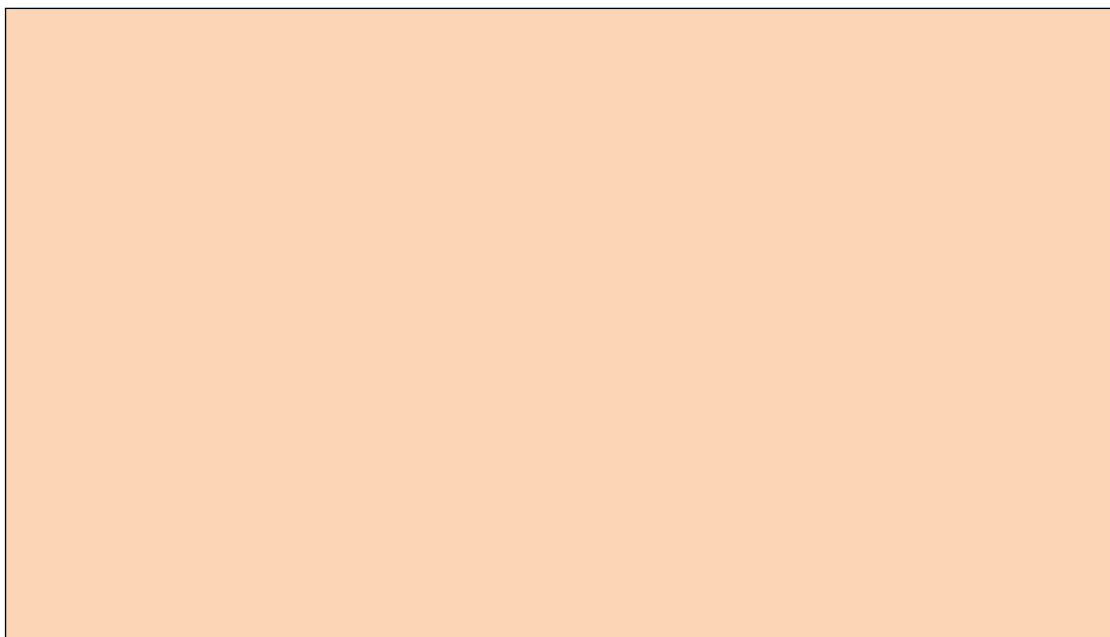
Advice and guidance may take the form of a “one off” discussion or could include several contacts over time.

Case example: Advice and guidance

An employer contacted the LADO service to seek advice about the actions of a member of staff who had engaged in discussion with a young person about self-harming. The member of staff in an attempt to reassure the young person had shared some of their own experiences of self-harm with the young person and had also given the young person advice about strategies to use to reduce their self-harming.

The young person’s parents were angry and upset about this. In discussion with the LADO service, it was concluded that harm thresholds were not met, there were no concerns about direct risk of harm from the member of staff to the young person or to other children and it was judged that this was a practice issue on the part of the staff member who had been well intentioned but had acted inappropriately.

Advice and guidance was given to the agency about reflection and learning for the staff member as well as exploration as to any need for support around their own experiences of self-harm. Advice and guidance was also given about feedback to parents with an emphasis on the importance of ensuring that the young person was adequately supported.



For comparison, a breakdown of the outcomes of LADO contacts for previous years is as follows:

	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024
Number of contacts with the outcome of advice and guidance to employer/organisation	204 67%	185 64%	237 64%	218 53%	190 48%

These figures show that the number of contacts to the LADO service with the outcome of **advice and guidance** remained at a consistent level for the years 2019 through to 2022.

However what is also evident is that in 2022 - 2023 the number of contacts resulting in the outcome “advice and guidance” dropped by 11% , with a further drop in 2023 – 2024, i.e. over the last 24 months there has been an increase in LADO responses which go beyond advice and guidance, to the current position for 2023 - 2024 whereby 52% of initial contacts have led to the LADO coordinating further investigations.

A QA spotlight exercise took place in November 2022 sampling LADO contacts and concluded that there was a consistent response to contacts and that thresholds were being appropriately applied. A repeat exercise on this theme was undertaken in May 2024 alongside our LLR counterpart colleagues in Leicestershire and Rutland, with an audit involving “dip sampling” of a range of situations that had been referred through to our respective LADO services over the 6 months up to the end of April 2024. Spotlight questions focussed on threshold application i.e.

- What was the outcome of the contact?

- Was the decision on threshold influenced by child's voice?
- Did the contact require immediate interim safeguards?
- Did all 3 Local Authority LADO services agree on threshold?

The exercise concluded positively that there was consistency in threshold decision making across the 3 Local Authorities, with other learning for the 3 services identified e.g. around best approach to managing allegations in “managerless” organisations.

Quote from feedback activity 2024

Always clear guidance with a practical approach that considers 'real life' rather than textbook answers. Demonstrates excellent understanding of working in an education setting and the complexity of cases.

Really clear guidance and they were always available quickly to discuss any issues. Lado support was understanding of the stress of the situation, the advice was clear and concise. The LADO was reassuring and supportive.

Where the LADO coordinates further investigation, practice is to facilitate multi-agency information sharing to further consider harm threshold and ensure employers have information sufficient to properly risk assess and safely manage their employees or volunteers. Paramount to this process is the safety of all children linked to the adult of concern, whether these links are through the adult's workplace, home life or in another employment or organisation.

Best practice is to begin by seeking an understanding of the experiences of the child or children involved and the impact to them of the alleged harm or concern. Wherever contacts that meet the threshold for statutory child protection processes are received, or where there is any element of doubt that this is the case, these contacts are always referred to police and social care services for consideration.

The need for employers to consider the support needs of employees and volunteers and to ensure they are well informed about LADO processes is also actively highlighted to employers at an early point during LADO involvement. To this end an information sheet has been developed for employers to share with their staff: this is routinely provided to employers.

To support the process of investigation, the LADO service works closely with colleagues within the Local Authority e.g. safeguarding in education officers, adult safeguarding services, and adult principal social worker, Looked After Children (LAC), Child in Need (CIN) and family placements teams, independent foster home reviewing officer, early education development team, human resources advisors. The LADO will also liaise as needed with colleagues from other agencies for example,

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- OFSTED

- Regulatory bodies such as GMC, TRA, NMC
- Police
- Education services
- Compliance / safeguarding leads for bodies in sports, faith, voluntary organisations

Thinking about situations where the LADO has coordinated further investigation and the final outcomes subsequently reached, the below table gives details as to final outcomes over a 5-year period. These outcomes relate to neglect, sexual harm, physical harm, and emotional harm – see also **section 2.c Contacts by category** for further comment.

<i>Final outcome of LADO process – based on balance of probability decision making</i>	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024
Percentage of total referrals – further investigations / actions beyond advice and guidance	35.5%	36%	36%	47%	52%
Unfounded <i>(there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made)</i>	33%	25%	34%	39%	40% 86
Unsubstantiated <i>(this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation; the term therefore does not imply guilt or innocence)</i>	22%	20%	21%	31%	17% 35
Substantiated <i>(There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation)</i>	38%	28%	33%	23%	26% 53
Malicious <i>(There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive).</i>	0%	1%	4%	1%	1% 2
False <i>(there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation)</i>	0%	4%	3%	0% 1	0% 1
Ongoing cases	7%	22%	5%	6%	12% 24

It is important to ensure that LADO processes conclude in a timely manner for all involved and as such it is positive that the number of ongoing cases open to the LADO service remains at a relatively low percentage.

However there has been an increase in ongoing open cases in the last year which is felt to be indicative of the complexity of situations and the impact this has on the timeliness of conclusions. Factors explaining this increase are the increasing complexities of some matters referred to the LADO, for example, where individuals have employments in more than one Local Authority area, where employer fact finding cannot be progressed in a timely way or where police investigations are protracted. This latter circumstance is often a feature of police investigations where there is a need for forensic examination of devices believed to contain indecent images or evidence of other sexual activity involving minors.

With regards the specific outcomes reached, it is positive to see that there has been a decrease this year in **unsubstantiated** outcomes. This outcome is reached when it is concluded that, after all enquiries have been completed, the allegation cannot be proven or disproven. The outcome “unsubstantiated” should be used only when there is judged to be nothing more that can be done to understand if an incident of concern is likely or not likely to have happened and harm caused. To conclude the LADO process with the outcome “unsubstantiated” can leave employers with an unclear understanding of any ongoing risk in the workplace and can also leave employees or volunteers under the impression that they have been vindicated which is not in fact the case.

A previous learning review reflected that further questions could have been posed to be clearer about an outcome. This has initiated ongoing reflection within the LADO service as to the use of the “unsubstantiated” outcome and the need to robustly question whether enquiries undertaken have been thorough enough to reach a clear outcome. The service remains very mindful that this outcome should always be reached with caution and that there is a need for professional curiosity as to whether other lines of enquiry can be pursued.

With regards to situations where allegations of harm are **substantiated**, these will always prompt further consideration by the LADO and LADO representatives as to whether there could be ongoing risk of harm posed by to children by the adults of concern and whether further action is needed to safeguard children in the longer term. For allegations with such outcomes, consideration is always given to the need for referrals to regulatory bodies and / or the DBS for barring decision. The LADO services continues to track with employers whether such referrals have been actioned and ensures with employers that wider safeguarding actions recommended through the LADO process have been completed and recorded. Actions might include involvement of our Local Authority Safeguarding in Education officers to advise and support organisations, encouragement to attend training events, approaches to governing bodies for sports and other groups, liaison with foster home reviewing officer and licensing teams e.g. taxi licensing. This practice reflects learning arising from local and national serious safeguarding incidents. In the period under review, several contacts have been recorded as ultimately warranting referrals to the DBS for barring decision.

On this theme, if an adult is dismissed or if they resign pre-empting a likely decision to dismiss them due to safeguarding concerns - a referral must be made to the DBS for barring decision. LADO service recording systems have recently added reference to this expectation to prompt confirmation with employers and give reassurance that this action is completed.

It is also positive to note that there has been no substantial increase in allegations of harm being recorded as **malicious**. Where allegations are made by children or their parents and are found to have no basis, agencies taking part in the LADO process will at times suggest that this is the most appropriate outcome, particularly if the children or parents involved have made previous, repeated unfounded allegations or there is concern about credibility. The LADO and LADO duty representatives are always mindful of the vulnerability of children and families who have reported experiences of harm, the difficulty of confidently attributing motives to those making allegations and the need to avoid stigmatising labels which might result in further vulnerabilities or disincentive to being believed. As such the outcome “malicious” is rightly applied only after careful consideration, and sparingly. It is noteworthy that managing allegations training events include discussion about adult perceptions of children’s credibility and “truth and lies”. See also **Section 3 The voice and experience of children** below and **Section 2 c contact by category** below.

