



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

**Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough**

Telford & Wrekin Council

Travel Assistance Policy Statement for Students Post 16



Policy 2022/23

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Telford & Wrekin is ambitious for all its young people recognising that the future prosperity and well-being of the borough depends in part on the achievement of young people in their education. There is commitment to support and encourage young people aged 16-18 to continue with their education and training so that they acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for their personal development and progression into future employment or Higher Education. To that end, this post 16 travel assistance policy supports access to further education with a particular focus on enabling young people to be as independent as possible in preparation for their adulthood.
- 1.2 This document is the Council's Travel Assistance Statement. Every year, the Education Act 1996 (the Act) and the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to publish a policy setting out what travel support is available to help young people attend their school or further education institution. The policy is for young who are over compulsory school age, being aged between 16 and 18 years and includes those who start their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. Information is also provided about arrangements for those who are aged 19-25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan as required under section 508G of the 1996 Education Act.
- 1.3 The policy statement supersedes all previous transport arrangements and entitlements. Funding for travel assistance is subject to annual budgets and financial affordability. As per our duty, the Transport Policy statement will be reviewed annually. This version covers the academic year from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.
- 1.4 The Education Act gives the Council the discretion to determine what support is available.
- 1.5 To be eligible for assistance, the young person must be a resident of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin. Young people not resident in Telford & Wrekin, or who are looked after by another Council but live in Telford & Wrekin, should refer and apply to, the Travel Assistance policy of their own Council.
- 1.6 In addition the chosen study programme must take place at a publicly funded provider (i.e. by the Council or the Education Skills Funding Agency), the study programme must be full time (equivalent to a minimum of 16 hours per week) and the young person must attend the nearest provider that can meet their needs.

- 1.7 Before the Council will consider any application for travel assistance, parents/carers must demonstrate that they have explored and exhausted all available sources of support as set out in section 6 and 12.

2. Travel assistance for Students 16-18 years.

- 2.1 The vast majority of students do not receive or require travel support from the Council to enable them to participate in education and training. In considering whether to provide travel assistance, the Council will have regard to the following:

- The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
- The needs of those who are vulnerable to becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the age of 16 or 17, or who have already become NEET;
- The needs of students who are parents;
- The need to ensure that students in the borough have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
- The Council's legal duties, including the duty to ensure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of 16-18 year olds;
- Distance and journey time from the student's home to establishments of education and training, the cost of transport there and alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments;
- The nature of the route or alternative routes which the student could reasonably be expected to take;
- Any preference to attend a particular educational establishment based on religion or belief for students from families on low income as defined in 2.5;
- The nature of the student's special educational needs, disability or learning difficulty;
- Anything said in an EHC plan about transport;
- Whether there is a nearer institution which is suitable and can provide the same or similar qualification(s);
- The best use of the Council's resources.

- 2.2 A wide range of specific fare arrangements are available through transport providers, such as travel cards and special fare offers. Some students will qualify for the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund, see section 6. Education providers may at their discretion distribute funds in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of their students. The discretionary bursary is targeted at students facing financial hardship, including transport costs. For further

information about discretionary funds please contact individual providers and some links are provided in section 12.

- 2.3 Where the schemes specified in section 6 and 12 are insufficient to subsidise the transport costs incurred, and the student has no other means of being transported by family or friends, (work commitments and other children may not be an acceptable reason) or is unable to walk or use public transport (even when accompanied) due to their special educational need or disability, then the Council may provide additional travel assistance to attend post-16 education. Students in receipt of a 16-19 Bursary will be expected to use the award towards transport costs. Where known, the value of any bursary/grant awarded to the student must be identified on the application for travel assistance or evidence is supplied that an application has been made.
- 2.4. To qualify for travel assistance, the student will be required to demonstrate how their chosen study programme meets their needs and offers academic progression towards their career goals. Support will only be provided to the nearest available school or college, where a suitable study programme is available. The Council will not provide travel assistance to students who choose not to attend the nearest school or college offering a suitable programme. Transport will not be provided on the basis of a single subject being unavailable at the nearest learning provider.
- 2.5 Where students meet eligibility, the Council will award travel assistance that enables independence and is the most economical mode of travel assistance. A contribution of £600 per academic year from students or their parents is required towards the cost of travel assistance. The charge will be £400 per academic year, if a financially dependent student, is from a low income household which is defined as:
- Families in receipt of Income Support.
 - Families in receipt of Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IB JSA).
 - Families who receive Child Tax Credit and have an annual income below the relevant threshold.
 - Families who receive Employment and Support Allowance (Income related).
 - Families who receive The Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit.
 - Families who receive support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
 - Families in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.
 - Families in receipt of benefits that supersede those listed above.

