

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BC

POST 16 TRANSPORT

POLICY STATEMENT

2019/20

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1. Introduction

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

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support. 'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (Year groups 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

This policy statement uses the term 'Post 16' to include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy statement specifies the support that Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council (the Council) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the Council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

The policy statement is in line with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance – Post-16 transport to education and training, which can be found at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training>

2. Transport and travel support

Who is eligible?

Assistance from the Council is available to support young people aged 16 or older who are engaged in learning or training at:

- a school sixth form;
- a Further Education institution;
- a LA maintain or assisted institution providing Higher or Further Education;
- a 16 to 19 Academy;
- an establishment funded directly by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA);
- a learning provider that is funded by the Council to deliver accredited programmes of learning; or
- an establishment directly funded by the ESFA that provides Apprenticeships or Traineeships.

Transport assistance is **discretionary** and subject to the availability of resources and to an individual student meeting the relevant eligibility criteria. *Please note there is a charge for Post 16 Transport which is set at £100 per term, a payment plan or direct debit can be arranged upon request.*

The Council has given priority to support those students who need it the most, with particular consideration to the needs of those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Local Authorities are responsible for promoting the effective participation of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in education and training up to the academic year in which they reach their 25th birthday.

In assessing the transport arrangements the Council has given regard to the following:

- The needs of those who could not access education or training provision if no arrangement were made (*Section 509AB(3) of the Education Act 1996*);
- The need to ensure that young people have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided (*Section 509AB(3)(b) of the Education Act 1996*);
- The distance from the learner's home to establishments of education and training (*Section 509AB(3)(c) of the Education Act 1996*) and taking into account the impact a learning difficulty or disability may have on a young person's ability to walk this distance;
 - The statutory walking distance of 3 miles (along the nearest available route) for those of compulsory school aged 8 and over (*Section 444(5) of the Education Act 1996*);
- The journey time to access different establishments (*Section 509AB(3)(c) as amended by the Education and Skills Act, Section 83*);
 - Best practice suggests that a journey of up to *75 minutes* each way to access learning is reasonable but that a single journey should not necessitate several changes of transport;
- The cost of transport to establishments in question (*Section 509AB(3)(d) of the Education Act 1996*);
- Alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments (*Section 509AB(3)(d) of the Education Act 1996*);
- Non-transport solutions to facilitate learner access;
- Preferences based on religion (*Section 509AD (3) of the Education Act 1996*).

What assistance is available?

The Council have the discretion to determine what transport and financial support is necessary to facilitate young people's attendance and determine a reasonable level of transport or financial support that is considered necessary to ensure access to education or training for young people resident within the borough.

The Council currently provides different levels of assistance based on individually assessed needs, reasonableness and affordability. At present, the Council offers the following to young people resident in the borough:

Independent Travel Training Scheme

The Community Transport Team's (CTT) Independent Travel Training (ITT) scheme will only support those young people already assessed or undergoing assessment to access mainstream transport provision through a programme of individual or group training.

- The Community Transport Service work with Stockton Riverside College to assess students in respect if independent travel training and to provide that training. Once a student can travel independently, travel assistance will not be provided;
- For students at Middlesbrough College or other FE colleges a referral needs to be made to the Community transport service for independent travel training;
- For students at sixth form colleges attached to schools (mainstream and special) independent travel training may be written into their EHCP. If this is the case then the school they attend, must make appropriate arrangements for travel training. The child or young person's progress with this will be reviewed as part of the annual review.

Applicants need to contact the Council Customer Service Centre on 01642 527117 for more details.

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

The Council provides young people who are aged 16 – 19, who are resident in the Borough and in part or full time education until the end of the academic year of their 19th birthday, the opportunity to apply for a half fare travel pass. This offer is also available to young people who are in work based training. The following applies:

- Unlimited travel, for half fare, within Stockton on Tees, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland;
 - Travel within Darlington Borough for half fare, until 10 p.m. Monday to Fridays, Darlington area College term times only.
- Pass validity will be from 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020;
- Passes cost students **£10*** apart from those families who are in receipt of certain benefits who will receive a free pass if they provide the necessary proof when apply. The benefits are:
 - Income Support (IS);
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA);
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance);
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
 - Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to a Working Tax Credit, and have a yearly gross income of no more than £16,190 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs);
 - The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
 - Working Tax Credit run-on paid for 4 weeks after qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit

Most operators accept Pathfinder passes on their scheduled services, but students should check with the operator before travelling. The scheme does not apply to special school / college buses.

Application for half fare passes

Students can obtain a pass directly via the Council Customer Service Centres in Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham. Details can be found here:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/stockton-council/customer-services/customer-service-centres/stockton-central-library-and-customer-service-centre/>

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/stockton-council/customer-services/customer-service-centres/thornaby-customer-service-centre/>

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/stockton-council/customer-services/customer-service-centres/billingham-library-and-customer-service-centre/>

Young people attending specialist colleges outside of the area, where there is no provision in the Tees Valley area, will need to discuss this with the appropriate college to apply through their hardship funds. The LA is unable to assist with this.

