

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

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| Decision Maker | Executive Lead Member for Children's Services |
| Date: | 19 January 2024 |
| Title: | Determination of Post 16 Transport Policy 2024 |
| Report From: | Director of Children's Services |

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Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to determine Hampshire County Council's Post 16 Transport Policy (the Policy) for 2024. As required by law the necessary consultation has been followed. The proposed changes are to increase parental contributions (charge) for transport in line with Consumer Price Index and updated text in the Policy to align with the main School Transport Policy. The Post 16 Policy for 2024 is presented for approval to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves the Post 16 Transport Policy 2024 provided in Appendix B.

Executive Summary

3. The proposed Post 16 Policy for 2024 was subject to a public consultation running from 30 October 2023 to 6 December 2023. The consultation was carried out on Hampshire County Council's (the County Council) website and the recommended changes to the Post 16 Policy for 2023 are detailed below in paragraphs 9 and 10.
4. There is no automatic entitlement to local authority funded school or college transport once a student is over the age of 16. The County Council has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college or school of choice and, if needed, apply to their provider's student support for assistance.

5. The County Council recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that 16+ students with special needs or disabilities can access an education placement that is suitable for their needs and so do offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service that requires an annual parental contribution.
6. The Post 16 Transport Policy for 2024 recommended for approval outlines the transport service available to eligible Post 16 learners and enables the County Council to continue to meet its statutory requirements.
7. The Post 16 Transport Policy for 2024 will continue to allow parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/ carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.
8. In 2022/23, for approximately 76.7% of Post 16 eligible students, the parental contribution was waived due to low income, in receipt of benefits, free school meals or exceptional circumstances.
9. It is recommended to increase the parental contribution amount in line with the March 2024 Consumer Price Index (CPI) and for the Policy to be updated to state that parental contribution rates will be uplifted by the March CPI rate as standard every year.

As CPI does change, the following was used as an example in the consultation to indicate the potential impact on the contributions. The CPI rate of 6.7% at August 2023 was used as an example:

| Distance to travel | 2023/24 Annual charge | 2023/24 Termly charge | Example 2024/25 Annual charge | Example 2024/25 Termly charge |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Up to 5 miles* | £783.19 | £261.06 | £835.66 | £278.55 |
| 5.01 to 7.5 miles* | £1,084.72 | £361.57 | £1,157.40 | £385.80 |
| 7.51 to 10 miles* | £1,519.39 | £506.46 | £1,621.19 | £540.39 |
| Over 10 miles* | £1,736.07 | £578.69 | £1,825.39 | £617.46 |

10. It was also proposed that changes are made to the Policy wording with respect to Independent Travel Training and the appeals and complaints processes to bring them in line with main School Transport Policy and to update website links in the section for additional transport support. Full details of these proposed changes are included within Appendix B.

Contextual Information

11. Local Authorities are required to publish a Post 16 transport Policy on or before 31 May each year in line with statutory guidance. This report includes the comments received in response to the annual consultation on the Post 16 Transport Policy in Appendices C and D. As the Policy is determined annually, parents or young people make a new application for transport each year and eligibility for transport assistance is decided each academic year. The newly determined Policy will be used for all new applications for transport assistance for the 2024/25 academic year.
12. The Policy details the offer for sixth form age students aged 16 - 19 and adult students with an Education Health and Care Plan or a disability to the age of 25. The recommended Policy explains that the County Council will provide local authority funded transport, when it is necessary, to facilitate attendance. It also explains, that where the young person is aged under 18, the expectation of the County Council is that parents or carers will be responsible for transporting their child, but individual circumstances of families will be considered when making eligibility decisions.
13. The Policy is determined within a statutory timetable on or before 31 May each year. It will be published following the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Decision Day.

Finance

14. The current expenditure on School Transport is over £50 million per annum for the 2022/23 financial year, Expenditure has risen by 47% from £34 million per annum in the previous financial year. For the 2022/23 financial year, £3.7 million was spent on Post 16 transport assistance and is estimated to increase to £5.4 million for 2023/24. There are several factors that have contributed to these increasing costs:

External market factors affecting the transport market have meant that costs have risen significantly for operators, and the costs are being passed on to the County Council.

Nationally, the number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children with SEND has been increasing at a rate of over 10% per annum since 2014. A rise in EHCPs typically leads to a rise in demand for transport. This is resulting in higher demand for transport overall, and at times, a requirement for more complex travel arrangements.

There is a higher demand for specialist school places, which are spread over a wider geographical area and require more specialist travel arrangements to ensure the needs of children are met.

15. The County Council currently fund a high proportion of the cost of Post 16 transport arrangements from revenue budgets, with parental contributions funding the remaining proportion. Whilst the County Council will continue to fund the majority of this cost, absorbing the increased cost of the transport

arrangements would impact and reduce the limited resources available for other essential services for vulnerable children.

16. The County Council offer the facility to pay Post 16 parental contributions in instalments on a termly basis.
17. For 76.7% of eligible Post 16 students in 2022/2023, the parental contribution was waived due to parents being on low income, in receipt of benefits, free school meals or exceptional circumstances. Parental contributions will continue to be waived under such circumstances in 2024/25.
18. The County Council work to limit the spend on school transport wherever possible, whilst ensuring statutory requirements continue to be met. There are robust procurement processes in place where the School Transport Service regularly review contracts to optimise and obtain best value. The County Council also continue to work with central government to maximise funding for vulnerable young people, and to ensure the challenges in respect of the increasing spend on local authority funded school transport is recognised nationally.

Consultation and Equalities

19. The public consultation on the 2024 Post 16 Policy ran from 30 October 2023 to 6 December 2023. The public were invited to make comments via a publicly available response form. Communications promoting the consultation included press releases, details on the County Council's website, communications sent to schools, emails to existing service users and Post 16 settings and an email to County Councillors. The consultation was also promoted via the County Council's social media channels.
20. There were a total of 78 consultation responses. 71 were from individuals, 1 official representative and 1 democratically elected representative. 5 respondents did not identify themselves.
21. When asked about the proposal for parental contributions for Post 16 transport arrangements to increase in line with inflation:

| Response | Percentage | Count |
|----------------------------|------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 0% | 0 |
| Agree | 16.7% | 13 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 7.7% | 6 |
| Disagree | 20.5% | 16 |
| Strongly disagree | 52.6% | 41 |
| Do not know/not stated | 2.5% | 2 |

22. When asked for alternatives to the proposed increase in line with inflation, 15.4% stated there should be no parental contribution, 11.5% of respondents stated means-tested, 7.7% stated based on actual travel costs and 5.1% based on average wage increases.

23. When asked to explain reasons for views on the proposed contribution increase and Policy wording updates, respondents stated:

| Response | Count |
|---|--------------|
| Affordability | 57 |
| Prevent education due to parent contribution | 22 |
| No impact detailed/None | 18 |
| Lack of local suitable settings | 17 |
| More/clearer communications | 14 |
| Comments about Policy | 14 |
| Other comments (not categorised) | 11 |
| 16-18 education compulsory | 10 |
| Inequality around who contributes | 9 |
| Independent Travel Training concerns | 9 |
| SEN inclusion | 8 |
| Operational Transport issues | 6 |
| Increased cars on road | 5 |
| Student cannot travel independently | 5 |
| Comments around driving better value | 5 |

NB: Respondents could raise more than one topic therefore the count does not match the total number of respondents.

24. Respondents commented on communications on Post 16 transport, raising the themes listed below. This provides an opportunity for 2024 communications to inform further on the following:

At year 11, the change from statutory to discretionary transport.

The Post 16 transport service is only potentially available to SEND students.

Post 16 transport is always subject to an annual application.

The application assessment is focused on what prevents the family household from transport the student.

Parental contributions can be waived for evidenced low income.

25. When respondents identified characteristics or issues impacted:

| Response | Count |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Disability | 37 |
| Poverty | 30 |
| Age | 19 |
| Rurality | 18 |
| Environmental impact | 6 |
| Do not know | 3 |
| Marriage/Civil Partnership | 1 |
| Race | 1 |
| Pregnancy/maternity | 0 |

NB: Respondents could raise more than one characteristic or issue therefore the count does not match the total number of respondents.