Case example:
Substantiated allegation of harm

It came to light following concerns raised by family members that a counsellor employed in a local organisation had been making contact out hours and via personal phone numbers and emails with a vulnerable teenager accessing services at the organisation.

The content was of concern and seemed to imply that an inappropriate, possibly sexual relationship was developing for the counsellor and young person: there were indications of an exchange of gifts and unofficial meet ups. The counsellor seemed to be encouraging a very unhealthy dependence in the young person, at the same time discouraging the young person from accessing other support services.

Following a multi-agency strategy discussion, the counsellor was suspended, and a police investigation commenced: it was concluded subsequently that there was no evidence of sexual grooming on the part of the counsellor although the communication was clearly inappropriate. The counsellor was offered support from their employer and the young person was offered support by social care services. The young person was reluctant to share information about their interactions with the counsellor, but it was felt that the actions of the counsellor, and the loss of the counsellor as a support in their life, had a negative impact on them.

A series of multi-agency LADO meetings took place where safeguarding and support arrangements were considered, and conclusion eventually reached that the allegation that the counsellor had harmed a child were substantiated and their suitability to work in a position of trust called into question. The counsellor was dismissed from their role and a DBS barring referral made by employers. The counsellor was affiliated to a professional body who were kept informed

throughout the process of the concerns raised and who subsequently took action against the counsellor with respect to their private practice.

The LADO service continues to explore any themes or patterns of concern about organisations and their safeguarding cultures. This has been particularly notable over the last year set against complexities about the availability of placements for children which are matched to their needs and the quality of unregulated placements. There has also been a specific review of all allegations of harm within a particular residential setting.

**Case example:
Organisational learning**

Within the space of a few weeks, a series of concerns were brought to the attention of the LADO regarding physical interventions involving vulnerable young people in a health setting. There were difficulties for the LADO service in gaining information about what had taken place for the young people and concerns about recording and reporting of incidents and information gathering about the identity of staff involved. There had been previous concerns about similar in the past and pattern of concern addressed with the organisation: the renewed concerns indicated that there had been limited change in the organisation with regards safeguarding cultures and staff attitude towards young people and the use of physical interventions. Representation was made by the LADO service to senior managers within the organisation, contributing to a commitment on the part of the organisation to undertake a formal practice learning review.

c. Contact by category

Type of contact	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024
Total referrals	304	288	369	412	395
Neglect	47 15%	67 24%	54 15%	58 14%	41 10%
Sexual harm	72 24%	79 27%	104 28%	104 25.5%	89 22.5%
Physical harm	142 47%	104 36%	164 44%	196 47.5%	207 52%
Emotional harm	43 14%	38 13%	47 18%	54 13%	58 15%

Breakdown of contacts by type of harm shows similar picture from previous years, with the contacts about risk of **physical harm** to children representing the highest number of referrals.

This category includes contacts relating to deliberate physical harm, physical interventions or restraints, mismanagement of behaviours e.g. in educational or residential care settings, situations where adult behaviour has been misinterpreted (adults may have felt they were guiding a child whereas a child may perceive that they were deliberately “pushed”, “grabbed” or “shoved”).

The LADO service remain mindful in communication with employers to highlight that some children’s perceptions might well be influenced by previous personal history whereby they may now experience even innocuous or well-meant touch as invasive, threatening or “triggering”. These discussions have been very helpful when talking with employers who might initially consider that a child is “over playing” an incident.

Sexual harm remains the next most frequent category of harm. Concerns relating to inappropriate social media contacts between adults and children continue to feature widely in referrals of this nature. Concerns about grooming behaviours and involvement in accessing indecent images of children are also examples of the harm to children considered.

Not infrequently concerns about sexual harm relate to the partners or adult children of employees or volunteers working in positions of trust. Employers confronted with these situations are often concerned about implications for children in the workplace, and understanding whether there is a transferable risk from their employee’s home situation and managing risk assessments. The LADO service supports employers to consider the implications for safeguarding in the workplace and managing risk assessments to promote safety in the workplace for children.

d. Who are contacts about?

	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024
Total contacts	304	288	369	412	395
Day care (early years settings)	7%	5.5%	4%	21 5%	16 4%
Education (non- teaching staff)	6%	4%	4%	16 4%	23 6%
Education (teaching support staff eg learning mentors)	7%	7%	8%	27 6%	28 7%

Education (qualified teachers)	20%	13%	18%	89 22%	68 17%
Faith	3%	3%	2%	11 3%	7 2%
Foster carers	20%	25%	20 %	67 16% *see breakdown below	55 14% *see breakdown below
Health	6%	8%	10%	32 8%	31 8%
Police	0%	0.5%	0.5%	1 0%	2
Probation	0%	0%	0%	0 0%	0 0%
Residential Care	13%	19%	18%	69 17% ** see breakdown below	88 22% ** see breakdown below
Social Work	2%	2.5%	2%	7 2%	3 1%
Sport	2%	3.5%	2%	12 3%	11 3%
Transport	6%	6%	8%	33 8%	23 6%
Volunteers	1%	1%	2%	9 2%	7 2%
Youth Work	3%	2%	0.5%	12 3%	1 0%
Other (eg security guards, driving instructors)	2%	0%	1%	6 1%	32 8%

*

Foster carers:

In 2023 - 24, there were 55 contacts relating to foster carers as follows.

6 contacts about kinship carers – 11% (a drop from last year's 21%)

25 contacts about IFA foster carers - 45% (like last year's 42%)

24 contacts about Local Authority foster carers - 44% (a slight drop from last year's 37%)

**

Residential settings

In 2023 - 2024 there were 88 contacts relating to residential care settings as follows

73 contacts about externally commissioned placements - 83% (an increase from last year's 70%)

15 contacts about Local Authority residential settings - LA residential care - 17% (a decrease from last year's 30%)

Overall patterns of contact remain similar to previous years with some variation.

The highest numbers of contacts and referrals continue to relate to **educational settings**, unsurprisingly so given that education services support a large employee base and daily contacts with large numbers of children across the city. The LADO regularly contributes to safeguarding training facilitated by safeguarding in education colleagues specifically for DSLs and senior school leaders. This supports the development of positive relationships and opportunities for constructive dialogue between the LADO service and education settings.

Contacts in relation to **foster carers** and workers in **residential settings** represent the next highest number of contacts.

36% of all contacts to the LADO service this year relate to individuals involved in the care and support of Looked After Children, although this is slightly lower than last year by 3%. While Local Authority foster carer and residential home referrals have again reduced slightly this year, contacts about foster care placements and residential care placements that are **non-Local Authority i.e. externally commissioned** have both risen. This indicates the potential vulnerability of children placed in external provisions which are often out of Leicester with reduced access for children to their social workers, families, and natural support networks.

It should be noted that the LADO service takes case responsibility for managing allegations where employee workplaces are City located. This includes IFA placements, non-Local Authority children's homes and taxi companies. The children using these services may not be Leicester City Looked After Children and may have other "home" Local Authorities. Conversely, Leicester City Looked After Children may be placed in or use services in other Local Authorities and it is the responsibility of the LADO in those Local Authorities to manage any allegations about services in their locality. However, the LADO service continues to systematically record information and will offer social workers advice and support in respect of allegations involving Leicester City Looked After Children are placed in other Local Authority areas: see also **section 6. Quality Assurance (QA) of LADO Activity** below.

It is encouraging that Looked After Children are being heard and their allegations taken seriously and reported to the LADO for consideration. Additionally, however as corporate parents for Leicester City Looked After Children, we want them to be safely cared for and reductions in contacts and allegations may be an indicator of increased safety. There has been an increase in recent years in smaller, private residential homes alongside a reduction in the number of foster placements and it is hoped that requirements for previously unregulated children's home around registration with OFSTED may result in a reduction of concerns about the care afforded to children in these settings.

It should be noted that Looked After Children may also be involved in allegations processes outside of their placements i.e. in their schools or extra-curricular settings.

Research and learning from case reviews around the UK tell us that **Looked After Children (LAC) and children with disabilities** are more vulnerable to harm in organisations.

7.3% of all contacts in 2023 - 2024 relate to workers caring for disabled children: this reflects a significant decrease from last year. Research shows that children with disabilities are “less visible” and “more vulnerable”. Whilst an increase in figures may suggest more harm to children with disabilities, it could also indicate there is more vigilance and awareness of the harm that might otherwise have been unrecognised for these children.

The drop in contacts for children with disabilities is surprising as there has been a focus on children with disabilities over the last few years and the vulnerabilities for them when cared for away from home. This reflection will be considered, and consideration given to targeted training.

e. Who makes contact with the LADO service?

	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024
Total contacts	304	288	369	412	395
Family members / members of the public / anonymous referrers	12 4%	9 3%	8 2%	7 2%	10 2%
Education services	70 23%	34 12%	74 20%	110 27%	94 24%
Health services (including EMAS)	4 1%	3 1%	25 7%	18 4%	18 4%
Local authority (not social care services – eg transport, education welfare, human resources)	12 4%	10 3.5%	8 2%	5 1%	11 3%
External social care providers (eg other Local Authorities, LADOs, private sector, IFAs, private residential care placements)	47 15.5%	28 10%	42 11%	28 7%	28 7%
Local authority social care (Leicester City)	108 35.5%	119 41%	145 40%	158 38%	121 31%
Regulatory and legal services, voluntary sector (eg CAFCASS, OFSTED, NSPCC)	11 4%	50 17.5%	37 10%	47 11%	70 18%
Police	35 11%	35 12%	30 8%	39 9%	44 11%

There do not appear to be any significant changes in who contacts the LADO service. Most agencies have a consistent pattern of contacting the LADO. This year's figures do show an increase in contacts from regulatory services and other bodies such as OFSTED, NSPCC, CAFCASS.

It is helpful to understand where contacts to the LADO service originate and equally to be clear about what agencies and organisations, or types of agencies and organisations, do not contact or seek support from the service. This enables the planning of awareness raising and training with relevant agencies. As in previous years, occasional ‘spikes’ in contacts from partner agencies and employers can be more noticeable following training events. There are regular training opportunities for partner agencies and employers with encouragement given on an individual basis and personalised invitations to agencies “new” to a relationship with the LADO service around attending training events, see also **section 4. Partnership working and training**.