Students will be invoiced for their contribution at the start of the academic year. Payment plans can be made available for students who require this.

- 2.6 Any travel assistance agreed by the Council will be provided on a term by term basis. The continuation of assistance is subject to satisfactory attendance for the previous term (as confirmed by the educational provider).

- 2.7 The Council encourages students aged 16+ to travel independently on public transport, to enable them to develop the skills for a successful transition into adulthood.
- 2.8 The Council operates an Independent Travel Training Scheme for students. Support is provided alongside a training programme to enable the student to travel independently over a period of time. This may be provided in conjunction with other forms of travel assistance, for example, travel passes. Council officers will work with a student alongside family, school and college to develop safe travel plans and routes to increase independence. For the majority of students eligible for post 16 travel assistance, independent travel training will be provided as the travel assistance offer with the expectation that following training, the student will be able to independently use public transport. The Council is working with schools including special schools to develop these skills as part of secondary education. Where this has taken place we expect that the parents and carers of students to continue to practice independent travel skills throughout the summer holidays, prior to starting any study programme.
- 2.9 The Council recognises that independent travel training, including the use of public transport, is not always possible for students with severe and complex learning difficulties and disability, and additional assistance with travel will be required.
- 2.10 Where the offer of travel assistance via Independent Travel Training is refused by the student, parent or carer, without reasonable grounds, then the Council are under no obligation to offer an alternative method of travel assistance.
- 2.11 Students who qualify for travel assistance and who are attending the same provider as other students, may be expected to travel together at the start and end of the day. This may mean that students will need to be prepared to attend earlier than their course starts or later than their course finishes. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent and carers of the student to discuss the programme timetable with the provider.
- 2.12 Decisions regarding what assistance is required will be based on enabling independence and the best use of the Council resources. Travel assistance options will therefore be considered in the following priority order:
- Independent Travel Training - Access to Independent Travel Training is provided alongside a training programme to enable students to travel independently over a period of time.
 - Escorted walking / 'walking-bus' or cycling
 - Public transport (bus pass)
 - A Personal Transport Budget (PTB)

Only in exceptional circumstances will a funded travel pass to occupy a seat on a taxi or mini bus be considered. Should this be granted and where there is more than 3 instances in any one year where the Council have not be notified with sufficient notice to cancel the service without reasonable cause, transport assistance is likely to be withdrawn.

- 2.13 The use of passenger assistants will only be funded where clear evidence is supplied and assessed by the Council to determine the need for this service, and an appropriate length of time using this support will be agreed.
- 2.14 Travel assistance is only granted for one academic year of study so parents and carers must apply annually for travel assistance support.
- 2.15 The Council will ensure that during the annual review of the EHCP that the student and where appropriate, parents, are made aware that travel support will be considered in accordance with the Council's post-16 transport policy.
- 2.16 The transport needs of students with special educational needs and disabilities will be reassessed when a student moves from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, even if the student is remaining at the same educational setting.
- 2.17 If a student has an EHC plan with an institution named in their plan, there is no entitlement to transport to and from this named provider. Parents/carers should be aware that transport support will be considered in accordance with this post-16 transport policy.
- 2.18 The Council will not provide travel assistance for any additional journeys linked to a course of study e.g. work experience placements, trips, the requirements for these additional journeys will be for the course provider to arrange and fund.
- 2.19 The Council would not generally consider work or childcare commitments as a reason for travel assistance to be provided.
- 2.20 Applications will initially be assessed on the basis of the evidence provided. The Council may undertake further assessment to determine whether it is necessary for the council (rather than the student/family) to make their own travel arrangements
- 2.21 Students undertaking a work based learning programme such as an apprenticeship or supported internships would need to apply for Access to Work funding to support their transport needs.
<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

3 Travel assistance for Children in Care and Care Leavers 16-18

- 3.1 The Council will fund travel assistance for Children in Care/Care Leavers for whom it has a legal/parental responsibility. The offer of travel assistance will be in the priority order as set out in section 2.12.