26. Other impacts highlighted by respondents across the questions included:

Not enough SEN schools impacting transport costs.

Contribution increase impacts only those paying it – ‘working poor’.

Rural locations more challenging.

Will impact choices and options for students.

Not equitable – prevents lower income from same opportunities.

Young person cannot travel independently.

27. Analysis of the responses has been included within slides in Appendix C. The full anonymised responses are included with Appendix D.

28. The County Council's Post 16 Transport Policy is compliant with and is based upon DfE statutory guidance [on Post 16 transport and travel support to education and training](#).

There is no automatic entitlement to free school or college transport once a student is over 16. The County Council has considered its resources and how it supports young people's participation in education and training. The County Council will continue to provide discretionary transport assistance for Post 16 students with an Education Health and Care Plan or a disability.

Public consultation responses raised concerns about general affordability and rural areas being potentially in a higher distance band therefore paying a higher financial contribution.

Responses to the public consultation regarding affordability have been considered alongside that this is a discretionary service being provided and for which low income families will have a waiver of contribution. If the County Council were to continue to absorb the increased cost of the transport arrangements, this would impact and reduce the limited resources available for other essential services for vulnerable children.

The County Council works to limit the spend on school transport wherever possible, whilst ensuring statutory requirements continue to be met. There are robust procurement processes in place where the School Transport Service regularly review contracts to optimise and obtain best value. The County Council also continue to work with central government to maximise funding for vulnerable young people, and to ensure the challenges in respect of the increasing spend on local authority funded school transport is recognised nationally.

For 76.7% of eligible Post 16 students in 2022/2023, the parental contribution was waived due to parents being on low income, in receipt of benefits, free school meals or exceptional circumstances. Parental contributions will continue to be waived under such circumstances in 2024/25. Parents may also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

The responses to the public consultation also cited the lack of awareness about the entitlement to statutory transport ending once a student reaches 16 years old. This will be addressed with additional information made available through Schools, Colleges and on the County Council School Transport website.

29. An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced for the Post 16 Transport Policy for 2024 and is provided in Appendix A.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

30. The County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change

considerations are built into everything the Council does.

31. The carbon mitigation tool and climate change adaptation tool were not applicable because the decision relates to the annual determination of a statutory policy for determining the eligibility for local authority funded transport assistance for students aged 16 to 25. This is the first administrative step in meeting the duty to support Post 16 students' journeys to and from their educational setting as it will ensure that help is provided when it is necessary to facilitate attendance.

32. The Policy is important for meeting the County Councils' strategic priorities as it provides an opportunity for local authority funded transport that enables young people to get a good start in life and assists in overcoming inequality. Also, the Post 16 Transport Policy helps people with special educational needs and/or a disability to find and access support within the community.

Conclusion

33. The proposed Policy aids parents/carers and users of the service to understand the transport service available and who may be entitled to support. The proposed Post 16 Transport Policy 2024 provides details of the service available to eligible Post 16 learners and enables the County Council to continue to meet its statutory duties.

Supporting information

Appendix A: [Equality Assessment](#)

Appendix B: [Proposed Post 16 Transport Policy](#)

Appendix C: [Slides of Consultation Responses](#)

Appendix D: [Anonymised comments](#)

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

| | |
|--|-----|
| Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity: | Yes |
| People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives: | Yes |
| People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment: | No |
| People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities: | Yes |

Other Significant Links

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Links to previous Member decisions: | |
| <u>Title</u> Permission to Consult on Proposed Changes to School Transport Policy for 2024 | <u>Date</u> 19 October 2023 |
| Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives | |
| <u>Title</u> Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training Statutory guidance for local authorities | <u>Date</u> January 2019 |

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

| <u>Document</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| None | |

APPENDIX A: EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

4. The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
5. Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
6. Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Title: Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2024

EIA for Savings Programme: No

Service affected: The Post 16 Transport service.

Description of the service/policy/project/phase:

The provision of transport to an education setting for young people who are older than school age is not a statutory requirement. Hampshire County Council have exercised discretion beyond the statutory requirement to offer transport assistance to young people between 16 and 18 years old who have an Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) or disability.

The current expenditure on school transport is just over £50 million per annum for the 2022/23 financial year, of which £3.7 million was spent on Post-16 transport assistance in 2022/23 and estimated to increase to £5.4 million for 2023/24. The County Council currently fund most of the cost of Post 16 transport arrangement from revenue budgets, with parental contributions funding the remaining proportion. Whilst the County Council will continue to fund the most of this cost, absorbing the increased cost of the transport arrangements would impact and reduce the limited resources available for other essential services for vulnerable children.

For 76.7% of Post 16 eligible students in 2022/2023, the parental contribution was waived due to low income, in receipt of benefits, free school meals or exceptional circumstances. Parental contributions will continue to be waived under such circumstances. The County Council works to limit the spend on school transport wherever possible, whilst ensuring statutory requirements continue to be met. There are robust procurement processes in place where the School Transport Service regularly review contracts to optimise and obtain best value. Hampshire County Council also continue to work with central government to maximise funding for vulnerable young people, and to ensure the challenges in respect of the increasing spend on local authority funded school transport is recognised nationally.

The Policy Statement details when and how the Council will support attendance in Post 16 education where travel/transport is perceived as a barrier. It allows parents/carers and users to understand how young people aged over 16 with an EHCP or a disability aged over 16 and in education may be eligible for a local authority funded transport service. In the previous Policy Statement for 2023, an increase was made to cover the increased external (supplier) costs of providing transport to Post 16 learners. The 2024 Policy Statement introduces increases in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to the parent contribution. This EIA supports a report to the Executive Member which recommends changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, with the statement due to be published by 31 May 2024 as per statutory requirements.

New/changed service/policy/project:

The following changes have been recommended:

1) An annual increase in parental contributions in line with the Consumer Price Index
The County Council would implement an increase in the parental contributions to Post-16 transport arrangements in line with inflation (Consumer Price Index (CPI)) from September 2024, with inflation-linked increases applied in subsequent years. The current Policy outlines the level of contribution for Post-16 transport but does not currently allow for yearly adjustments. An inflationary increase would be applied to the contribution starting in September 2024 and for subsequent academic years in line with the CPI rate for March each year. This increase aims to partially offset rising costs currently covered by the County Council. Parents would continue to contribute towards transportation costs, with the County Council funding the remaining amount as in previous years. To illustrate, the annual parental contribution for a journey of between 5 and 7.5 miles was £1,084.72 for the 2023/24 school year. If these contributions were to be uplifted by the CPI rate at the time of consultation (6.7% based on the 12 months to August 2023), this contribution would increase to £1,157.40 for the 2024/25 financial year. For 76.7% of Post 16 eligible students in 2022/2023, the parental contribution was waived due to low income, in receipt of benefits, free school meals or exceptional circumstances. Parental contributions will continue to be waived under such circumstances in 2024/25.

2) Update to the wording of the Independent Travel Training section The County Council would update the language, wording and level of detail regarding Independent Travel Training within Section 7 of the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, to bring it in line with the proposed changes in the School Transport Policy. A comparison table showing the current and proposed wording can be viewed on the Post-16 2024/25 Consultation page:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/Post-16-Transport-Policy-for-2024-25>

3) Explanation of Appeal and Complaints Process The County Council would update the Policy to improve the explanation of the Appeal and Complaints processes, bringing it in line with improvements to the wording in the proposed School Transport Policy which have been drafted based on the latest DfE statutory guidance.