The LADO service works hard to establish and maintain constructive working relationships with referrers and those who contact the service and is very proud to receive regular positive feedback and expressions of thanks for advice, guidance, direction, and support offered by the service.

f. Timeliness of LADO processes

	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024
% cases closed in 4 weeks	52%	70%	67%	68%	64%
% cases closed in 12 weeks	80%	91%	92%	95%	89%

It is pleasing that despite the high number of contacts to the service this year that throughput to conclusion of LADO processes remains consistent. The data reflects a similarity in timeliness in the last 12 months to previous years except for 2020 – 2021 where figures again are somewhat anomalous as the reduced number of referrals due to restrictions on social contact enabled swifter throughput.

Quality assurance processes and management oversight routinely explore the timeliness of throughput.

There are no statutory timescales around the completion of LADO processes - but there are local expectations aiming to limit anxiety and stress caused by the process of investigation to all individuals involved, children, adults, and employers alike, as well as the need to reach defensible and safe positions for employing organisations.

At times LADO processes can be protracted where there are complex enquiries or a need to rely on expert advice e.g., where there is parallel police investigations relating to historical abuse or online abuse involving forensic examination of devices.

The LADO service continues to track appropriate cases after a final outcome has been reached to ensure that key ongoing safeguarding tasks are actioned. There has been a focus

on the importance of this tracking to reflect OFSTED advice at inspection in 2021 regarding the need to ensure recommended follow up actions are progressed. The LADO service utilises systems to track those actions to their completion e.g. employer referrals to the DBS for barring decision, referrals to regulatory bodies some outcomes of internal investigations if there is a potential need for further safeguarding advice and outcomes of criminal cases if further advice and guidance or action is likely to be required. This can extend the length of LADO involvement but adds value in terms of the wider safeguarding context.

During the cyber-attack experienced by Leicester City Council in March 2024 our service was able to continue with some disruption mainly to admin processes. There has been some impact on the ability to complete administrative tasks necessary to the conclusion of cases.

3. The voice and experience of children

Children's voices and views are integral to all LADO processes: the service recognises how important it is to understand as fully as possible the experience of children when assessing the potential impact of harmful or inappropriate behaviour towards them by adults in positions of trust.

Over the last 12 months good practice has continued to be promoted with respect to the voice of the child and the use of the Lundy Model of participation within LADO process.

The Lundy Model is considered in all LADO meetings to ensure that the child's voice and experience is fully understood when considering risk from an adult. The focus and value given to the child's participation and voice assists all involved to arrive at a conclusion and plan wider and ongoing safeguarding actions.

Records and forms have been amended to highlight children's voices and experiences.

Section 2 b. Outcome of LADO contacts above comments on views about "malicious" allegations and children telling "untruths". As noted, managing allegations training events include discussion about adult perceptions of children's credibility, the significance of "retractions" and "truth and lies". A briefing paper and assessment aid about "understanding retractions" has been prepared by the LADO service and is provided for consideration in cases where children may appear to "retract" what they may first have said, with areas to consider in these circumstances.

The importance of accurate chronologies is emphasised where suggestion might be made that a child has "made previous false or unfounded allegations" to evidence such assertions. The importance of securing an independent view of children's experiences is also emphasised e.g. in situations where Looked After Children in a residential home might not have been given opportunity to talk to their social worker about concerns, they may have about their residential workers.

The LADO service continues to promote the need to hear and take seriously the views of family members or others who raise concerns on children's behalf. Case learning following serious safeguarding incidents both within and beyond the Local Authority have shown the value of seeking out and hearing what family members have to say about the experiences of

Looked After Children in their care placements. In advice and guidance to managers where internal enquiries and / or investigations are being progressed it is recommended that enquiries routinely include the voice of the child and their parents or carers.

The LADO service benefitted from a presentation from a manager working in residential services at a provision for disabled children about communication. In June 2023 the LADO service also completed a quality assurance audit with respect to how the voices of disabled children are heard. This has led to reflection and learning as to our commitment to and success in securing the voices and views of disabled children in allegations processes and has resulted in some practice improvements e.g. challenge to partner agencies who may suggest that there are communication needs which limit the extent to which children's experiences can be heard.

A meeting last year with a group of young people, "The Co-Producers", alongside workers from the Participation and Engagement Service, has resulted in work taking place to develop a podcast explaining the LADO role which will be accessible to Looked After Children. This is an exciting project for the service, commencing in June this year.

Continued expectations of ourselves and our service are to:

- Actively promote listening to and hearing children and their experiences to enable safe decision making this includes listening to others who raise concerns on their behalf.
- Be questioning and curious about the views of children and the impact on them of allegations or concerns.
- Challenge "blameful" language and attitudes such as scepticism towards or disbelief of children
- Recognise the vulnerability of children in society overall and consider the impact of factors such as age, gender, sexuality, race, culture and heritage, religion, past experiences, and in particular past harms.
- Take account of the additional vulnerability of Looked After Children and children with disabilities and take all opportunities to advocate on behalf of these children.
- Promote the use of the Lundy Model to aid quality participation of children and young people.
- Routinely promote or in some cases give direct feedback to children and young people about the outcome of LADO processes which concern them e.g. through appropriately worded and presented letters or recommendation to those working with them.
- Continue to recommend safety planning work with children to ensure that they have courage and confidence to speak out if they experience further concerns or worries about adults in the future.
- Consider with involved professionals if there is scope for adults to acknowledge or apologise directly to children if their behaviour was wrong or unacceptable.

**Case example:
Hearing the voice of the child**

A concern was raised by a visitor to a school that they had seen Child S being physically mishandled by a teaching assistant TAB. TAB denied any wrongdoing, claiming that they were trying to defend themselves from being assaulted by Child S. It emerged that there were many concerns about TAB's overall conduct in the school: for example, TAB held a particular view of Child S and their needs which were not shared by leaders in the school. TAB spent a lot of time with Child S to the exclusion of other staff and was also influential with Child S's parents. Thus, TAB was felt to hold a lot of sway over Child S. Child S had little verbal communication and it was initially felt that it would be very difficult to gain their views about TAB.

However, over a period of weeks, observations of Child S and feedback from parents as to occasional comments they had made expressing anxiety about TAB, this was particularly in relation to returning to school after the holidays, this enabled a good understanding of Child S's voice and experiences around TAB which were fed into the LADO process and considered when determining actions to be taken with respect to TAB.

4. Partnership working and training.

It is crucial that the LADO service maintains **positive working relationships** with colleagues within the Local Authority, with partner agencies, statutory and voluntary groups and with other Local Authority LADOs, particularly those in neighbouring Leicestershire and Rutland. This supports effective responses around individual allegations concerns and assists work to promote safer organisations.

The LADO service continue to have positive working relationships with

- social care services within Leicester City (e.g. LAC, CIN, CASP, family placements team and placement commissioning teams and foster home independent reviewing officer, adult safeguarding teams, and adult principal social worker)
- other services within Leicester City Council (e.g. human resources, and early education development team)
- social care services in neighbouring authorities
- Leicestershire police (the Child Abuse Investigation Unit) a key contact has been identified within the police who the LADO is to meet quarterly and can contact for advice and "troubleshooting".
- health services (UHL and LPT)
- education services
- faith groups (e.g. Church of England Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and Federation of Muslim Organisations)
- non-Local Authority placement providers

Special mention should be made of **Safeguarding in education** (SIE) colleagues who work closely with the LADO service. The SIE team consult regularly with the LADO service, promote the LADO role in their training events and have been made available to provide training and safeguarding learning to other small independent organisations where the safeguarding culture has been felt to be of concern after a LADO contact. While their services are not wholly designed for use in 'out of school settings' they have successfully engaged these settings to improve safeguarding. This is a strength of working closely together for the benefit of Leicester Children in out of school settings.

The LADO also has strong links with the **regional LADO group** which meets quarterly online and provides a forum for reflection, learning and good practice discussion as well as benefitting good cross authority working in complex cases. The LADO service also attends the annual LADO conference and has access to National LADO Network resources and participates in National LADO Network consultations.

The LADO service has a positive working relationship with the DBS regional outreach worker who is a good source of advice and support.

Quality assurance work in partnership with the LADO services in Leicestershire and Rutland has continued over the last year: this is reported on in **section 6. Quality Assurance (QA) of LADO Activity** below.

One of the LADO's core responsibilities is to provide **training** to partner agencies and other service providers. Training and briefing sessions held in 2023 – 2024 included:

- Termly "Safer organisations and managing allegations" training for DSLs and school senior leaders alongside Safeguarding in Education colleagues.
- Question and Answer and a Meet and Greet for foster carers "coffee and chat" meeting.
- Early Years forum presentation
- Termly "managing allegations" training for employers across the city is arranged in conjunction with LSCPB.
- Bespoke online presentation and learning event to the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Bespoke presentation to residential services on the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and managing Allegations.
- 2 foster carer training sessions / workshops on the role of the LADO
- Termly presentation to ASYEs and other social workers on the role of the LADO
- Presentation to police
- A cross service-learning review was led by the LADO service following a complex investigation into allegations in residential setting. This resulted in a 7-minute briefing.
- Work with commissioning services on improving the quality assurance of placements following a learning review.

All training with the exception of the standalone presentation to ASCL takes place face to face and this has felt beneficial for the development of good working relationships.

All training sessions have a focus on safe and healthy organisational cultures, explain LADO processes and harm thresholds and consider the importance of hearing children's experiences and understanding the impact on children and adults. There is also consideration of learning from serious case reviews.

Feedback and comments on training

A massive thank you for the work and time ... put into delivering the training session... The session was really well received, and colleagues have also asked to pass on their thanks... the session worked well and was really detailed and clear in setting out information that was incredibly relevant. It was an absolute pleasure collaborating with the service. We are hugely grateful to you for your time yesterday - **education colleagues**.

An excellent training course – **foster carer**

The training was the perfect amount of time, enough time was given for group discussion as well as being able to ask any questions or queries that you might have had, overall would recommend – **early years colleague**.

Amazing training, great delivery – **voluntary sector colleague**

5. Feedback from agencies regarding the quality of LADO input.

Feedback from agencies who use the LADO service is beneficial each year to inform ongoing improvements. Feedback forms were widely distributed to partner agencies during May 2024 with the aim of gathering feedback about the quality of the input from the LADO service. We were pleased to have received **37 responses**.