Concessionary seats

With regards to School 6th Form provision, young people can apply for a concessionary seat via Home to School Transport at a cost of **£100.00*** per term. There are only a few concessions available on the contracted school services, if it is part of the school route and this is not a dedicated College service. Places are only allocated to Sixth Form students if they are available and are given on a first come first served basis. Applicants need to contact the Council Customer Service Centre on 01642 527117 for more details.

In addition there is a public Scholars service operated by Compass Royston on behalf of Conyers School – whom you need to contact directly for more information.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

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

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:

- in care
- care leavers
- in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2019 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2019 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2019 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or the local authority

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

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/ search for post 16 bursaries.

Young parents / Care to Learn

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

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

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

Types of child care

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

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

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

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

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

Payments

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

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

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

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

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

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

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

Type of course

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

This includes courses that take place in:

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

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

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

Individual establishments provide some subsidised transport. Further information will be available prior to enrolment. Check individual establishments for further information.

Students reaching the age of 19 years and continuing on a course can continue to use the half fare bus pass until the end of the academic year in which they reach 19 years of age.

**Note: this amount may change*

3. **Provision for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties or those who face other difficulties in following their courses.**

Before applying for a travel pass a young person must consider where the course is available first and where. This means that if the same, or similar, course is available from a Post 16 provider closer to home in Stockton than outside of the borough, then the latter would not be considered eligible for support.

- **The Council** provides appropriate transport assistance for young people (over compulsory school age) aged 16 to 18 and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday who have previously had a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further education college course has been identified to be undertaken at the nearest appropriate establishment. Transport requirements will be reassessed when a young person moves from compulsory schooling to post-16 education. If a young person prefers to undertake the same course at a college further away, then this would be their preference and as such they would not receive any assistance with individual transport.
- **The Council** in partnership with School 6th Forms and FE Colleges will also consider individual applications from young people **aged 16-19 years old** who have an identified learning or physical disability that prevents them from using public transport and who haven't been assessed as having transport needs prior to the age of 16. Independent information would be needed to support these applications. An assessment of need will be completed to determine the appropriate support.
- **The Council** will consider individual circumstances for those young people with learning and physical difficulties who apply for transport **over the age of 19 years**. It would be likely that in most cases, they will be referred to Health and Social Care for an assessment. If assistance is agreed, a contribution towards the transport would be required.
- **Both Stockton Riverside College (Stockton and Billingham campuses) and Stockton 6th Form College** will consider individual applications in line with the policies for Learner Support Funds. A range of support in terms of both personal assistance and provision of appropriate equipment etc. may be available.
- **The Council's** half fare permit scheme would apply to these students who are between the ages of 16 and 19 years.

4. Additional information

Travel outside the borough

The Council supports choice so that young people should have a reasonable opportunity to choose between the courses available to them at 16 and be supported to access their choices. The Council transport e.g. taxis, mini-buses etc, will not be provided to learners who choose to enroll in an out-of-borough education establishment unless it makes sense for an individual student because a similar, suitable course is not available locally. The Council may provide assistance if a similar course is not available locally, however students should also enquire about travel assistance available from their learning provider. Colleges may be able to provide assistance with transport for some pupils from their student access budget.

Contacts for transport providers in the Stockton-On-Tees area and UK

For further details of Post 16 providers and local bus/coach operators covered by this policy statement please contact the Community Transport Service on 01642 527117.

Or write to:

Community Transport Service, Cowpen Lane Depot, Cowpen Lane, Billingham, TS23 4DD

This policy statement and other information about young people's travel are available on the Council website:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/schools-and-campus-stockton/school-transport/>

A main source of Government web based information for the general public can be found at GOV.UK at the following link: www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19.

5. Complaint / Appeals process

The Council aims to provide the best possible services at all times. However, if you are unhappy with a decision made under this policy statement, you may appeal using **the Council** standard complaint procedure. Any complaint about the policy statement or service will be investigated in line **the Council** corporate complaints procedure which can be found here:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/stockton-council/customer-services/complaints-compliments-or-comment-about-stockton-council-services/>

Appeals procedure if I am refused transport

If you are refused transport you will be sent a letter advising you of the reason for the refusal. You have the right to complain or appeal this decision.

Stage one: Review by a Council Officer

If you have been informed that you are not entitled to transport assistance under the Council's Post 16 policy you can apply for a review under Stage one.

You have 20 working days from receipt of the Post 16 transport decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision. This written request should be submitted to the Community Transport Service, Cowpen Lane Depot, Cowpen Lane, Billingham, TS23 4DD.

The written request should detail why you believe the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances you believe should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the written request from you, the appropriate Council Officer will review the original decision and send you a detailed written notification of the outcome of the review, setting out:

- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted;
- information about how other departments and/or agencies were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached;
- information about how the parent can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate)

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel

You have 20 working days from receipt of the Council'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 request from you an independent appeal panel will consider written representations from both you and officers involved in the case and give a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days), setting out:

- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted;
- information about how other departments and/or agencies were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached;
- information about how right of the parent/carer to put the matter to the Secretary of State.