4) Minor amendments to wording for clarity. The County Council would make minor amendments to the wording within the Policy for better clarity. These include: - To add: '2. General Transport Available – The following link provides the information supplied by colleagues and sixth form establishments.' - Update to 'Other transport support' section and remove the link to 'Brain in Hand' as this is not relevant to the Policy - Any other minor changes to wording to improve clarity

Equality considerations

A consultation was undertaken on proposed changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy, and was live from 30 October - 6 December, Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes, and the impacts they foresaw should the changes be implemented. A detailed comms plan was developed and

delivered to ensure wide awareness of the consultation. Five virtual drop-in sessions with the Head of School Transport and the Eligibility and Policy Manager were set up and promoted. 78 participants responded to the consultation, which included and one unstructured response. The response to whether parental contributions should be increased by inflation was 16.7% in agreement, 52.6% strongly disagreed and 20.5% disagreed. Response themes included focus on affordability, preventing education, no stated impact, lack of suitable local settings, more/clearer communications and general comments about policy. This led to a review and update of the impacts and mitigations that would be in place in response to the public consultation.

Equality considerations – Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public: Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Negative - Medium

Rationale

The established policy and legislation, from 2021 affects learners at specific ages differently, particularly those aged 16 on 1st September 2024 and those aged 17 on that date, although only until their 18th birthday. Therefore, the impact on age identified here is in respect to the legislative requirements and the subsequent considerations made by Hampshire County Council (HCC) when deciding on the support necessary in relation to travel and transport to facilitate a young person's attendance at their place of education. As a young person becomes a Post 16 learner, HCC considers transport support is only necessary if it is essential to enable them to attend their programme of study. If the young person is able to access other forms of travel, support/funding, and has the available means to access their education setting, then they would be expected to use these in the first instance.

In the public consultation, respondents cited Age as the fourth most frequent impact. Tied in with the feedback about the need for more/clearer communications for Post-16 there was also a theme of respondents not being aware of statutory transport ending at 16 years and that discretionary transport was subject to application and a parental contribution.

Mitigation

Where transport is necessary to facilitate attendance, the Council will provide transport assistance. Each young person will be considered on a case by case basis to ensure provision reflects actual need with the contribution waived for learners from families in receipt of income based benefits or who are on a low income. The 2024 communications plan will build on that of 2023 by including more articles explaining when statutory transport entitlement ends and the principles of the Post 16 discretionary transport.

Disability

Impact on public: Negative - High

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The vast majority of young people over the age of 16 in education will attend placements which are accessible from their home address. However, where a young person or a family member (with responsibility for the young person) has Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND), a health issue/concern, or disability this may make accessing an education placement difficult or impossible without HCC providing support with travel/transport arrangements. The proposed policy change concerns provision for this cohort of learners (and their families) and recognises the potential impacts on this protected characteristic.

HCC ensure support is available if it is considered necessary in order for the young person to attend their education placement / training. Where possible and where appropriate, HCC will support young people to use public transport and make their own journeys independently, and will expect parents to provide transport assistance. In the public consultation, Disability was the most frequent impact named by respondents. Respondent comments included that transport for SEN students should be free at 16+.

Mitigation

Hampshire County Council recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that 16+ special needs or disabled students can access a place that is suitable for their needs and so do offer a transport service, under discretionary powers. The transport arrangements require a parental contribution. This can be paid in instalments on a termly or monthly basis if required. The Post 16 2024 Policy will continue to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/ carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special educational needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on gender reassignment and therefore has been assessed as neutral.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact on pregnancy and maternity and therefore has been assessed as neutral.

Race

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on race and therefore has been assessed as neutral.

Religion or Belief

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on religion or belief and therefore has been assessed as neutral.

Sex

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on sex and therefore has been assessed as neutral..

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on sexual orientation and therefore has been assessed as neutral.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Impact on public: Negative - Low

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on marriage and civil partnership and therefore has been assessed as neutral.

Poverty

Impact on public: Negative Low

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. In the public consultation, affordability was named as the most frequent reason for respondents explaining their reasons for views on the proposed contribution increase and policy wording updates. Poverty was the second most common impact named by respondents in the consultation.

Mitigation

This has been considered by the County Council, and the contribution rate would continue to be waived for families in receipt of certain benefits. Families with exceptional circumstances would also be able to apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions. For context, during 2022/23, the parental contribution was waived for 76.7% of Post-16 eligible students.

Rurality

Impact on public: Negative – Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

Families living in rural areas often face a longer journey in terms of distance and journey times to access Post 16 provision. Public transport may be a more restricted offer. The longer journey and restricted public transport may limit families' capacity to support their child's travel. As journeys from rural areas will tend to be longer, the cost of providing transport for young people from rural areas are greater on average. Therefore the charges are grouped into four bands based on distance. Due to the longer distances, rural families will be more likely to be in a higher band with a higher charge. Responses to the public consultation cited lack of local suitable settings as the fourth most frequent reason for answering consultation questions as they had. Rurality was recorded in the consultation responses as the fourth most affected group of respondents.

Mitigation actions:

Where transport is necessary to facilitate attendance, the Council will provide transport assistance. Each young person will be considered on a case-by-case basis, including the proposed journey and any limitations on infrastructure, to ensure provision reflects

actual need. The Post 16 Policy will continue to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/ carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

Geographical Impact: All Hampshire

Additional Information:

The updates to wording (including Independent Travel Training, Appeal and Complaints process and other minor wording changes) will improve the clarity of the policy and will not change how the service is delivered. Any impacts relate to the proposed increase in parental contributions. This EIA principally focuses on assessing the impacts of the proposed change on the public with no proposed changes to staff working terms and conditions, therefore the impact on staff has been assessed as neutral throughout

EIA reference number: 00509

Appendix B

2024 Transport Policy for students in further education aged 16–18 and continuing students aged 19.

Amendments to wording are marked in **red**.

Name of LEA: Hampshire

Department Responsible: Children's Services

Hampshire County Council 2024/2025 Transport Policy for students in further education aged 16-19, continuing students and young people aged 19-24 with learning disabilities.

1. Commitment

Hampshire County Council (HCC) and its Post 16 providers are committed to ensuring transport is available to enable students to access education and training as set out in this Policy. Support is provided either by the County Council or Post 16 providers. This Policy applies for 2024/2025 only and sets out the support available.

There is no automatic entitlement to free school or college transport once a student is over 16. The County Council has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college of choice and, if needed, apply to their college's student support for assistance. The cost and mechanical process of transporting young people with special educational needs is greater and more complex. HCC recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that 16+ special needs or disabled students can access a place that is suitable for their needs and so do offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service that requires an annual parental contribution.

2. General Transport Available

There are a number of public transport service providers in Hampshire. Colleges and schools in Hampshire have their own transport arrangements but the situation does vary. Students should check with their setting about the transport arrangements and ticketing prices that can apply to both bus and training travel. **The following links provide the information supplied by colleges and sixth form establishments:** [College and School Details](#)

College and School Details

Information provided by Post-16 providers regarding transport services can be found in the section 12: [College and School Details](#).

Other transport support

Post 16 education providers and other agencies provide support with transport in certain cases, for example:

- Cycle schemes
- [Care to Learn](#)
- [Wheels to Work](#)

3. Qualification for support from Hampshire County Council for students attending colleges and schools with sixth forms (including academies)

The County Council will assist with travel expenses for Post-16 students with special educational needs or a disability. A parental contribution towards the cost of this transport will be required. This contribution will be uplifted annually by the March Consumer Price Index (CPI) ; For the purposes of the example below a rate of 6.7% (based on the 12 months to August 2023), has been used to indicate the potential impact on the contributions:

| Distance to travel | 2023/24 Annual charge | 2023/24 Termly charge | Example 2024/25 Annual charge | Example 2024/25 Termly charge |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Up to 5 miles | £783.19 | £261.06 | £835.66 | £278.55 |
| 5.01 to 7.5 miles | £1,084.72 | £361.57 | £1,157.40 | £385.80 |
| 7.51 to 10 miles | £1,519.39 | £506.46 | £1,621.19 | £540.39 |
| Over 10 miles | £1,736.07 | £578.69 | £1,825.39 | £617.46 |

Transport will normally only be offered if the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or if the student has a disability which means he/she requires transport arrangements to be provided. The student or their parents will need to apply for transport and evidence that HCC must provide transport to facilitate attendance, and evidence that without transport assistance, the student will be unable to attend the educational placement.

When assessing an application for transport assistance, the County Council will refer to the criteria provided in [Appendix 1](#).

