

Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy

2026–2027



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 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. The Education Act 1996 requires the Council to prepare and publish an annual statement setting out the transport and travel support arrangements it considers necessary to facilitate attendance in education or training for young people of sixth-form age. The Council must have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training, when preparing and applying this policy. The policy applies to young people over compulsory school age, including those aged 16 to 18 and those who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. It also explains how the Council will consider arrangements for young adults aged 19 to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, in line with sections 508F and 508G of the Education Act 1996.

1.3

This policy statement supersedes all previous post-16 transport arrangements and entitlements. Funding for travel assistance is subject to annual budgets, financial affordability and the Council's assessment of what arrangements are necessary in each case. The policy will be reviewed and published annually, and this version covers the academic year from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027.

1.4

The Education Act 1996 gives the Council discretion to determine what transport or travel support is necessary for post-16 learners. There is no automatic entitlement to free or subsidised transport for students aged 16 and over. Each application will be considered individually, taking account of the student's circumstances, the availability of suitable education or training, the accessibility of the journey, other support available and the efficient use of public resources.

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, including a school, further education institution, local authority maintained or assisted institution, Education and Skills Funding Agency funded provider, or other learning provider funded to deliver accredited programmes of learning. The study programme must normally be full time, equivalent to a minimum of 16 hours per week, and the young person must attend the nearest suitable provider that can meet their assessed education or training 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.

The Council will take account of the needs of all learners of sixth-form age, including learners with special educational needs and disabilities, learners who are vulnerable to becoming not in education, employment or training, young parents, learners living in rural areas, learners from low-income households, and learners who may face barriers because of religion or belief. The Council will also consider sustainable travel options and the promotion of independence wherever appropriate.

2. Travel assistance for students aged 16-18

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
- 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 on Page 15.

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 must demonstrate how their chosen study programme meets their assessed needs and provides appropriate progression towards their education, training or employment goals. Support will normally only be provided to the nearest suitable school, college or training provider where an appropriate programme is

available. The Council will not normally provide travel assistance where a student chooses to attend a more distant provider when a suitable programme is available nearer to home. Transport will not be provided solely because a single subject or preferred course combination is unavailable at the nearest learning provider, unless there is clear evidence that the nearer provider cannot meet the student's overall assessed needs.

Where students meet the eligibility criteria, the Council will award the most appropriate and economical form of travel assistance that enables access to education or training and promotes independence wherever possible. Travel assistance may include:

- 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), where it is appropriate for a parent, carer or other agreed adult to use their own vehicle or make suitable arrangements to support the young person's travel. A funded seat on a taxi or minibus, or a taxi uplift PTB, will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there is clear evidence that other travel options are unsuitable. Where these forms of travel assistance are agreed, a contribution of £600 per academic year from the student, parent or carer is required towards the cost of travel assistance. The charge will be £400 per academic year where a financially dependent student is from a low-income household, as defined below:
 - ❖ 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.

2.5

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).

2.6

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.

2.7

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.

2.8

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.

2.9

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.

2.10

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.

2.11

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:

- Public transport (bus pass)
- Independent Travel Training, where support is provided alongside a structured training programme to enable students to travel independently over time.
- Escorted walking / 'walking-bus' or cycling

- A Personal Transport Budget (PTB). In exceptional circumstances, the Council may consider commissioning or funding transport where all other options have been assessed as unsuitable. Where there are more than three occasions in any academic year when the Council has not been given sufficient notice to cancel commissioned transport, without reasonable cause, travel assistance may be reviewed and could be withdrawn. Passenger assistants will only be provided in exceptional circumstances where clear evidence demonstrates that this level of support is necessary. Where a passenger assistant is agreed, the expected duration and review arrangements will be confirmed.

2.12

Travel assistance is only granted for one academic year of study so parents and carers must apply annually for travel assistance support.

2.13

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 travel assistance policy.

2.14

The transport needs of students with special educational needs and disabilities will be reassessed when a student moves from compulsory schooling to post16 education, even if the student is remaining at the same educational setting.

2.15

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 travel assistance policy.

2.16

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.

2.17

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

2.18

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.

2.19

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 aged 16-18

3.1

The Council will consider travel assistance for Children in Care and Care Leavers for whom it has legal or corporate parenting responsibility. Any assistance agreed will be assessed in accordance with this policy, taking account of the young person's care plan, pathway plan, education or training placement, independence skills and the priority order of travel assistance set out in section 2. Where a Child in Care or Care Leaver aged 16 to 24 gains an apprenticeship, the Council may provide support such as a funded Arriva travel pass where this is necessary and proportionate to enable participation.