Questions asked:

The timeliness of response

- 93% of respondents said they received a timely response.

View as to whether the LADO response supported the safety of a child/ children within a setting/ organisation/workplace .

- 95% of respondents considered that the LADO response supported the safety of a child/ children within a setting/ organisation/workplace.

Views as to the quality of the input from the LADO service.

81% rated the quality of input as **Very Good**.

16% rated the quality of input as **Good**.

3% rated the quality of input as **Average**.

Feedback and comments about the quality of LADO input

As always, I received fantastic support from LADO service

Very knowledgeable and empathetic

Really clear guidance and they were always available quickly to discuss any issues

The professional that I spoke to was very informative, kind and put time and affect in for both the young person and staff member

Comments on possible improvements to LADO input/intervention to enable safety for children and fairness for adults.

When I have asked the LADO for support with external people/organisations who might pose a risk to students, I feel that there sometimes seems a reluctance to get involved. On occasions I have not been given feedback in these situations

The new online referral form is very long. Could less information be submitted as an initial triage maybe? Occasional lag in speaking to them - they seem very busy.

Response was timely but higher staffing levels so that there is a person available to speak to immediately if needed.

During this last year we gained feedback via an Ombudsman finding in relation to the LADO service.

We are generally very proud of our responsiveness to any referrals. In this situation we did not provide an update to a parent who directly approached LADO about her worries in relation to a teaching assistant. We wholly accepted and apologised for not feeding back to the parent, we acknowledged that we should have done. This also initiated reflection on whether we record every time we are asked for advice and the LADO threshold is not met. We have updated our standards to reflect this learning.

6. Quality Assurance (QA) of LADO activity

We recognise the LADO practice is a niche expertise that is limited within Local Authorities. Therefore, since 2019, we have worked with colleagues from Leicestershire and Rutland to progress and embed QA activities for LADO work across LLR. The strength of the QA forum is to reflect with colleagues on thresholds, outcomes, and safety within organisations. The QA is limited to an overview rather a 'deep dive' audit due to access to different LA systems. The forum is also used for considering themes emerging.

In 2022-23 we considered the initial learning and findings from the complex abuse investigation into the harm to children with complex health needs and disabilities within the Hesley residential childcare group in Doncaster.

We have revisited some of the themes this identified across LLR and reported to LSCPB our findings. We have completed two reports to the LSCPB on LLR audit work of the LADO role in the last year.

- LLR spotlight audit. Children with disabilities referred to LADO services within the three local authorities.
and
- LLR LADO spotlight audit. LADO Threshold Application Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.

The QA supported better cross boundary working, consistent application of thresholds, reflection, and good sharing of information on gaining the child's voice and promoting the systematic focus on whole organisation harm.

In January 2024 a spotlight QA activity was completed as there has appeared an increase in workload within the LADO service and it was necessary to consider if appropriate and proportionate responses have been applied that is consistent with Working Together, Keeping Children Safe in Education and local safeguarding procedures. This was a Leicester City QA audit.

The spotlight activity dip sampled contacts to the LADO service over 3 months. During this time 95 contacts were made to the LADO service. Of the 95 the spotlight activity dip sampled 37 cases.

The focus was to consider threshold for LADO involvement, timely responses, robustness of advice and guidance, if interim safeguarding arrangements were being considered at an early stage and if the child's voice was evident in the process and informed the planning and actions.

We were pleased to see; timeliness of LADO responses and coordination of a wide range of involved professionals, that thresholds were appropriately applied, children's voices heard and acted upon, consistent consideration of interim safeguarding measures at the outset and advice and guidance in the main is shown to be of a good quality.

We noted we needed to improve on consistently providing a written summary of what was referred, what actions taken place, threshold application/outcome and rationale for this, recommendations and always considering how the child should be feedback to and evidencing consistently the child's voice.

7. Next steps for 2024 - 2025

During the last 18 months we have responded to demand by increasing capacity within the service by an extra 4 days a week from an Independent Child Protection Chair who now specialises in LADO work as their primary role. This has provided the service with additional consistency. This change has been well received by partner agencies who have appreciated the consistency of service. It also provides additional expertise in the service and aids reflection and support to the service from having the additional expertise.

The service has remained mindful of the need for timely throughput as shown by the number of ongoing cases and timescales for completion and will continue to be mindful of the need to respond creatively to unpredictable increases in demand.

The data contained within this annual report are in the main unremarkable and reflect very similar patterns, year on year, with small accountable or explicable variations. This shows a consistency in threshold and response of which we are proud. One area of change relates to the incidence of “unsubstantiated” outcomes, and we continue to focus on reducing in the interests of clarity and better understanding for all around harm and risk posed.

We have sought feedback from partner agencies: this highlights our strengths and what needs to improve in our service. Again, we are proud of the feedback we have received which shows that our service responds in a timely way and provides quality responses to employers across a range of organisations who seek our advice. This feedback does also tell us that we need to strengthen our work with the police in some cases to ensure good communication and timelines of response and we have begun to address this.

Whilst we have continued to promote listening to children and their experiences at the heart of our work, the embedding of the Lundy Model and our learning from Quality Assurance activity continues to strengthen our child focus.

Finally, we will continue to be focused on whole organisation approaches considering patterns of concerns and learning for organisations overall where there are worries about individuals working within them. Follow the trajectory of the learning from the Doncaster investigations and National Safeguarding review, we understand the need to “think the unthinkable” and to be vigilant to the possibility of complex abuse whether in our own area or for “our” Leicester Looked After Children placed in other Local Authority areas.

8. Conclusion

We aim to

- continue delivering a quality service that has the confidence of partner agencies.
- ensure a process that is safe for children and fair for adults.
- to promote and support safe organisations.
- Learn and reflect and support organisations to do the same.

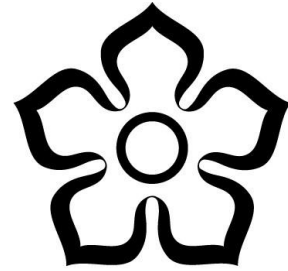
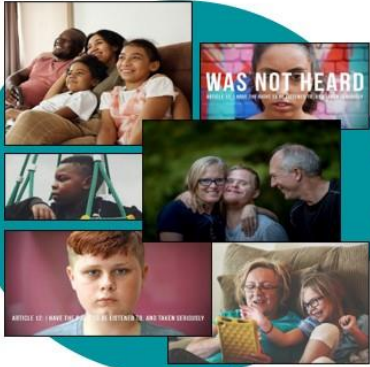
To achieve this aim:

- Our training offer will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose, relevant and reflective of updated guidance and new developments. Targeted training will continue to be available to the voluntary sector including sports settings, faith settings, services to children with disabilities, and to the private sector. There will be a targeted approach in the next year to promote training in settings children with disabilities attend.
- We will continue to dip sample and complete spotlight audits on LADO work monthly to ensure our aims are being achieved.
- We will continue our work with the children's engagement and participation service to gain a children's perspective and critique of our work and our quality assurance processes.
- We will share LADO learning from local and national reviews annually with children's social care and early help staff.
- We will work directly with police to strengthen our communication and processes.
- We will use our LLR Quality Assurance forum to focus on relevant themes e.g. managerless organisations and develop our knowledge base – we will similarly access learning via the regional LADO group and National LADO network.
- We will question all contacts to our service to establish if the individual of concern works "cross boundary" and liaise appropriately with other Local Authority LADO services.

Finally, we will continue to access professional development opportunities to develop our skills, knowledge, and expertise in order to continue to provide a quality service.

Jude Atkinson – Local Authority Designated Officer
Katherine Lockwood -LADO representative/Independent Chair
Lesley Booth – Service Manager
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit

June 2024



Leicester
City Council

SCE Social
Care &
Education

Keeping children safe,
helping families thrive

- Whole system and child centred approach to reform
- Will require changes to legislation
- Builds on previous Stable Homes, Built on Love reforms.
- Four key reform principles:
 1. Children should remain with their families and be safely prevented from entering the care system in the first place
 2. Where children cannot remain at home and it is in their best interests, we should support children to live with kinship carers or in fostering families, rather than in residential care
 3. Fix the broken care market
 4. Need to invest in key enablers which underpin the children's social care system, including the workforce, better data, information sharing and to scale and spread evidence-based programmes which have improved children's outcomes

Legislating to keep families
together and children safe and to
remove barriers to opportunity

- Key priorities in legislating to keep families together and children safe and to remove barriers to opportunity:
 1. Mandating local authorities to offer family group decision making
 2. Improving data sharing and introducing a single unique identifier
 3. Strengthening the role of education within multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
 4. Strengthening multi-agency child protection
 5. Home education and child protection
 6. Extend corporate parenting responsibilities
 7. Promoting educational outcomes for children with a social worker through Virtual School heads
 8. Providing Staying Close support to care leavers

Legislating to make the care
system child centred and to
tackle profiteering

- Key priorities in legislating to make the care system child centred and to tackle profiteering:
 1. Making it easier to open the right kinds of homes which meet children's needs
 2. Improving accountability for the quality of homes
 3. Ensuring inspection reflects the makeup of the children's homes market
 4. Improving local authorities' ability to shape the market
 5. Regulating the placements market to ensure financial stability and tackle profiteering
 6. Introducing a regulation-making power to govern local authority use of agency workers within children's social care services

- Develop and implement our response to earlier reform proposals – Family Help – seamless support across Early Help and Child in Need embedded in our communities
- In parallel work with key safeguarding partners and other agencies to develop multi-agency child protection teams sitting alongside our community-based Family Help offer
- Ensure we have the right resources to deliver on newly mandated family-decision making meetings
- Continuing work with ICB on shared Care Record
- Work with safeguarding partners and education colleagues to ensure education role is strengthened in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and service delivery

- Launch the SCE Social Care Academy to support and accelerate our strategy to grow our own highly skilled and flexible workforce and reduce reliance on agency staff
- Embed Valuing Care tool into our case management system to support effective and best value placement planning
- Work collaboratively with regional neighbours and their planning departments to deliver quality children's home provision that better meets need
- Continue discussions with neighbouring authorities to develop Regional Care Cooperative to exert great influence on placements market
- Future proof all changes to service delivery models to account for impact of local government reforms

OFSTED ILACS Inspection- September 2024

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny
Commission

Date of meeting: 25 February 2025

Lead Director/officer: Laurence Jones

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Laurence Jones
- Author contact details: laurence.jones@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.4