4. Post 16 training providers and apprenticeships

The same qualifications as set out in paragraph 3 apply for students attending post-16 training providers. Students in apprenticeships with employed status do not qualify for any assistance with travel costs.

5. Qualification for support from colleges and schools with sixth forms including academies

In addition to the support available from HCC, post-16 providers may also provide financial support towards transport costs for certain students such as young parents, those from low-income families, those at risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). This is determined by the provider and is often based on how they have locally determined to use 'hardship' funds.

The link below provides details of Post-16 providers transport services [College and School Details](#).

6. Assistance with transport for students over the age of 19 with learning difficulties or disabilities

Students over the age of 19 may qualify for transport assistance if they are subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan. It will then be provided either up until the age of 24 or

until the student completes the course, whichever is the earliest. A new application will need to be made each year to access the service.

The student or their parents will need to apply for transport and evidence that County Council must provide transport to facilitate attendance and evidence that without transport assistance, the student will be unable to attend the educational placement.

When assessing an application for transport assistance, the County Council will refer to the criteria provided in [Appendix 1](#).

7. Independent Travel Training

~~The County Council provides some mobility/independence training for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Children in special schools will be subject to transition plans in year 9 and independence training can form part of that plan. Some colleges also provide mobility/independence training.~~

Independent Travel Training may be offered to eligible students with parent's consent. Readiness to complete Independent Travel Training would be outlined in the EHCP or agreed by the County Council following a discussion with the school or college and parents. Once an eligible student has successfully completed Independent Travel Training, their travel arrangements will be reviewed.

Note: Travel arrangements offered to an eligible student may change after their training has been completed to reflect their improved ability to travel to school independently.

8. Students attending providers outside Hampshire

The County Council may provide assistance with transport to support students attending providers outside of the county, but students need to qualify for support against the criteria outlined in [Appendix 1](#). The provider attended may also be able to provide some support, see section 5.

9. Students attending providers in Hampshire but living outside the county

Such students should apply to their home Local Authority for assistance. However, providers themselves may provide assistance and are not bound by county boundaries.

10. Applying for assistance with transport

Students wishing to apply for help with transport can do so by accessing the HCC website where further details are available: [How to apply for transport assistance for post-16 provision | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Students may also wish to apply to colleges direct for help. Paragraph 12 provides details of the colleges and their contact details together with an outline of the assistance they provide.

Eligibility for transport assistance is re-assessed annually and a new transport application is required each academic year if assistance is still required. If the student's personal circumstances change within an academic year, their eligibility for transport assistance will need to be re-assessed and a new application required.

11. Complaints/Appeals

Hampshire County Council takes all complaints seriously and has a complaints procedure to ensure they are investigated and, where possible, resolved. The process is available on our website: [Children's Services Complaints](#).

People are encouraged to raise their concerns using the appropriate contacts. Where necessary, complaints will be considered at a more senior level to ensure every effort is made to resolve the issue.

Parents wishing to make an appeal regarding a transport entitlement decision or subsequent transport arrangements should contact the Head of School Transport, via email at School.Transport.cse@hants.gov.uk or in writing to Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UG. The appeals process is provided in Section 5 of [Appendix 1](#).

12. College and School Details

The following links are to the websites with information on travelling to the School or College. The information published is supplied directly by Schools and Colleges and links will not be updated within this document.

Hampshire establishments:

- [Andover College](#)
- [Barton Peveril College, Eastleigh](#)
- [Basingstoke College of Technology](#)
- [Brockenhurst College](#)
- [Eastleigh College](#)
- [Fareham College](#)
- [Farnborough College of Technology](#)
- [Itchen College](#)
- [The Sixth Form College, Farnborough](#)
- [HSDC](#)
- [Peter Symonds College](#)
- [Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke](#)
- [Richard Taunton Sixth Form College, Southampton](#)
- [Sparsholt College](#)
- [St Vincent Sixth Form College](#)
- [Totton College](#)

Out of county establishments:

- [Chichester College](#)
- [Guildford College](#)
- [Merrist Wood College](#)
- [Highbury College, Portsmouth](#)
- [Newbury College](#)
- [Portsmouth College](#)
- [Southampton City College](#)

Appendix 1

Criteria applied to determine eligibility to transport to a Post 16 provider

The following criteria apply to all students:

Necessity: The County Council will provide transport assistance when it is necessary to facilitate the student's attendance at their educational setting.

Minimum distance: The journey from to school/college must be more than three miles, measured by the nearest available walking route.

Eligible but living within walking distance?

Transport may be provided within the walking distance if it is necessary to facilitate attendance.

Factors that may be taken into account include:

- The student's ability to walk
- The student's need to be accompanied by an adult.

Which college or school? Travel assistance will be given to the nearest school or college considered to be the most suitable placement for the student and which offers a course or programme which is designed specifically to meet the special needs of the student concerned. If the course or programme is not specifically designed to meet the needs of those with SEN, travel assistance will be given to the nearest college offering an appropriate course. A course is deemed appropriate where it enables a student to meet his or her career objectives.

A student attending their nearest special school or school with a sixth form named in his or her EHCP may qualify, subject to the other criteria detailed in this Appendix.

Pick-up and drop-off points: Where the distance between a nearest pick-up or drop-off point and home or college is less than 1 mile, the County Council will not normally provide transport for that part of the journey. However, transport may be provided for students within these distances where this is recommended following an assessment of their individual needs. The criteria used to determine entitlement within walking distance apply in these circumstances.

Journeys to and from other destinations: Transport is not offered to or from points other than the college and home.

Waiting Time: The expectation is that students will share transport and the drop off and collection arrangements are made in line with the college start and finish times. Transport is not able to take into consideration individual student's timetables and where appropriate, the transport arrangement may include a waiting time at the start and/or end of the day.

Residential Placements: Some students with complex and/or severe needs are placed in a residential out of county special school or college because there is no appropriate provision available locally. Such students will receive transport at the start and end of each term, half term and at other school/college closures. Any additional transport will be the responsibility of parents/carers.

1. The following apply additionally to student's aged 16 or 17 in September 2023:

Parental Assistance: The County Council expects that parents and carers take responsibility for facilitating their child's attendance in education where they are able to do so. Families/applicants may apply for transport and explain their circumstances which make support from the County Council with transport necessary to enable their child to attend their place of education or training. All requests for transport will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Charges: If transport is provided by the County Council, a parental contribution may be levied.

When the student's parents are in receipt of Income Support; income-based Jobseekers Allowance; income-related Employment and Support Allowance; support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit; Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190); Working Tax Credit run-on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit; or Universal Credit, the charge will be waived.

Families in receipt of free school meals (due to low income) are not required to pay the contribution.

Families with a low income, but not in receipt of the above benefits, where the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to around £16,190; or those with exceptional circumstances, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

2. The following apply to student's aged 18 when the transport starts in September 2023 or already 18 at the time of application or 19 or over and continuing on a course that they started before their 19th birthday:

Parental assistance: There will be no expectation that a parent will assist with their adult child's transport arrangement, although parents who wish to do so will be welcome to support their adult child's transport arrangement.

Charges: If transport is provided by the County Council, a parental contribution may be levied.

When the student's parents are in receipt of Income Support; income-based Jobseekers Allowance; income-related Employment and Support Allowance; support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit; Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190); Working Tax Credit run-on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit; or Universal Credit, the charge will be waived.

Families in receipt of free school meals (due to low income) are not required to pay the contribution.

Families with a low income, but not in receipt of the above benefits, where the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to around £16,190; or those with exceptional circumstances, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

3. The following applies to students aged 19 or over and starting a new course:

Charges: If transport is provided, no contribution towards the cost of transport will be levied .

4. School Transport - Review/Appeals Process

Parents who wish to challenge a decision about:

- The suitability of the transport arrangements offered to their child;
- their child's eligibility;
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances; and
- the inherent safety of the route in accordance with the Road Safety GB guidelines

may do so via email to School.Transport.cse@hants.gov.uk or in writing to, School Transport, Elizabeth II Court, Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UG. Parents should indicate their reasons for challenging the decision using the categories above.