- 3.2 For Children in Care and Care Leavers aged between 16-24yrs for whom the Council has a legal/parental responsibility who gain an apprenticeship will receive a funded Arriva travel pass.

4 Travel Assistance for Students aged 19+ with SEND

- 4.1 The requirement for the Council to consider whether travel arrangements are necessary to enable participation in education and training continues after the age of 18 years in respect of students up to age 25 with EHC plans who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday.
- 4.2 Where the Council considers it necessary to make arrangements for the provision of transport where the Council itself has secured the provision of the education or training at the relevant institution along with the provision of boarding accommodation, then this transport will be provided free of charge.
- 4.3 In all other cases the Council has discretion to determine what transport or financial support is necessary to facilitate the student's participation in education and training.
- 4.4 In determining whether it is necessary for the Council to provide transport, the Council will consider on an individual basis why it is necessary for the Council to make travel arrangements. To assess this we would need to know:
- The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
 - The needs of the relevant young adult students who are parents;
 - Distance and journey time from the student's home to establishments of education and training, the cost of transport there and alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments;
 - The nature of the route or alternative routes which the student could reasonably be expected to take;
 - Any preference to attend a particular educational establishment based on religion or belief for students from families on low income as defined in 2.5;
 - Anything said in an EHC plan about transport;
 - Whether there is a nearer institution which is suitable and can provide the same or similar qualification(s);
 - What other arrangements have been considered or tried and why they are not suitable;
 - What funding is available for transport from the institution that the student is attending? There would be an expectation that the student has actively applied for that funding;
 - If there is a family member/carer who is more aware of the student's needs and who is able to transport the student and if it is the most appropriate option for the student why it would not be a reasonable arrangement to make;

- If the student is in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance, the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outside, we would expect this benefit to be fully utilised to meet their transport needs and this includes transport to their educational or training placement. If there are any factors limiting its use, details should be provided;
- The student's age, ability, aptitudes and special educational need or disability (as specified within an Education, Health and Care Plan);
- The quality of education or training and locations and times of provision;
- If there is a 'Motability' vehicle available to the student. If a decision has been made not to use the 'Motability' vehicle to support the student to reach their education placement, we would normally expect the carer/student to make their own appropriate alternative arrangements, or provide details as to why that is not possible/reasonable;
- Any other circumstances that need to be taken into account along with any recent supporting evidence;
- The best use of the Council's resources.

4.5 The Council would not generally consider work or childcare commitments as a reason for travel assistance to be provided.

4.6 Applications will initially be assessed on the basis of the evidence provided. The Council may undertake further assessment to determine whether it is necessary for the Council to make travel arrangements.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Scheme

6.1 Some students have a guarantee of support. The 16 to 19 bursary fund supports the most financially disadvantaged 16 to 19 year olds and those students who most need help with the costs of staying in education. Those who are 16-19 and who are in the following groups receive a bursary of up to £1,200 a year:

- students in care and care leavers
- students claiming income support or universal credit in their own name
- students who receive both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) in their own name

6.2 If the student is in one of the above groups, but the course is shorter than 30 weeks, or part-time, they may receive less than £1,200.

- 6.3 Other students facing genuine financial difficulties may be awarded a bursary at the discretion of their school, college or training provider.
- 6.4 To apply for a bursary, students should speak to their school, college, Academy or training provider as they each have their own application process. Contact details for main providers are listed at section 12.
- 6.5 Low Income is defined as:
- Families in receipt of Income Support.
 - Families in receipt of Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IB JSA).
 - Families who receive Child Tax Credit and have an annual income below the relevant threshold.
 - Families who receive Employment and Support Allowance (Income related).
 - Families who receive The Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit.
 - Families who receive support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
 - Families in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.
 - Families in receipt of benefits that supersede those listed above.