4. Travel assistance for students aged 19+ with SEND

4.1

For students aged 19 and over, the Council will consider whether transport or other arrangements are necessary to enable participation in education or training. This includes young adults aged 19 to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, and adult learners where the Council has duties under sections 508F and 508G of the Education Act 1996. The assessment will focus on whether it is necessary for the Council, rather than the student, parent, carer, education provider or another source of support, to make arrangements.

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 or travel assistance, the Council will consider the individual circumstances of the student or young adult. The assessment may include:

- 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.

5. The 16 – 19 Bursary Scheme

5.1

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help eligible students meet the costs of participating in education or training, which may include transport costs. Some students in defined vulnerable groups may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 a year, subject to national rules and the student's circumstances. These groups include:

- 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

5.2

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.

5.3

Other students facing genuine financial difficulties may be awarded a bursary at the discretion of their school, college or training provider.

5.4

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.

5.5

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.

5.6

For further information on bursaries please visit the SEND Telford & Wrekin local offer website: Bursary Information 16-19 Year Olds - SEND - Local offer

(www.telfordsend.org.uk)

6. Situations where travel assistance will not be provided

6.1

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/carers 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.

7. Removal of support

7.1

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.

7.2

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.

7.3

On-going or serious behavioural issues may result in transport arrangements being suspended or permanently removed.

8. How to apply for post 16 travel assistance

8.1

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 <https://travelassistance.telford.gov.uk>

8.2

Applications for travel assistance can be made throughout the academic year. Where an application is fully completed and all required evidence is provided, the Council will aim to process it within 20 working days. Where additional information is needed, the decision may take longer. To support planning for students starting placements in September, applications should be received by 30 June 2026. Where applications are received after this date, travel assistance arrangements may not be in place for the start of the academic year, and students, parents or carers should make suitable interim travel arrangements while the application is considered.

8.3

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.

8.4

Should disagreements arise about the travel assistance offer then the Council will endeavour to informally resolve the issue. Further evidence may be requested.

8.5

In applying for transport assistance, parents are expected to support young people to be ready to access the appropriate support offered.

9. Appeals

9.1

This section explains the review, appeal and complaint routes available where an applicant disagrees with the Council's decision about eligibility for travel assistance or the assistance offered. The DfE statutory guidance expects local authorities to have a clear local complaints or review process. The process below applies to post-16 learners aged 16 to 18, including those who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. Students aged 19 and over should use the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, as set out in section 9.3.

9.2

For students aged 16 to 18, including those who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday, the Council operates a two-stage review and appeal process. If

an application is declined, or the applicant disagrees with the travel assistance offered, it remains the responsibility of the student, parent or carer to ensure attendance at the post-16 provision while the review or appeal is considered. The Council must receive a Stage 1 review request within 20 working days of the decision. Details of where to send the request will be included in the decision letter.

- **Stage 1: Review by Senior Officer** The appeal will be considered by a senior officer delegated by the Director. 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. Applicants 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.

9.3

Students aged 19 and over, or their representatives, may make a complaint to the Council using the Corporate Complaints Procedure. Complaints should be sent to customer.relationship@telford.gov.uk. Once the appeals or complaints process has concluded, a student cannot normally re-apply within the same academic year unless there has been a significant and material change in circumstances. During the review, appeal or complaint process, no new travel assistance will be provided and existing arrangements will not normally be changed unless the Council considers this necessary. The student remains responsible for attending their educational establishment until the outcome is determined. There is no right of appeal solely because the Council varies the form of travel assistance, unless the effect of the decision is to refuse or cease assistance.

9.4

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/>

9.5

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.

9.6

The Council will monitor the operation of this policy and may make in-year changes where required by law, statutory guidance, budget changes, operational need or local transport availability. Where significant in-year changes are proposed, the Council will consider whether consultation with relevant partners, providers, parents, carers and young people is required.

10. Safeguarding

10.1

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

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

Bus tickets and passes Telford & Wrekin Council have recently introduced 6 subsidised bus services, the 101, 102, 103, 104, 105 & 106.

We have the following fare offers on the services available for students:

Day Tickets £4 Adults £2 children (U19) Weekly Ticket 7 days £15 adults / £7.50 under 19
Season Tickets 28 days - £50 adult / £27.50 under 19 Annual - £500 adult / £275 under 19

Further information on the services including timetables can be found here

https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20174/public_transport/134/bus_services_and_timetables

For travel on Arriva bus services the authority have a Telford Teen Travel Card scheme where 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

Further information on Arriva bus services can be found here: Bus Travel in Telford | Tickets & Times | Arriva Bus 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>

12. 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

- 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/communitygroups/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>