In the first instance, a case will be reviewed by a Senior Officer within the School Transport Service.

In cases against refusal of a transport service, there may be a further appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel made up of one or more Senior Officers outside of the School Transport Service. Members of the Panel will hold a comprehensive understanding of the school transport Policy and legislative framework and will make decisions on appeals against offers of transport.

Stage one: Review by a Senior Officer

A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's school transport decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.

The written request should detail why the parent believes the decision should be reviewed using the categories above. They should give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's written request a senior officer will review the original decision and send the parent a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, setting out:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. Road Safety GB);
- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- any other agencies or directorates that were consulted as part of the review.

Where they have upheld the original decision, they should also explain how the parent may escalate their appeal to stage two of the process.

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel, where it applies.

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

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents request an independent appeal panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and give a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days), setting out:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. Road Safety GB);
- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- information about any other directorates and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the review; and
- information about the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (see below).

The independent appeal panel will be made up of one or more members who 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. Members will be assigned by a senior manager within the County Council's Children's Services directorate.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman There is a right of complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, but only if complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.

Appendix C



Consultation
Feedback Summary

Appendix D

Public Consultation – Anonymised actual full text responses to open questions

(NB: Some respondents repeated same text across different questions. Personal information has been redacted).

Q2 If you think an alternative measure should be used to calculate any price increases please explain what you think this should be here.

- Should be free as it was pre 16
- It should be subject to income and not inflation.
- How are parents going to afford £350 a term? Most are struggling as it is. We pay £200 council tax a month already. One SEN school which is appropriate in the area for the needs. If there were more SEN schools, transport wouldn't be an issue. I have a child in mainstream with ASD, I couldn't get them both to school without school transport. I hope payment plans will be in place if this is enforced. We fight for our disabled children to have a good education and now being hit with a cost on top.
- Given that post 16 education is compulsory, unless taking on an apprenticeship or traineeship, I understand why there is a charge at all. With all the other cost of living increases, it seems like a huge amount of money to come up with to enable teenagers to travel to attend compulsory education.
- You should consider the SEN provision separately
- Currently with public transport at £2 until 2024 you would be 3x a public bus! to the same place
- Understand the reasoning for requiring transport needs to be looked at first, maybe a priority system could be used , working/none working, motability scheme drivers and non drivers ,
- This should be means tested
- It is not fair to increase to families who are already struggling, they will just opt out of the post 16 and do themselves and then be able to work less. Should be means tested, perhaps to the band of council tax.
- The average Public Sector wage increases. HCC is a public sector organisation so it should reflect the public sector wage increases and NOT the general rate of inflation.
- I think it should be means tested and based on affordability.
- Should be the same cost for EHCP child as to a non SEND child using college bus.

- 'Because it's going to be either cold goes to college or doesn't because of transport costs. Lots of young people will get denied an education because of this increase
- 'The wording is not clear enough, will I ne going from paying £0 under the current system to paying £1600 for 2 children?
- 'There should be a transport allowance given to each post-16 person so that they can use it towards the transport costs.
- Raising the cost by 6.7% under the current economic crisis with inflation seems unreasonable. A better way would be to consider more carefully the demographic areas that require this transport.
- We contribute and pay the highest band for our daughter's taxi, we would struggle to manage a higher price. We don't qualify for free transportation. Our daughter has learning/mental health issues that inhibit her using an alternative transport such as the train. We feel that anymore than £1800 would mean we would struggle and our daughter would be at risk of not attending her chosen college.
- Why are SEN children being discriminated against for have SEN needs?
Why are parents being discriminated against for having children with SEN needs.
The cost would be far less if children could go to local SEN schools... but they are not available and therefore it is somehow the parents fault. As if parents of SEN children haven't got enough on their plate and most of these children cost more to provide, now they have to pay £3k more per year for post 16 transport. Those on benefits won't see the difference. Those who are rich will not care. Just those normal working parents who are struggling financially in the current climate will be hit. Or, we could send our SEN children to a not appropriate local college and watch them struggle or fail. What a decision! Some parents wont have a choice due to their financial situation.
I strongly feel that any child accessing transport to school should pay the same as their peers. Increase for all children, across the whole of Hampshire. Not just SEN children.
Also taxi-sharing! Last year my child shared a taxi with two others. This year they are all travelling on their own to the same place. Please get an IT specialist to create an IT programme to sort this situation out and save an enormous amount of money that is currently being wasted.
- It should be based on a percentage of actual costs
- At present it is not clear, to my knowledge, how the amount of the parental contribution is calculated. It is just a figure, this already seems high and although I appreciate there is a cost, to use the CPI each year seems unfair. As we have seen recently the CPI rate has been very high and although currently coming down, world events can see this increase. If there is to be an increase at all, there should be a cap to protect parents from too high an increase.

- I think the increase in parent's contribution should be the same as the increase in the price of the bus tickets. I'm also confused by the rate reflected in your proposal of 1800+ pounds for 10+miles. (We live 12 miles from XXX and on their website their annual bus pass is 680 pounds!!! Are the bus companies ripping Hampshire council off by over 1000 pounds per child?!
- Inflation is probably fair way to calculate any price increase. I am not how you calculate the initial charge, as that seem very expensive
- A linked Civil salary freeze when an increase affects the beneficial receiver,i.e. parent/student.
- to use firms that are closer to where the children live so not as much mileage is used to pick up children and to use smaller vehicle's ie my son and one other child were picked up n a mini bus.
- The earnings and tax bracket of the parents should be taken into account, as is the case for student finance England and the Student Loans company. Asking parents on a low income to pay the same contribution as higher income families is unfair. There should be no parental contribution required for households who receive state benefits, or for parents who have a disability which means they cannot drive.
- Bear in mind people can not afford the cost you are requesting. Maybe allow part/Token payments as well. Maybe ask for allowance up to 10 miles and over 10 miles Hcc to fund the bill as this is the biggest cost and so unaffordable.
- There are few options, the proposed measure is sound and equitable.
- There should be no fee at all for transport
- For over 18 on PIP and UC it should be discretionary as it is not affordable.
- No young person who lives in a town with zero sixth form provision should be charged to get to college. If education is compulsory up to 18 then funding for transport to that education shouldn't be funded by parents.
- Parents simply won't have the money dor this - and the young person education and ability to work layer on in life will hugely suffer! These.proposed changes amplify inequalities and reduce assistance
- It may be easier to work out the annual cost and split that cost between the children/young adults using the transport. It must be more effective for a mini bus to collect 8 children between 0-15 miles to the school/college rather than a taxi which can only collect 4. There would also then need to be some way of working out the split with those who live further away, paying more than those who live closer. This is just a suggestion and I can see that basing the costings on mileage alone is probably easier to calculate.

- I agree with the principle of contributions being linked to inflation however with the challenging state of public finances, a more extensive review is needed. Looking at both post-16 transport and school transport, this should be means tested. How can it be equitable that a wealthy family are 'entitled' to free transport just because the school is 3 miles or more away. Surely a formula can be devised where those who can afford it, would be paying at least 50% of the costs.
- School transport should and must be free until the child has left school, as old as 19, which is the present government policy of keeping children in school because it [government and industry] cannot generate the work required in this country
- Should be linked to average wage rise percentage as generally these do not follow inflation.
- It is demonstrable that caring for a child/young person with a disability is more expensive than caring for a child/young person who does not. Therefore I do not believe that it is fair that parents in this situation are expected to pay more for their young adult's transport than that of any other young person attending their local college/education establishment/placement. Therefore this contribution should be capped at whatever price the equivalent service is charging e.g. Stagecoach. Young adults are expected to remain in some form of education until they are 18 and this raises to 19 in the cases of young adults with SEN. This education in both cases is designed to foster greater independence and therefore parent's should not be put in a position where they are worse off in order to meet this obligation. In an ideal world all children/young people would be accessing transport independently however this is most certainly not possible for all children/young people with SEN.
It is critical also to remember that the closest college/sixth form to the young person may not be able to support that young person's needs or offer a suitable course/placement for them. The closest college that offers a course which meets their needs/is suitable may be more than 10 miles away, but their local college could be under 5 miles away. In this instance they would end up paying a great deal more for transport because their more local option cannot support this need. Young people with disabilities have as much right to choose courses that are of interest and suitable to their needs as other young people. With other young people they are able to make choices based on cost, whereas those with disabilities are forced to make choices based on suitability/availability. Costs should be based on the individual and all the many factors that impact on where they choose/are able to go to college.
- It should be the same as under 16s as it's a legal requirement for pupils to attend education until 18
- Disability benefits and my salary aren't increased at the same rate as inflation, so where are parents supposed to get the money from? It's disadvantaging the disabled who are already disadvantaged in getting work and generating income for themselves. Increase corporation tax, increase wealth taxes, they can afford

it. They sit on mass unused wealth, they can also work and have a much higher earning potential.