7 Situations where travel assistance will not be provided.

- 7.1 Travel assistance will not be provided in the following circumstances and it will be the parent/carers responsibility to provide transport on these occasions
- If the student does not fulfil the criteria
 - If the parent/carer requests a place that is not the nearest appropriate establishment at which a place is available
 - For students with an EHCP, where the parents have agreed to make provision for transport
 - To work experience placements or other extra-curricular activities
 - To dental or hospital appointments
 - To clinical, medical or non-educational appointments
 - In the event of detention and/or exclusions
 - To attend meetings following exclusion
 - To attend open days and 'taster sessions' at a setting
 - Following continued inappropriate behaviour occurring on transport
 - In the event that a student is unwell, having already arrived at the post 16 provider, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

8 Removal of support

- 8.1 The Council will remove travel assistance with immediate effect where it is proven that assistance was obtained on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, or where the young person's individual circumstances have

changed, which results in the student no longer being eligible for support or has been assessed as not requiring such support. It may also cease on the written request of the student who, if necessary, has made alternative arrangements for them to travel to the education provision. Any fraudulent claims may result in criminal prosecution.

- 8.2 Whilst recognising the special educational needs of students, the Council encourages positive behaviour on transport so that the health and safety of all passengers and staff is maintained. If there is an occasion of behavioural issues whilst on transport, these will be reviewed and discussed with parents, carers and where appropriate, necessary professionals. Transport may be suspended if an investigation is undertaken. In such circumstances, it will remain the responsibility of the student to ensure that they attend the educational establishment during the interim period.
- 8.3 On-going or serious behavioural issues may result in transport arrangements being suspended or permanently removed.

9 How to apply for post 16 travel assistance

- 9.1 The Council will expect conversations to have taken place between the student, their parents/carers and the post 16 provider they intend to study with, to check out their travel support alongside any bursaries before an application to the Council is made.

The application process for post 16 travel can be found online at the following address

http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/10/home_to_school_transport

- 9.2 Applications for travel assistance can be made throughout the academic year and where fully completed, will take 20 working days to process. Where additional information is sought, it may take longer. In order to arrange necessary travel assistance for young people starting placements in September, applications should be received **BY 30th JUNE 2022**. This is to provide the transport team with sufficient time to arrange travel assistance where required. Where applications are received after this date travel assistance arrangements may not be in place for the start of the academic year and alternative arrangements should be put in place whilst the application is being considered.
- 9.3 Applicants will be required to explain and evidence in the application how they meet the criteria and why Council resources are needed. All information must be complete to ensure it can be fully considered against the criteria in this policy. Missing information or insufficient evidence may result in the application being returned and a delay in the decision. Incomplete

applications will take longer than 20 working days while missing information is requested.

- 9.4 Should disagreements arise about the travel assistance offer then the Council will endeavour to informally resolve the issue. Further evidence may be requested.
- 9.5 In applying for transport assistance, parents are expected to support young people to be ready to access the appropriate support offered.

10 Appeals

- 10.1 This section outlines the appeal procedures to be used where it is felt that the Council's decision with respect to eligibility for travel assistance is incorrect. This is not a statutory right of appeal. There are separate procedures for students aged 16-18 including those who start their programme of learning before their 19th birthday and students who remain in education up until their 25th birthday.

10.2 The procedures for students aged 16-18 including those who start their programme of learning before their 19th birthday:

Review and Appeal – Stage 1 & Stage 2

Should an application be declined there is a right of appeal. It will be the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure the student attends their post 16 provision whilst any appeal is being carried out. The Council must receive this appeal within 20 working days of decision. After this date, the Council's decision will remain final.

Details of where to send the appeal will be contained in the decline letter.

Stage 1: Review by Senior Officer

The appeal will be considered by a senior officer delegated by the Director for Services. They will review the original transport decision in light of the information provided. The appellant will receive their decision in writing within 20 working days of the Council having received the appeal.