1. Summary

- 1.1 Ofsted undertook an inspection under the “inspecting local authority children’s services” (ILACS) framework in September 2024. This was a short inspection and so was made up of a week off site analytical activity followed by a week with a team of inspectors on site speaking to staff and partners and reviewing cases. A copy of the final report, published on 29 January 2025, is attached as **Appendix A**. Prior to this Ofsted visit last inspection took place at the end of the pandemic in 2021 and found that services were “good” in the context of Leicester having been in a very long period of lock down and social work practice with children had been heavily modified due to the restrictions in place. The current context of work in the city is very different and the needs of children, and the whole population, have been significantly impacted by the pressures on families and emotional and mental health challenges during the pandemic period.
- 1.2 The latest report gives an overall rating of “requires improvement to be good” and identifies areas that need strengthening for impact to consistently “good”. There are a large number of strengths in the report. Of the key areas for improvement identified in the 2021 report (private fostering, designated officer arrangements, sufficiency of placements, consistency of recording, case file auditing) all have been resolved. There has been significant change in senior leadership in the department with both Divisional Directors and the Strategic Director starting in role in the year before the inspection. The report notes that “leaders have maintained a supportive environment and ensured that caseloads remain at manageable levels” and that “Social Workers know their children well and speak about them with knowledge and sensitivity”. The effectiveness of the relationship between early help services and more formal social care services is singled out for praise, as is the managing of allegations against professionals, the response to exploitation, young carers, disabled children and the approach to regulated services such as fostering and adoption. The thresholds for the involvement of services, formal child protection plans and children entering the care system were found to be appropriate.
- 1.3 The report identifies a number of priority areas for improvement, nearly all of which had already been identified by leaders prior to the inspection and which in many cases have begun to be addressed in the six months since the inspection.
- 1.4 A summary of actions against the five key areas for improvement highlighted by Ofsted is described below. This will be overseen by a Board chaired by the Strategic Director (and statutory Director of Childrens Services) which will meet regularly from March 2025 and will report regularly to the Executive on progress. A full improvement, which also covers the government reforms set out in the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill is attached as **Appendix B**. The reforms have come with an additional grant of £2.6m for the next financial year. This will be used in part to boost social worker numbers, which are the lowest per head of child in the East Midlands, and to increase the capacity of managers to deliver on the areas highlighted below.

1.5 The five areas that Ofsted have identified for improvement and the current position is as follows:

The range and accuracy of information used by leaders to evaluate service performance and the quality and impact of management oversight and supervision

1.6 Whilst there is a large range of well checked and timely information available to managers, we are reviewing this and bench marking with the information available in similar authorities where Ofsted have not found this to be an issue. Whilst the information is expanded and improved compared to that at the previous inspection, it may be that other authorities have developed their suite of data more, raising expectations. The opportunities to use artificial intelligence are largely untapped in Leicester City and this will be an area of focus for the coming year.

1.7 The relative youth and inexperience of middle management in Leicester was highlighted to inspectors prior to the inspection week, and we recognise that in recent years there has not been any formal development programme for managers, and that some of the guidance and structured paperwork in place has been unhelpful and despite challenge by staff this has not been addressed. This will have impacted on the good practice being evidenced for every child and family in case files, even when the practice itself is sound. We have begun to review the paperwork used, and our guidance to staff, and expect to commission a programme of development for managers to commence shortly and run for some time to support cultural change and professional development. Leicester has had an approach of growing our own leaders from our practitioner cohort, and as such limited experience from outside the authority has been drawn in. This approach needs to be reviewed alongside the support for early careers in leadership.

The timeliness and robustness of responses to contacts and referrals and the quality and consistency of care plans and pathway plans

1.8 Ofsted found evidence of good practice in these areas, but also some inconsistencies, so that not every child is receiving the same quality of service. We are looking to strengthen our management oversight and quality assurance, as well as the structure and accessibility of some of our documentation, to support the development of consistent social work practice. We intend to recruit an additional head of service and increase our quality assurance officer and Principal Social Worker time to support these developments early in 2025. We are also looking with the Department for Education to identify a Sector-led Improvement Partner (SLIP), who are an outstanding authority, to support us in focusing on this element of our improvement work. We plan to recruit thirteen additional social workers, alongside two Independent Reviewing Officers, two Multi-Systemic Therapists and four staff focused on Family Group Decision Making. This will improve capacity and have an impact on caseloads to allow more time to concentrate of timeliness and quality.

Arrangements to identify, safeguard and support the most vulnerable children in care and care leavers, including children in unregistered children's homes

1.9 We have immediately reviewed the oversight and contact levels for the small number of children in care who might be at increased risk and increased management oversight and new procedures are in place to provide greater assurance. Whilst we use providers who have a proven track record and pass our own quality assurance processes, and so were broadly assured of the children's safety, more regular oversight through face-to-face meetings with qualified Social Workers was needed, recognising that Ofsted cannot provide any assurance about the safety of these placements given their lack of registration. Leicester has relatively small numbers in unregulated placements but

recognises that any child in a technically unlawful placement is one too many. There are currently eight children in unregulated placements out of 600 in the care of the authority. We are continuing to open new residential children's home provision to reduce the numbers still further. Holly House opened this year and Hill View is due to open later this year. There are further expansions of the estate planned through the shortly to be published Sufficiency Strategy.

Support for care leavers who may be more reluctant to accept help, including those in custody and those facing homelessness.

- 1.10 We will continue to consider our rights-based approach, allowing young adults with mental capacity to make their own decisions, balanced against the need to continue to be a strident corporate parent into early adulthood. Some of the specific areas to be addressed in the report will be difficult to achieve as for example it is simply not possible any more under prison service rules to visit young adults who do not want to be visited by us or to telephone or email prisoners without their permission. We will also consider how we might support young people who are homeless but not in the city given the two cases cited by Ofsted were in London and Edinburgh so could not practically access our priority housing locally even had they wanted our assistance.
- 1.11 The judgement by Ofsted in this area is new and has not featured in previous inspections and the focus is welcomed. We had a visit from the Department for Education's Leaving Care Advisor last August whose judgement was slightly different in that he felt the leaving care service were "good with outstanding features". He left us with areas for development, different from those identified by Ofsted, which we agree with and are actively working on to improve our offer. We have used all of these insights to strengthen the offer.

Ofsted's Response to the Complaint About The Inspection Process

- 2.1 The publication of the report by several months was due to Ofsted responding to a complaint about the inspection process made by the local authority. We have not complained about the content of the final report after changes made during the factual accuracy check. The authority had received a verbal apology during the on-site week about inspector behaviour, but at the conclusion of the week remained significantly concerned about the way that the inspection has been conducted and so made this formal. Ofsted initially refused to investigate the complaint, but after challenge reviewed their decision. The Ofsted complaint process is an internal review by Ofsted themselves and there is no right of appeal. The majority of points in the complaint about how evidence was gathered and the fairness of the approach used were largely dismissed by Ofsted who felt they had acted in accordance with the framework and that the judgements of inspectors, whilst subjective, were fair. However, they did apologise for failing to give the correct information in the set-up meeting about their key lines of enquiry to allow the authority to collate the best evidence to put before inspectors.
- 2.2 There are two other areas of complaint which are worth highlighting as areas where the concerns of leaders and staff remain unresolved. Ofsted were asked if the inspection team had training in unconscious bias and how to address this in the inspection process but declined to directly answer this question. They were also challenged about how they raised concerns in individual care work in line with their published framework. All issues they raised were responded to by the local authority swiftly either through explanation or action. Despite the published framework being checked at the time of the complaint being made, Ofsted state that the referred to part of the framework was

not in place at the time of the inspection. The history of changes to that framework on the government website shows the guidance was changed in December 2025, after both the inspection and the complaint.

2. Recommended actions/decision

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission is invited to comment on the report and the proposed improvement plan.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

This report is produced for scrutiny by the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The recommendations in this report will be funded within existing budgets.

Signed: Mohammed Irfan

Dated: 22.01.2025

5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report

Signed: Kamal Adatia

Dated: 21.01.2025

5.3 Equalities implications

Children's Services are responsible for protecting and promoting the welfare of children in need in the city and also for ensuring that everyone is in receipt of education. The report provides an update on Ofsted's ILACS inspection in December of 2024. Leicester has larger proportions of younger people compared to England. According to census information, the city has a much higher level of ethnic diversity amongst its children and young people than most other council areas. The Index of Deprivation 2019 showed that Leicester is ranked as the 32nd most deprived out of 151 local authority areas in England, deprivation has an important impact on children's lives and health. The framework aims not to be dependent on one major single inspection event but to provide insight to Ofsted on the performance and direction of travel for the authority. Delivering effective children's services that champion the needs and improved outcomes for children and young people, should lead to positive impacts for children and young people from across all protected characteristics. The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework focuses on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements: • to help and protect children (from across all protected characteristics) • the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home • the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption • the experiences and progress of care leavers They also evaluate: • the effectiveness of leaders

and managers • the impact they have on the lives of children and young people • the quality of professional practice One of the underpinning principles of the inspection is focussing on the things that matter most to children's lives. Inspectors should be consistent in inspections while being flexible enough to respond to the individual circumstances of each local authority. They should take appropriate action to comply with Ofsted's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh

Dated: 22 January 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.

Dated: 22.01.25

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A: ILACS Inspection Report

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

9. Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?

Inspection of Leicester City Council local authority children's services

Inspection dates: 23 to 27 September 2024

Lead inspector: Tom Anthony, His Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good

Leicester has a young and diverse population. Nearly 70% of the school population is made up of global majority groups. This brings dynamism to the city but also challenges in terms of the range and complexity of need and the impact of poverty and racism. Despite the clear commitment of leaders to meet these challenges and do the right things for vulnerable children in Leicester, the overall effectiveness of services to support children and families in Leicester has declined since the last inspection in 2021. Although there have been recent changes in the senior leadership team, including a new Strategic Director Social Care and Education who is also director of children's services, leaders have maintained a supportive environment and ensured that caseloads remain at manageable levels. Alongside examples of stronger practice across parts of the service, inspectors found a lack of professional curiosity and services not responding effectively to children's increasing needs. Managers are not always identifying this or providing appropriate direction or challenge. Senior leaders were not sufficiently sighted on these issues.

What needs to improve?