- This contribution puts parents in a difficult situation and many councils do not charge for this, so it's disappointing that this contribution is even here. However with councils also struggling, I think it would be fair to say increase at the rate of 50% of the CPI, which would be a compromise

Q3 If you would like to explain your reasons for any of the answers on this page, please do so below.

- The cost of living is crippling family's with disabled child. The government decide that children have to be in education till 18 so how is it now at 16 the parents have to pay a contribution when there are no local suitable settings
- if you have a number of children using a minibus for example, the cost efficiency is there already and the household income should reflect what contribution can be made by the parent.
- Already paying large amounts in income tax, NI, Council tax, taken after PAYE, already paying a large contribution for bus service, there are too many inefficiencies which could be resolved to free up existing funding
- I understand the cost of providing this service goes up each year and therefore I understand it would increase our contribution. that said, i do think this could be reviewed on a case by case basis if people are struggling financially
- Currently with public transport at £2 until 2024 you would be 3x a public bus! to the same place
- Understand the reasoning for the inflation of price, but for some families this will illuminate an education for a post16 applicants due to the inflation of daily life, some families rely on post 16 education to be able to work and maintain a health work/ home life balance, inflating the cost will may have a bigger financial impact on lower income families.
- People are struggling as it is why punish those with disabled young people who may well not be able to afford to pay for their child's transport even a small contribution may prevent that child being able to attend college and further education
- People are struggling as it is in this cost of living crisis. It is not the child fault if a local college is not suitable and can't meet need.
- If means tested then it would take into account if parents were able to pay rather than treating everyone the same
- You could have a millionaire with a mansion in Burley paying the same amount as expected from a parent living in a council house.

- Financially not maintainable I would be better off not working as I'm married with 3 children and it would seem we would be penalised for working and being married as well as paying for 2 children to get the same bus with no discount available. It would be financially better to drive the children to school but not only will this have an impact on the environment due to the children attending a village school they prefer children to get the bus and car share as there is limited parking available and it can cause some serious risks with all the cars and traffic not to mention the wear and tear on the car due to the poor conditions of the country roads as they are not maintained regularly due to your budget cuts.
- Stealth tax for the disabled child. Last year contributions went up 21%, this year another 7%. How come Hampshire have the highest contributions compare to any other county? £1800 a year is too much for most parents when we can only choose a college that meet a SEND child needs.
- Given that most incomes have not risen in line with inflation and the majority will have less disposable income it seems unreasonable to raise by this percentage for the majority of families whose children want and should be able to access further education of their choice.
- Why are SEN children being discriminated against for have SEN needs?
Why are parents being discriminated against for having children with SEN needs.
The cost would be far less if children could go to local SEN schools... but they are not available and therefore it is somehow the parents fault. As if parents of SEN children haven't got enough on their plate and most of these children cost more to provide, now they have to pay £3k more per year for post 16 transport. Those on benefits won't see the difference. Those who are rich will not care. Just those normal working parents who are struggling financially in the current climate will be hit. Or, we could send our SEN children to a not appropriate local college and watch them struggle or fail. What a decision! Some parents won't have a choice due to their financial situation.
I strongly feel that any child accessing transport to school should pay the same as their peers. Increase for all children, across the whole of Hampshire. Not just SEN children.
Also taxi-sharing! Last year my child shared a taxi with two others. This year they are all travelling on their own to the same place. Please get an IT specialist to create an IT programme to sort this situation out and save an enormous amount of money that is currently being wasted.
- I reside in a small village. I do not drive. If the transport to colleges are cancelled then my son would not be able to further his education
- Children are obliged to continue their education after secondary school therefore, in a state system, their transport enabling them to reach their college etc should be paid for

- I don't think the price of bus ticket increases follows inflation even remotely. If only increased by the rate of inflation either Hampshire or the parent is going to lose out. Parent contributions should be a percentage of the cost of the bus tickets as they rise or fall.
- I am not sure how the charges are calculated, however suggestion that we should pay over £800 for our child to take a train and travel one train stop is ridiculous. It would cost us far less paying for a train ticket by ourselves
- So the impact felt is equal across the whole of society.
- parents can not afford any increase.
- I understand why increases are needed. However I would like a robust system in place for families whose salaries have not increased in line with inflation
- Council should provide transportation to all disabled person, irrespective of parent's condition.
- Hampshire have already made cost savings by closing Merrydale - those funds alone would cover the cost of transport post 16
- My son has profound and multiple learning difficulties, is pre verbal and a full time wheelchair user. He will never be independent and requires the care and supervision of responsible adults to keep him safe and, in this case, transport him to and from school. The costs are crippling disabled households who are already facing increased costs with energy prices and cost of living
- You always hit the most vulnerable. When government decided children should stay in education the free transport should have been included in this policy. Most young people with SEN can't attend their local colleges or use public transport and so you are penalising them yet again. The cost is a hell of a lot more than an ordinary bus pass
- Many local authorities do not charge for this service. I have always found it odd that HCC do.
- This is NOT parents purchasing a service. This is the council that should assist people with special educational and health needs, and make education and health available to these people, so that they can thrive
- There needs to be a more equitable way of allocating scarce public resources. A frank and open dialogue between the council and residents is needed to find a way forward. Too many people are attempting, and sometimes succeeding, in abusing services at both ends of the wealth divide. In addition, keeping in mind that benefits are currently being raised in line with CPI when most salaries are not, it should be looked into whether those on universal credit should be asked to contribute albeit at a lower rate.

- It appears that government / council failures result in its only solution is to make people pay for its mistakes.
- A CPI increase could push those on very low incomes into poverty and create a situation where it becomes an issue of further education becoming out of reach and therefore stifling social mobility. It will also have a far greater impact on those with disabilities as at the same time mobility allowances on DLA have become far less supportive, particularly with cognitive issues.
- All that is required is for a child to have an EHCP & be on a low income /benefits to receive transport for free. It should be based on the disability. A child who needs support to walk either via a wheelchair or walker find it difficult to get on a bus/train, to drive wheelchair or be pushed in their wheelchair to school. Very few train stations are fully adapted to people in a wheelchair. If a child can walk, they can take a bus or train or their parent can drive them to College. If the parent feels the child will not cope being on a bus/train on their own , the parent can ride the bus/train to College. Some colleges have a agreements with bus companies to subsidise the travel.
The few people who pay end up supporting the people who do not pay. For a family with a child who have a physically disability who requires a powered wheelchair, it is costly to purchase a vehicle equipped to take a powered wheelchair & space is needed to park For a child that can walk & climb, no such vehicle is required. The system benefits people who simply do not work who then end up getting many things for free.
- It is demonstrable that caring for a child/young person with a disability is more expensive than caring for a child/young person who does not. Therefore I do not believe that it is fair that parents in this situation are expected to pay more for their young adult's transport than that of any other young person attending their local college/education establishment/placement. Therefore this contribution should be capped at whatever price the equivalent service is charging e.g. Stagecoach. Young adults are expected to remain in some form of education until they are 18 and this raises to 19 in the cases of young adults with SEN. This education in both cases is designed to foster greater independence and therefore parent's should not be put in a position where they are worse off in order to meet this obligation. In an ideal world all children/young people would be accessing transport independently however this is most certainly not possible for all children/young people with SEN.
It is critical also to remember that the closest college/sixth form to the young person may not be able to support that young person's needs or offer a suitable course/placement for them. The closest college that offers a course which meets their needs/is suitable may be more than 10 miles away, but their local college could be under 5 miles away. In this instance they would end up paying a great deal more for transport because their more local option cannot support this need. Young people with disabilities have as much right to choose courses that are of interest and suitable to their needs as other young people. With other young people they are able to make choices based on cost, whereas those with disabilities are forced to make choices based on suitability/availability.
Costs should be based on the individual and all the many factors that impact on where they choose/are able to got to college.