Stage 2: Appeal Hearing

If the appellant does not agree with the senior officer's decision at stage 1, they may escalate the appeal to stage 2. At stage 2, the appeal will be considered by an independent transport appeal panel at an appeal hearing.

The panel will be made up of three independent Council officers who were not involved in the original decision or in stage 1 of the complaint.

The hearing will take place within 40 working days of the appellant notifying the Council of the wish to escalate the appeal to stage 2.

Appellants can, if they wish, attend this hearing to explain to the panel why they do not agree with the Council's transport decision.

Council officers involved in the case will also attend the hearing to explain the reasons for its transport decision. There will be an opportunity for questions during the hearing.

The appellant will receive the appeal panel's decision in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing.

10.3 Procedure for Students aged 19-25

Students aged 19+ or their representatives are able to make a complaint to the Council using the Corporate Complaints Procedure. Complaints should be sent to customer.relationship@telford.gov.uk

Once an appellant has gone through the appeals/complaints process and been unsuccessful, they cannot re-apply within the same academic year unless they have a significant and material change in circumstances.

During the appeal process no new travel assistance will be provided or in the case of existing arrangements, no change will be implemented. The student will be responsible for ensuring that they attend the educational establishment until the outcome of the appeal is determined.

There is no right of appeal if a decision is made to vary the form of travel assistance. There is only a right of appeal if an application for travel assistance is refused or if existing travel assistance is ceased.

10.4 Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If, following the appeal, the appellant feels that the Council have refused help unfairly, made a mistake or not handled the application for home to school transport correctly, a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman can be raised.

For more information visit: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

10.5 Complaints to the Secretary of State for Education

To complain to the Secretary of State, young people or their families should use the contact form on gov.uk - www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus. Any complaint should outline the case, set out the decision taken by the local authority and include any other relevant documentation, for example any advice or decisions from the LGO where appropriate.

11 Safeguarding

If any person has concerns about the safety of a child please contact Family Connect and Adult Safeguarding **Telephone: 01952 385385**

If any person is concerned about suspected abuse of an adult then contact Family Connect and adult Safeguarding **Telephone:** 01952 385385

12 . What other support is available for the Telford & Wrekin area?

Bus tickets and passes

Telford Teen Travel Card - Students are able to access a Teen Travel card which provides a discount on weekly bus tickets. This can be applied for via the following website:

https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20461/travel_telford/5310/teen_travel_card

Students may be eligible for Further Education residential support scheme or Dance and Drama Awards – details are available at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students>

Other Useful Contacts

For further information about travel assistance from individual sixth form providers, please visit their websites which can be found at www.telford1619.com. Further information about services for Special Educational Needs, including colleges, independent specialist settings and training providers, can be found at www.telfordsend.org.uk. If the chosen provider is not listed below, please see their website in the first instance and contact the Transport Team for any further information.

- Telford & Wrekin Council, Transport Team, Darby House, Lawn central, Telford Tel; 01952 384620 email transport.contracts@telford.gov.uk
- Telford College, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford, TF1 3DY Tel: 01952 642200 <http://www.tcat.ac.uk/learner-services/travelling-college/>
- Adams Grammar School, High St, Newport, TF10 7BD Tel: 01952 386300 <http://www.adamsgs.uk>
- Newport Girls High School, Wellington Rd, Newport, TF10 7HL Tel: 01952 386400 <http://www.nghs.org.uk/sixth-form/>
- Holy Trinity Academy, Teece Drive, Priorslee, Telford TF2 9SQ Tel 01952 386100 <http://holytrinity.academy/>
- Walford & North Shropshire College, Oswestry Campus, Shrewsbury Road, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4QB Tel: 01691 688000 <https://www.nsc.ac.uk/student-services/student-transport/>
- Rodbaston College of Agriculture, Rodbaston, Penkridge, Stafford,

Staffordshire, ST19 5PH Tel: 01785 712209
<http://www.southstaffs.ac.uk/about-us/rodbaston-campus/>

- Wheels to Work <https://www.community-resource.org.uk/community-groups/wheels-to-work>
- Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology, London Road, Shrewsbury, SY2 6PR Tel: 01743 342340 <https://www.scg.ac.uk/students/travelling-to-college>