- The range and accuracy of information used by leaders to evaluate service performance and the quality and impact of management oversight and supervision.
- The timeliness and robustness of responses to contacts and referrals.
- The quality and consistency of care plans and pathway plans.
- Arrangements to identify, safeguard and support the most vulnerable children in care and care leavers, including children in unregistered children's homes.
- Support for care leavers who may be more reluctant to accept help, including those in custody and those facing homelessness.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: requires improvement to be good

1. Contacts to the children's advice support and prevention team (CASP) at the integrated front door in Leicester City are made promptly by external professionals. The appropriate nature of contacts indicates an understanding of thresholds by agency partners, however, information provided by agencies is of variable quality. The CASP team delivers an effective out-of-hours service to children in the city and provides a clear and swift handover of information to daytime staff.
2. Inspectors found a small number of examples of delays in contacts being responded to and entered on the electronic recording system. In these examples, the date of contact is shown as the date the contact has been created, not the date it was received. This means some children wait a number of days before their contact is responded to, and performance data in this area is not accurate.
3. Social workers understand the need to seek parental consent before information-sharing begins. When consent is dispensed with, management agreement to override the need for consent is not always recorded on children's records.
4. The co-location of early help and social care helps cases to be transitioned seamlessly and with no delay. Clear processes ensure that practitioners know how to step children's cases up from early help to children's social care.
5. Early help workers apply appropriate thresholds, overseen and guided by managers, to ensure that they request cases step up to children's social care (CSC) when risks and concerns escalate. Early help assessments are detailed and take care to consider children individually. Plans are appropriately pitched and progress is reviewed by managers to ensure progress is made for children. Step down processes are also clear and social workers ensure that early help workers, and families, know the scope and nature of early help

support that is needed. While there is a waiting list for early help, this affects only a few children, and they do not have to wait long for support.

6. Responses by the CASP to contacts and referrals do not always demonstrate sufficient professional curiosity or fully consider family history. This means that children are not always receiving the support they need.
7. In cases viewed as less urgent, there are sometimes delays in convening strategy meetings. This means that for some children there are delays in sharing important information and agreeing actions to keep them safer.
8. Strategy meetings are well attended by key partners and appropriate actions are identified to ensure children are safeguarded. Once immediate actions to safeguard children have been taken, thorough S47 enquiries are completed. These consider risk in the context of the wider family, and most contain detailed partner agency information and social work analysis. Children are seen and direct work is completed with them to ensure their voice and experiences are understood. Decisions about next steps, including whether to hold initial child protection conferences, are appropriate.
9. Where domestic abuse is a feature of contacts, social workers consider history and the cumulative impact of abuse. Interim safety plans are discussed with the 'protective' parent. The language used and the expectations set out in these plans often place high levels of responsibility on the protective parent and do not indicate a thorough understanding of the trauma they may have experienced.
10. Assessments incorporate children's and families' histories and previous episodes of involvement from children's social care or early help services. This helps workers to understand, assess and analyse recent events in the context of known family behaviour and relevant previous incidents.
11. Social workers know their children well and speak about them with knowledge and sensitivity. Most children in need or subject to child protection plans are visited in accordance with their plan. Visits are mostly purposeful and seek the views of children and their families. For some children, effective direct work is completed to help them understand why there is social work involvement in their lives. This is done using a range of activities, including conversational play, games, word play and situational conversations.
12. The quality of plans varies and while they identify needs, actions are not always sufficiently specific in terms of timescales and the outcomes being sought. Over-optimism about the sustainability of change means that some children are stepped down from child protection plans too soon.
13. For most disabled children in need of support, their disability and the impact it has on their life and their family's life is well recognised and appropriate support is offered.

14. The response provided to children who experience neglect is not consistently effective. In cases that have been held for longer, there is sometimes avoidable delay in recognising that children's experiences are not improving. When decisions are made to enter the Public Law Outline, there are generally effective systems in place to track and review children. For some children, the work undertaken during pre-proceedings improves their safety and so avoids the need for court proceedings, but a small number remain in pre-proceedings for too long without their circumstances improving.
15. Children in private fostering arrangements are appropriately assessed and supported, although there are delays in this being done for some children. Homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are appropriately assessed and given important information, including their option to become looked after.
16. The local authority designated officer (LADO) service has significantly improved since the last inspection. The LADO ensures that when there are concerns about adults who work with children, children's experiences are central to their decision-making and they invest time and energy in ensuring all relevant strands are considered and people are involved as needed. When cases conclude, and if it is appropriate, children are sent personalised letters to tell them how well they did in raising their concerns and how important it is to tell people in future if they are worried. This service delivers a lot of training across a range of agencies and organisations and has built effective working relationships across the partnership.
17. Vulnerable children at risk of exploitation are supported by social workers who are attuned to risks of child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. Social workers make full use of specialist and partner agencies to provide effective support. Plans fully recognise the importance of children being able to work with adults they trust. For some children, specialist support has significantly reduced risks.
18. Children who go missing from home are subject to well-coordinated planning to mitigate risk. However, they are not always offered return home interviews or sufficiently encouraged to engage with them. This can lead to missed opportunities to gather information about safeguarding concerns.
19. There is a strong and creative offer to young carers in Leicester City. Much positive work is delivered through the young carer groups, including activities, and young carer passports provide children with support, fun and access to sport and cultural activities, as well as developing their skills.
20. There has been a significant increase in the number of children who are electively home educated (EHE) in the Leicester City area, most notably in the secondary phase. While leaders are knowledgeable about the most vulnerable children and young people who are EHE, systems and procedures do not always help the EHE team to have close enough oversight of this group.

The experiences and progress of children in care: requires improvement to be good

21. There is an effective multidisciplinary service in place to support children on the edge of care to remain living at home whenever possible. Through this service, parents benefit from a wide range of therapeutic support. Similarly, an impressive multidisciplinary team provides support to promote the stability of children in care as well as children who have been adopted or live with special guardians. Most children in care live in stable homes with carers who help to meet their needs.
22. When children do come into care, this is the right decision for them. When children are unable to remain with their parents or wider family, adoption or fostering to adopt for younger children are actively pursued. Many children are also supported to leave care to live under special guardianship orders (SGO).
23. Leicester City Council has taken the decision to use the term 'children seeking safety' for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. When these children arrive in Leicester, appropriate arrangements are made for them, including identifying age-appropriate suitable homes, and ensuring that their health and education needs are provided for. The trauma that children have experienced is recognised. For these children, their interests and access to education are promoted.
24. Disabled children benefit from stable placements which meet their needs well and provide long-term stability. Clear early planning for transition to adult services takes place, which ensures minimal disruption.
25. Although visits and support are provided, not all children who are placed at distance from Leicester City have an up-to-date health assessment. This means the authority and partners cannot be assured children's physical and emotional well-being needs are being met.
26. The quality of children's plans is variable. Stronger plans are detailed, taking careful account of children's wishes and feelings, reflecting their religious and cultural needs. Weaker plans lack this level of detail and specificity.
27. Personal education plans are often of a good quality. The views of children in care are actively sought and considered. Targets on personal education plans are not, however, explicit enough to clarify the actions needed to achieve the desired result, and sometimes lack ambition for children.
28. Independent reviewing officers (IROs) escalate concerns appropriately, although the impact of escalation is not always effective and timely. IROs seek to engage children in their reviews, however, high caseloads impact on their oversight and ability to advocate for children.

29. Most children in care have not had an opportunity to explore their histories through life-story work. While this is regularly raised in review meetings, it is not always followed up. This is a missed opportunity for children to understand their own lived experiences.
30. Most children in care are living locally in homes which are appropriate to their cultural and ethnic identity. A small number of children have been or are living in unregistered children's homes. These placements are only made in emergencies when no suitable option is available. Placement searches continue and children are moved to more appropriate homes as soon as this is possible. However, during their time in unregistered homes, some of these children are not being visited by their social workers or receiving IRO oversight commensurate with their potential vulnerability.
31. The fostering service has areas of significant strength. There is a commitment to achieving permanence for children where possible. Carers receive very good support, which promotes stability and consistency of care for children. However, the oversight of foster homes is not always sufficiently thorough, meaning that early opportunities to identify and address concerns about children's care can be missed. When care arrangements appear vulnerable to disruption, effective action is taken to strengthen placement support.
32. Leicester is part of an established and highly collaborative regional adoption agency (Family Adoption Links). Good practice is shared across participating services, which ensures ongoing development and innovation. Adoption practice is driven by managers and practitioners who are highly invested in their work. This leads to good outcomes for children and adopters.

The experiences and progress of care leavers: requires improvement to be good

33. In Leicester, personal advisers are called leaving care advisers (LCA). Young people usually have the opportunity to get to know their LCA before they leave care. This provides LCAs with the opportunity to understand children's whole history and build a relationship with them. LCAs attend key meetings about children or carry out joint visits with social workers before children leave care, to help to build their relationships.
34. The local authority is in touch with most care leavers. Stability in the care leavers team means that LCAs have enduring relationships with the young people they work with, some for five years or more. This means young people know who to contact when they need advice and they do so readily. Care leavers spoken to valued the relationships they have with their LCAs.
35. When young people say they do not want support, this is sometimes too easily and readily accepted, without persistence to provide the support they may need. While based on a well-intentioned desire to recognise an adult's right to

self-determination, this approach can lead to risks to more vulnerable care leavers not being identified or adequately addressed.

36. LCAs understand the importance of family and friends and the need for long-term relationships for care-experienced young people and support them to develop and maintain these. They also help young people secure accommodation in their home community, which helps them to maintain social relationships.
37. Most care leavers are in suitable accommodation and care leavers said that they like where they live and feel safe there. When care leavers are homeless, they are appropriately supported to find temporary, and then more permanent, accommodation. A very small number of care leavers living away from Leicester, who are vulnerable because of their histories and specific needs, are not adequately supported to find accommodation when they are at risk of becoming homeless. This means the local authority cannot be assured that they have somewhere suitable to live.
38. Care leavers are supported to register with a GP and dentist. When young people have emotional or mental health needs, LCAs usually help them to secure support from relevant agencies and professionals. This means that young people generally have their health needs met. While health histories are created for some young people when they leave care, they are not consistently provided to all care leavers, and some do not know they can access this information.
39. Leaders recognise that the care leaver offer needs to be enhanced and work is under way to achieve this. For example, young people living outside Leicester do not benefit from council tax exemption, and access to Wi-Fi, a key requirement for most activities, is not explicit in the offer. LCAs are not always clear about what the local offer is, and pathway plans contain out-of-date information about the offer. This means that young people will not be clear about all their entitlements and may miss out on them.
40. When care leavers are parents, they receive support and guidance from their LCAs to help them parent their children. This includes accompanying them to meetings about their children, together with practical support, such as moving home or getting their washing done.
41. Care leavers in custody receive a variable level of support. Some young people have not had a face-to-face visit from their LCA for a number of years while they have been in custody. The reason given is that they decline a visit, but there is little evidence that they have been encouraged to accept a visit.
42. Most care leavers in custody have very brief pathway plans that leave most actions to the prison service or family members. LCAs do not pull those actions together into a cohesive plan, instead noting that others are doing things. As a result, LCAs do not always show drive and ambition to ensure that those care

leavers in custody have their health, education or other needs met. Sometimes it is not clear how young people in custody are being helped to prepare for release.