- Each student and family is unique and has different challenges. I feel some families contribution should be waived dependent on how serious the child's condition is. Also with siblings, both with serious conditions, the contribution needs to be looked at.

Q4 It is proposed that a number of updates are made throughout the Policy document. If you have any feedback on the changes to the Policy, please explain these here.

- Most children can't travel Independently because of their disabilities and schools are never local as very few send settings
- The following point of the Hampshire entitlement transport policy is somewhat discriminative and not inclusive in my view. This massively restricts parents who are divorced/split and needs to be reconsidered to include a reasonable distance of the main post code for agreed set dates.
4.17. The home address will be that at which the child resides and spends the majority of his/her time. Occasionally a child will have more than one address, for example, because they live with parents who have different addresses. In this situation, the address used for determining transport will be the one at which the child spends most of their time including weekends and school holidays as well as during the week. When the child lives at the other address, they will not qualify for any transport arrangements other than the one provided from the primary home address.
- It should be made clearer that Post 16 transport is funded by the parent and not the council as per pre 16 transport. Transport is also only in the way of minibus or taxi and doesn't include public transport. It is too specific and doesn't meet the needs of the SEN student.
- All about money, not providing SEN children with a good education
- Simplification should be considered here
- Specifically it looks like you are lumping in the removal of the school buses HB4 and 5 from the Worthys with reviewing SEN provision. It is underhand and unfair to hide it this way and sneak in the changes. The law requiring you to disclose these plans, is there to protect the taxpayer from tactics like this. We pay an awful lot of tax to fund your Council and over and over you make questionable decisions like this. HCC has overspent and underperformed. Removing school buses (which you hired on the cheapest contract, so dangerous that the BUS CRASHED AND INJURED SCHOOL CHILDREN), should not be considered. To save money by cancelling these buses would mean a 2.99mile, unlit walk on a badly-maintained path along a 40mph road, which would need to be crossed, by children from age 10 in all weathers and when it is dark in the mornings. Monstrous. You should be ashamed of yourselves. You work for the people, to improve lives, to make a difference. PLEASE DO BETTER

- With the current cost of living crisis the last thing parents need is added stress and it made harder for their kids to get transport to and from school/college
- Changes to make the policy clearer are good. However, there should be changes which reflect the need for HCC Transport to improve its communication with users and providers. We and other users and providers have been badly let down by poor communication this past year. A consultation was set up to ensure such problems do not re-occur but this, to my knowledge, was never completed and I certainly haven't heard what improvements have been made. Urgent reform needed here!
- The school Transport Policy is not user friendly or easy to understand. before bringing the Post 16 policy inline with it I recommend an overhaul of the Scholl Transport policy as a whole.
- Change sound like Hampshire look for away only pay for nearest college and not the most suitable college travelling costs.
- The policy needs to not discriminate against SEN children. All children in Hampshire should share the cost of transport. SEN children should not pay more. It is discrimination.
All the other proposed changes are changes for the better.
- I am concerned that the wording around completion of travel training gives no definition of success criteria. E.g. for an autistic child being able to undertake the travel safely on one day may not correlate with being able to do so on another. A robust definition of successfully completing the training is required, with parent view critical. Otherwise no parent would agree to the training at risk of their child being judged to pass when they remain in need of support.

In the consultation webpage it refers to other word changes which don't affect the implementation of the policy. However for the school transport policy this was also stated and there were significant changes to the policy hidden in this area. Therefore, we cannot support the wording changes until we have seen the full proposed changes. Without the chance to review these changes, this consultation is unlawful.

- If the transport doesn't continue with taking students to and from college then my son would not be able to continue his education
- The proposed 20 days to request a review is not long enough to gather evidence, prepare and assist one's review. However if you allowed to offer further information within the 40 days' timeline of an Independent Appeal Panel then I think that's adequate.
- the price that parents contribute should not be increased
- Independent travel training is a good idea, however consideration should be made for students who cannot travel independently, due to a lack of appropriate

bus services in the area they live. Many rural bus services do not run early enough in the morning for a student to get to college/sen placement on time.

- Get more council tax from all, instead of punishing family with disabled child.
- I think the changes seem to be for the council narrative not the parents of the child. A more fair proposal may be more suitable.
- All of the changes seem sensible and are more comprehensive than the existing text.
- A review by the Secretary of State should still be included in the appeals process
- I really don't understand what is meant by 'Transport Training'. In the great majority of cases, a student is either able to travel independently or not. Our daughter is never going to be able to travel independently, and will always need a transport assistant.
- County needs to have better communication within the SEN transport team. Head of transport should not be absent at the beginning of term. If he is, there needs to be someone to take over the reins who can be a point of contact to deal with the problems that arise with transport issues. My son was granted assistance for post 16 transport (email confirmation) and then this was retracted as the statutory placements were being worked on.
- I feel that there is a real danger of making it even more confusing with your proposed changes. Please ensure that you do not make any process any more long and drawn out. Your proposals for the tiered complaints system certainly seems like it will drag the process out rather than resolve quickly and effectively? School and Colleges are very different and it would be good if HCC could realise this for some of their other policies too. Already the post 16 SEN transport policy is too much 'copy and paste' from the schools one and does not take into account the vast difference between post 16 establishments and schools or the difference in the students.
- PARENTal contributions should be abolished Also, complaint and appeal process is long and awful at the moment. Policy should state that parents will have access to independent panel within maximum 2 weeks from making complaint
- Having read the proposed wording, I don't see any issues with it.
- There is not enough detail about Independent Travel training for comments.
- Ensure any changes are in favour of parents / children and not used to cover up government / council mismanagement of finances
- I do not believe that Independent Travel Training will work or will be suitable for all young people with SEN. I also do not believe that just because a young person has had this training that they should be forced into independent travel

which may not be suitable for them just because they have done this. There is a vast difference between being able to do something on 'paper' and being able to do this in reality and unfortunately I do not believe that any transport training can be so comprehensive that it will cover every eventuality that might happen travelling independently that a young person without a disability could readily manage but a young person with a disability could not e.g. changes to routes/times/fluctuations in the number of people/not being able to get the seat that they always sit in/other people and their expectations/behaviours (not all members of the public are 'nice' and 'welcoming' to vulnerable people and some actually actively target them e.g. stealing money/belongings)

- Make sure there are easy read versions for parents with disabilities. Make sure that the Post 16 transport policy takes those with EOTAS and their travel needs into consideration.
Explain the difference between compulsory school age and those required to legally remain in education and training. What is the difference between compulsory and legally required.
- I think it does read more clearly.

Q5 What, if any, impact do you think the proposed changes to the Policy for Post 16 Transport provision in Hampshire may have? Please use the box below to tell us how the proposed changes would affect you or your organisation.

- The inflexibility of the transport offered disadvantages the child. If your child wants to have the flexibility of being able to come home from college when they are tired/overwhelmed they are not able to do so if the parent has accepted the transport arrangements from HCC. The needs are still there for the child, but if there needs to be any flexibility the transport has to be declined.
- This will put more cars on the road, polluting and causing more carbon emissions alongside traffic in local areas.
- Parents not being able to afford the cost, which will result in SEN children missing out on education
- It is hard enough to make ends meet, this will impact the poorer households and prevent children from attending education and having equal opportunities
- Will force more families back into using their own car and increase traffic. In the Waterside area is bad enough as no transport is available for Marchwood students going to Noadswood. Totally unacceptable.
- It will put families under even more pressure to find more money to cover essential costs. It may impact the choices and options for youngsters who wish to attend education post 16
- I think this policy and this way of collecting responses is not user friendly and will not capture a range of voices

- part empty running service
- I understand the need to update the policy and having clearly printed wording will help. Many when completing or using the forms online
It will impact many families who are unable to afford transportation to their named education setting
- It may stop those with lower income having the same opportunities as those who can afford to contribute to travel.
- Post 16 students will not be able to attend placement if transport is not provided or parents are unable to pay. Also so family are on low income but just cause they don't qualify to UC etc they still can't afford the cost. The law states they have to stay in education till 19 now.
- unfair to rural struggling families
- concern over who decides and on what criteria that a young person is safe to travel independently - the young person may be able to understand and make the journey but be very vulnerable to potential victimisation /abuse from other people, either randomly or by grooming over a period of time
- A hefty rise in costs with no obvious benefits to users / providers is simply unacceptable!
- Less likely to students to access suitable institutions outside of their very local proximity.
- If more costs are passed onto parents it could leave families in financial difficulty.
- I think most parents will have to transport their own child when this service should be free for SEND children.
- More students travelling by car
- With the already high cost of living it won't be possible for many families to afford this cost.
- Would affect the living standards as a family.
- For some a small cost increase will become a struggle. This impacts the children and the choice of colleges they attend. Not everyone pays. Therefore the main change here only impacts those that DO pay.
- Why are parents being discriminated against for having children with SEN needs.
The cost would be far less if children could go to local SEN schools... but they are not available and therefore it is somehow the parents fault. As if parents of

SEN children haven't got enough on their plate and most of these children cost more to provide, now they have to pay £3k more per year for post 16 transport. Those on benefits won't see the difference. Those who are rich will not care. Just those normal working parents who are struggling financially in the current climate will be hit. Or, we could send our SEN children to a not appropriate local college and watch them struggle or fail. What a decision! Some parents won't have a choice due to their financial situation.

I strongly feel that any child accessing transport to school should pay the same as their peers. Increase for all children, across the whole of Hampshire. Not just SEN children.

- It is difficult to say as the exact wording changes have not been published. To successfully consult on the changes in item 5 the revised text must be provided.
- Many children will not be able to continue their education. Leaving more children claiming benefits
- I may put people off education
- Parents having to stay home more to support with transport for their child. Making it harder to work and earn money and likely to have child not attend education system
- There would be a financial impact on parents should the contribution increase further. Disabled people and their parents/carers already face increased costs.
- Increased cost would be an issue
- Increase inequalities and increase the likelihood that those who are less well off will travel to their college or place of education as frequently resulting in poorer grades, less opportunities
- At this stage I'm grateful for any help that I can get. I'm not interested in taking advantage of Hampshire county council.
- Obviously increased costs
- Families' budgets will be strained and some opportunities lost.
- will cost more for the parents and some of which do not receive any benefits help.
- Children who have been diagnosed with conditions later and who now need further support at post 16 than they did at year 9 should not be pushed towards travel training simply because of their age. A holistic view needs to be taken on whether it is suitable for each child.
- Children with disabilities need to be considered carefully if expected to make their own way to college - those living in rural areas may need to access more than one bus which might be beyond their abilities.

- I cannot answer this question without providing personal information.
- financial
- Inflation affects not only the council but also every aspect of the living for each resident.
- Get more council tax from all, rather than punishing family with disabled kids.
- I believe it will impact and result in Post 16 (SEN) not attending college as unable to get there as the college who can provide the ehcp needs may be some distance away. If unable to afford HCC cost and no transport leading to no education. Government state student must be in education till 19. Being forced into a college not suitable leading to student failing. Which later on will result in cost to Adult Social Care when student becomes young person and needs to access other resources due to previous failings.
- Minimal from my perspective
- Hampshire will gain more money at the cost of hard squeezed parents and students
- Prices going up. "Prices going up. This consultation doesn't address the utter chaos and complete lack of responsiveness of the Hampshire Transport Dept at the beginning of the 23/24 college year, where no emails or were answered and calls took over an hour to be answered, when we were trying to find out when a transportation assistant might be available."
- The parents and guardians you are emailing are working 24/7 to support children who (for no fault of their own) need extra support. 2. Parents of kids with SEN should have to fight to get their kids support. 3. Demanding parents and guardians of SEN kids pay more in post 16 transport than non-SEN is discriminates against the kids with SEN and their parents. 4. Morally and ethically, a local authority that implements such policies is not worthy of my time and makes me embarrassed to be British.
- Not all students will be able to achieve independent travel training. My son is one of them. He has profound and multiple learning difficulties, is preverbal and a full time wheelchair user. The costs for post 16 transport are crippling. Live in a rural environment and school is not local so the cost for transport is high. However, have other SEN children to get to places of learning so transporting my son to post 16 provision is not achievable. Environmental impact due to increased traffic to post 16 if parents take their child to school as well as risks associated with more cars and traffic in a built up residential area where school is located.
- Charging more yet not guaranteeing young people can actually use the form of transport they've paid for is unacceptable. In Fleet and Church Crookham every

post gcse young person continuing in education has to travel for this provision. The bus service is over subscribed and often leaves passengers behind. The frequency of service is also very poor. Changing the policy will not improve access and charging more for a poor service is unfair.

- Even fewer learners with SEND successfully attending post 16, particularly mainstream. These sort of changes always impact the most disadvantaged more heavily.
- Poverty for people with ehcp and their family. Reduced education and health services accessibility
- The main thing would be the cost increase. I can understand why the LA feel the need to increase in line with inflation but with the cost of living crisis, I think this just puts families under more pressure. My child has Post 16 transport due to his disabilities and we live a considerable distance from the college - I currently pay for his transport.

I only have the need to use Post 16 transport because he's unable to catch a bus and make his own way to college because of his disabilities. If my child was neuro typical, we would still have to pay for a bus pass, but it would be hundreds of pounds cheaper than Post 16 transport. I would imagine there are lots of families in the same boat and I feel like we're penalised as we don't have any other alternative but to pay and use the transport provided by the LA due to our children's complex needs.

- Increased costs to families.
- Whilst not directly, it will impact my great grand children when they reach school age, which by then government / council will have raised school leaving age to 25 to keep them off the unemployed list as a result of government / industry failing to create work/
- In order for our Son to learn and be the best he can he needs to be settled as his Autism affects his ability to deal with anxiety. He currently requires transport and an escort as he is incredibly vulnerable. Both the Government and local authority have decided to downgrade this vulnerability by refusing to recognise his risk through either DLA mobility allowance or a blue badge. The increase in cost due to this has meant that our standard of living has been significantly impacted. This would further exacerbate this.
We are also no where near a bus route or train station due to our rural location.
- If the prices are increased, more people will be unable to pay which means HCC will need to pay out more money. It will create a loop of less & less people being able to pay and HCC spending more money. For the people in receipt of benefits, have a rating scale so if a family is between 16,000 - 17,000, for example, they need to pay 50% of the stated cost for example, and then gradually lower it. This would ensure HCC receives some money to pay for the transport for Post-16 transport.

- With SEN it is really crucial to factor in the suitability and provision at the most local college for the young person. They may not be able to go to their local college and might be forced in to taking a place much further away. The impact of independent travel could be huge on a young person with SEN, it is not possible to demonstrate every eventual situation they might face and there is a huge emphasis on them remembering what they need to do in situations that do not arise that often.
- It will exclude poorer families from college education.
- They will put many into poverty, they'll affect mental health.
- Less young people will be able to access their training and education due to parents/carers being unable to afford contributions even though they don't qualify for discretionary funding.
Less provisions will be accessible, due to more cost to parent/carer.
The government wants young people doing more hours of education and training post 16, therefore funding should be in place to facilitate that as it is for those under 16.
- I think it is essential for those with health conditions and physical limitations to have the same rights as others to attend education. If a child is entitled to transport there must be a need and to then make a charge that is continually rising, will impact these Childrens ability to attend education and to me that is not inclusion.