43. When care leavers are not in education, employment or training, the planning and support provided to them is not always sufficiently ambitious. Their plans do not clearly or sufficiently set out what steps need to be taken and by whom to bring some structure and meaningful activity to their lives. Young people are well supported to attend university, and there are apprenticeships available within the local authority, which are greatly valued by care leavers who take up these opportunities.
44. The quality of pathway plans is highly variable. Some pathway plans demonstrate a strong understanding of the young person's views and needs and are very specific and detailed about how the young person will achieve their ambitions. Other written plans lack detail and do not reflect the range of work being undertaken to support the young person. When circumstances change for a young person, pathway plans are not updated to reflect the meaningful change in circumstances.
45. When care leavers over 21 approach the service for help, they are quickly reallocated to an LCA and usually supported with the presenting concern or worry.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: requires improvement to be good

46. The last 18 months have seen significant change in the leadership team for children's services in Leicester. These have taken place in a challenging financial climate and the context of complex need in the city. Corporate commitment to children's services has been sustained and leaders have strived to maintain a supportive environment for workers. However, they currently lack a comprehensive understanding of the quality and consistency of frontline practice and its management.
47. External partners, including Cafcass (children and family court advisory and support service) and the designated family judge, say they have confidence in decision-making, and schools appreciate the advice they get from well-trained professionals through the front door services.
48. There has been improvement in some areas identified at the last Ofsted judgment inspection in October 2021 as needing to improve. The co-location and integration of early help provision has improved access to this tier of effective support. Leaders are taking a planned approach to implementing changes, in line with the government's children's social care reform opportunities.

49. Managers in all tiers of the organisation are not consistently maintaining a tight enough oversight and grip to ensure that effective timely support is provided to children and care leavers.
50. Leaders have managed to maintain relative stability for children in their care and are acutely aware of the challenge to identify sufficient placements to meet children's needs. However, the frequency of visits and monitoring activity for the small number of children living in unregistered children's homes do not provide adequate assurance about the care that they receive. Leaders know that, as corporate parents, they need to do more work and have, for example, concrete plans to enhance the local offer for care leavers.
51. Frontline practitioners in Leicester City have access to a relevant and extensive range of learning and development opportunities. Training is delivered through easy-access bite-size sessions and more comprehensive training is also helping workers to improve the support they provide.
52. Leaders have responded to recommendations from recent local safeguarding practice reviews, delivering training across the workforce to develop skills and knowledge in areas which have been identified as requiring greater knowledge and understanding, including child sexual abuse.
53. Leaders are rightly proud of the multidisciplinary specialist teams that have been created to support children with a range of complex needs and their families and carers, including where there is a risk of entry to care or care arrangements breaking down. Children, families and carers are supported by skilled therapists to address and manage historical trauma. This is helping children.
54. Performance management arrangements are not consistently underpinned by accurate and up-to-date information. For example, data in relation to initial contacts at the front door or to measure the timeliness of response to children identified as living in private fostering arrangements is not accurate. This means leaders do not have a sufficiently precise understanding of the volume and pace of service responses to children.
55. The quality and impact of frontline management oversight and supervision are not consistently strong enough to ensure that children receive the right support at the right pace to help keep them safer and improve their experiences. A culture of 'high support' from managers is not backed up by 'high challenge' to consistently improve the impact of support that is provided to children and care leavers. Supervision records are often very brief and do not show sufficient tracking of children's progress.
56. The recruitment and retention of frontline practitioners remains an appropriate focus of activity for leaders in the city. A range of workforce supply routes, including apprenticeships, Frontline and ASYE recruitment are being used, alongside a focus on enabling staff to progress their careers through promotion.

The local authority has suitably ambitious plans to further strengthen its workforce offer, through, for example, an enhanced academy for learning and development.

57. Frontline practitioners like working in Leicester City and inspectors met long-standing members of staff as well as staff who have returned to the city after working elsewhere. Practitioners value the level of support they receive and their access to a broad range of training and development opportunities.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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Children's Social Care Improvement Board

"To provide excellent services for children, young people and their families while achieving best value for the public purse"

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Placement Sufficiency	Social Work Practice	Developing Practice Leadership	Early Help, Prevention and Leaving Care
HoS Corporate Parenting	HoS Social Work (SLIP support)	Director (Leicestershire support)	HoS Prevention
Residential capacity	Record keeping	Developing a high support/high challenge culture	Children's centre and family hub consolidation
Foster carer recruitment	Domestic abuse safety planning	Locality links	
Placement support	Safety planning and contingencies	Multi-disciplinary family help teams	Developing the care leavers offer and staying close
Investing early (valuing care)	Administration and support functions	Capacity and workload	Developing family group decision making
Managing the local market		Chairing and effective escalation	
Managing unregulated placements		Supervision, oversight and case progression	
Developing kinship local offer			

Workstream: Placement Sufficiency						
Area for development	Aim	Desired impact	Core activities	Required resources/support	Lead	Key milestones
Residential capacity	To develop high quality local residential places sufficient to meet our projections over the next 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of children will be placed in Leicester or Leicestershire No children will need an unregulated placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hillview Children's Home Complex Needs Home (DoLs) Mainstream Children's Home 			
Foster carer recruitment	To grow the number of local authority foster carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net numbers of LA foster carers will grow by 10% Foster carer skills will be demonstrably improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LiquidLogic portal Fostering microsite Specialist foster carer recruitment 			
Placement support	To grow the practical support to offer to foster and kinship carers to keep placements stable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A placements support team is in place Relative numbers and stability of kinship placements are increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement support team Foster carer handbook/Tri. X Financial offer Respite/emergency carers 			
Investing early (valuing care)	To identify children at risk of entering care and to invest early to avoid higher cost later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More children identified as being at risk of entering care remain with their family 				

Workstream: Placement Sufficiency						
Area for development	Aim	Desired impact	Core activities	Required resources/support	Lead	Key milestones
Managing the local market	To ensure every child's placement is made using best value principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average placement cost is below benchmarked averages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Select list 			
Managing unregulated placements	To ensure that unregulated placements are safe and as short in duration as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average length of unregulated placements is reduced All children have clear safety plans 				
Developing kinship local offer	To increase the number of stability of placements with family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number / % of placements with family are increased Kinship breakdowns are decreased 				

Workstream: Social Work Practice						
Area for development	Aim	Desired impact	Core activities	Required resources/support	Lead	Key milestones
Record keeping	To ensure that records are consistent and high-quality, with updates captured within two working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's records are updated in a timely way The quality of recording in children's records enables them to understand their life history Audit activity demonstrates there is a high adherence to timescales for updating records 				
Domestic abuse safety planning	To develop practice so that domestic abuse safety planning is balanced so that responsibility does not overly fall to survivor/victim parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic abuse safety plans are robust and ensure that children are kept safe Audit activity demonstrates that the survivor/victim parent is not solely responsible for keeping the child safe 				
Safety planning and contingencies	To ensure that all safety plans have well developed contingencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety plans and their contingencies are robust and ensure 				

Workstream: Social Work Practice						
Area for development	Aim	Desired impact	Core activities	Required resources/support	Lead	Key milestones
		that children are kept safe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit activity evidences that safety plans have well developed contingencies 				
Administration and Support functions	To strengthen business support functions, both human and electronic systems, to ensure they effectively support frontline managers and professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems and processes are in place to ensure that frontline managers and professionals are supported to best do their work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative tasks for fostering 			
Capacity and workload	To review capacity within teams to ensure workloads are appropriate and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caseloads are manageable and take account of experience and risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADM and panel advisor capacity Social worker capacity to enable prevention of placement breakdown 			

Workstream: Developing Practice Leadership						
Area for development	Aim	Desired impact	Core activities	Required resources/support	Lead	Key milestones
Developing a high support/high challenge culture	To ensure that team managers consistently offer constructive challenge to support practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case audits find appropriate levels of support and challenge offered to practitioners by team managers Quality conversations capture evidence of the support and challenge received by practitioners 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Manager Development Programme Shadowing and mentoring opportunities 		
Locality Links	To support practitioners to know key professionals and organisations in the geographical patch where they work, routinely share information and link local resources to children and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and families benefit from working with practitioners who understand the local area and the resources available to the local community 				
Multi-disciplinary teams	To shape multi-disciplinary teams that allow complex investigations across social care, police and health to happen in an integrated and swift manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated teams support access to substance misuse, DA/DV, mental health and other specialist workers 				

Chairing and effective escalation	To ensure that where there is inaction, drift, delay or a lack of services cases are escalated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case records demonstrate a clear record of escalation and the response at each stage, meaning escalations can be easily tracked 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escalation tracker • Escalation guidance 		
Supervision, oversight and case progression	To improve the quality and impact of management oversight and supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

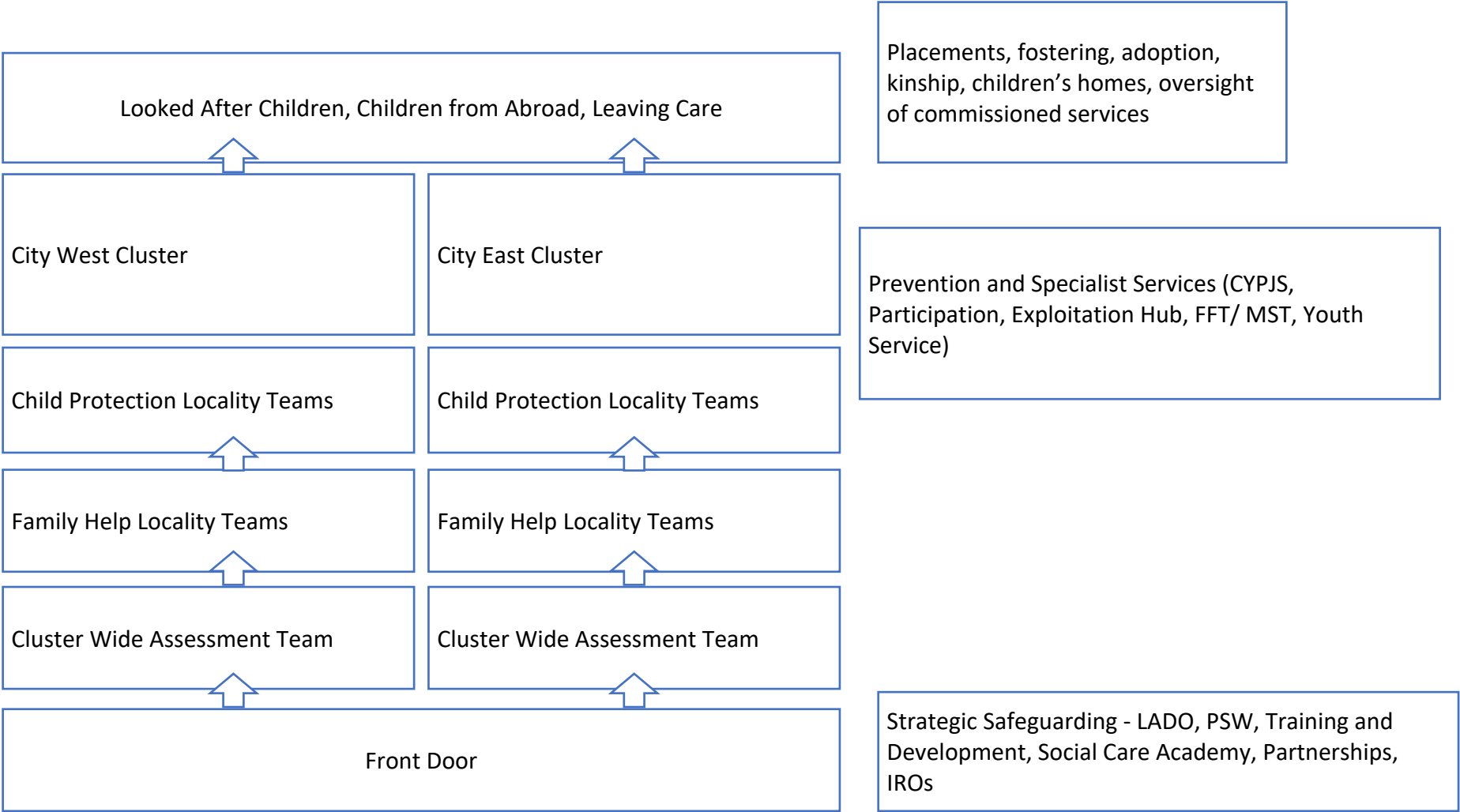
Workstream: Early Help, Prevention and Leaving Care						
Area for development	Aim	Desired impact	Core activities	Required resources/support	Lead	Key milestones
Children's centre and family hub consolidation	To shape a local open access offer that fits with and supports a Family Help Offer	•				
Locality Links	As in the Developing Practice Leadership section					
Care leavers offer and staying close		•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Close, Staying Connected • Befriending and Mentoring 			
Developing Family Based Decision Making		•				

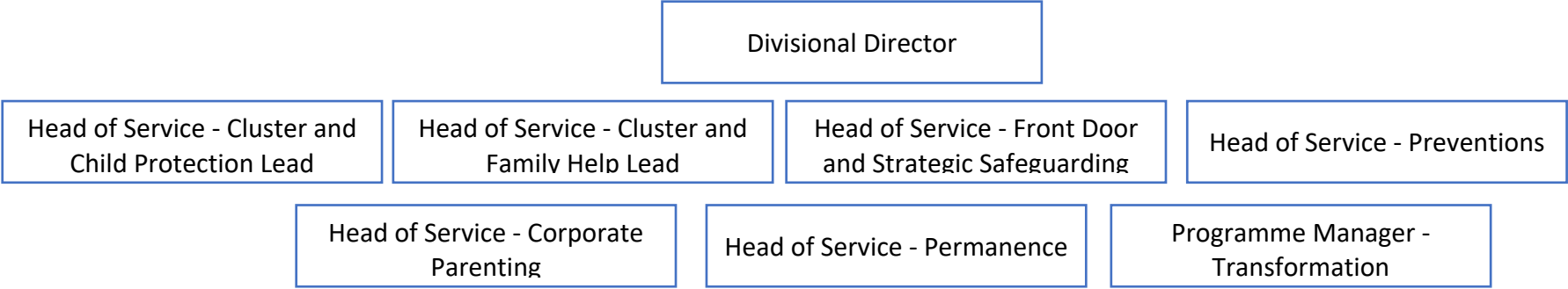
Improvement Board – TOR

- Meet monthly
- Strategic Director (Chair), children's social care SMT, DfE Regional Advisor, Head of Finance, Critical Friend (Social Care Director from another authority), Programme Manager, Data Lead, health, police and education reps

Target Operating Model

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Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (CYPE)
Work Programme 2024 – 2025

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
19 June 2024	Questions, Representations and Statements of case.	Set up session to help members understand the issues surrounding community asset transfer.	
	Introduction to CYPE Scrutiny Commission including new Directors.	Briefing to be given on finance and resources in CYPE.	To be shared in a later paper with scrutiny
		Staff turnover figures to be provided.	To be shared in a later paper with scrutiny
		Updated briefing on CYPE to come to Commission once more is known after General Election - to include information on finance and resource and the workforce.	To be shared in a later paper with scrutiny
	Terms of Reference		
	Education Performance Report.	Influence on deprivation on performance to be investigated, particularly with regard to white children and those eligible for free school meals.	
		Regional director from DfE to be invited to the Commission to inform on academy schools in the area.	
		Monitor the emergence of a national plan.	No national plan announced to date
	Children Seeking Safety	Report to come to the Commission on Childrens Centres and Children's Services.	
		Commission to be kept informed of developments regarding Children Seeking Safety.	
	Post-16 SEND Home-to-School Travel - Update	Consultation to be shared with Commission in advance. (via email rather than at a meeting due to schedule)	Will be shared when available.

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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
20 August 2024	Use of Capital Programme in Schools	Added value to be included in future reports.	Plan to go out in the KIT school bulletin.
	Youth Justice Plan Refresh 2024/25	Plan to be sent to Schools. Engagement Strategy to be shared with Councillors, and offer made to Councillors to attend meetings on participation of young people in the service.	
	Adventure Playgrounds Update	Update report on the situation regarding Adventure Playgrounds to come to the Commission after September.	Added to workplan.

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
29 October 2024	DSG high-needs block recovery plan	<p>Information to be provided on how long people are having to wait for EHCPs and suitable placements.</p> <p>Report to be brought on sufficiency in Mainstream and Special Schools.</p> <p>Case study to be brought to the Commission.</p> <p>Report on tribunals to be brought to commission, including the number of cases, and costs, including costs of external consultants in tribunals to be ascertained.</p>	Shared with Members.
	Adventure Playground Update		
	Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report	Terms of Reference of the task and finish group to develop learning and training around the role of immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting in safeguarding children to be circulated to members.	
	Workload and Resources	Benchmarking information to be shared with Members	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
14 January 2025	Update on Youth Summit	<p>To be considered as a regular item to ensure the conversation continues.</p> <p>Cultural Dimension to be added to look at how Young People from overseas interact and how they settle in the UK/Leicester.</p> <p>Consideration be given to including Looked After Children and Children Seeking Safety.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to how young people want to be spoken to and receive information.</p> <p>Members to be kept informed of future summits.</p>	Shared with Members
	Update on Children from Abroad Seeking Safety	<p>Proportions of 18+ and U18s to be included in next report.</p> <p>More information on the support the Education Psychology service provides in relation to trauma experienced by CSS, other than the 'Journeys' project to be provided. Health colleagues to be contacted on this.</p> <p>To be reported on every 6 months.</p>	
	Update from Impower	<p>Report to be brought on the Functioning Family Therapy pilot programme, looking at its activity and successes, including a cover report explaining terminology. To come to Commission quarterly or 6-monthly.</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
	<p>Children's Services: Cost Mitigation Programme Overview</p> <p>Draft General Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2025/26</p>	<p>Information on independent visitors to be sent to members.</p> <p>Commission to follow social work staffing and training.</p> <p>Commission to be informed on how work with families in localities will be carried out and what the change will look like and how it will be delivered locally. A project plan for delivery will be needed.</p> <p>Request regarding breaking down budget into service areas to be considered.</p> <p>Information to be provided on whether local safety schemes include road safety schemes around schools.</p>	
25 February 2025	<p>Post-16 SEND Home-to-School transport</p> <p>LADO Annual Report</p> <p>Children's Services Reforms</p> <p>Ofsted ILACS Report (Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services) and Improvement plan</p>		

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
8 April 2025	<p>Adventure playgrounds – final update</p> <p>High Needs Block – Impact of workstreams</p> <p>Functioning Family therapies</p> <p>Sufficiency Strategy</p>	<p>To include info on activities and successes, and a cover report explaining terminology. To come quarterly or 6-monthly.</p> <p>To include provision of Care Packages/Residential Accommodation for CLA – Council provision and the private sector. PDCC Members to be invited.</p>	

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Children's Centres		
Sufficiency in Mainstream and Special Schools		
Children from Abroad Seeking Safety	6-monthly report.	
Academies – Performance Report		
Needs Assessment in Relation to Families in the City		
Children not in state-maintained schools e.g.: Academies, Independent, Faith schools		
Multi-Academy Trusts - Overview		

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Update from local DfE Officer		
Fostering Annual Report	To include costs relating to Customer Relationship management tool, the Ofsted thematic report, information on family finding events and more detail on advertising techniques for recruitment.	
Fostering Community Champions update	Deferred from 26 March 2024	
Corporate Parenting Update	Annual report.	
Fostering Service – Marketing Strategy		
SEN support and funding		
Pupil Place Planning (Primary and Secondary)		
Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report		
Youth Services - overview		
Children in Care Council/Care Leavers		
School Holiday Activity and Food Provision		
Education Govt reports e.g.: white paper / green paper		
Ofsted Inspection reports		
Children’s Social Care – Recruitment Issues		
Mental Health impacts on children	Likely to be examined jointly with other commissions	
Informal Scrutiny on DSG High Needs Block	To commence following the full report to the Commission.	
Leicester Children’s Services – Self Evaluation		
Covid impact and response to early childhood development		

