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### **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

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#### **Time and Date**

2.00 pm on Thursday, 30th November, 2017

#### **Place**

Committee Room 3 - Council House

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#### **Public Business**

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interests**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
  - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2017
  - b) Matters Arising
4. **Implementation Update - Home to School/College Travel Assistance**  
(Pages 7 - 44)

Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)
5. **Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education** (Pages 45 - 50)

Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)
6. **Outstanding Issues** (Pages 51 - 52)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
7. **Work Programme** (Pages 53 - 58)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
8. **Any Other Business**

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

#### **Private Business**

Nil

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Martin Yardley, Executive Director, Place, Council House Coventry

Wednesday, 22 November 2017

Notes: 1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Rose, Governance Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3111, alternatively information about this meeting can be obtained from the following web link: <http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk>

2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Michelle Rose as soon as possible and no later than 1.00 p.m. on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.

3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Scrutiny Board, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors S Bains, J Clifford (By Invitation), S Hanson (Co-opted Member), K Jones (Co-opted Member), B Kaur (By Invitation), D Kershaw, J Lepoidevin, A Lucas, P Male, K Maton (By Invitation), C Miks, K Mulhall, M Mutton (Chair), R Potter (Co-opted Member), E Ruane (By Invitation) and P Seaman

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting OR if you would like this information in another format or language please contact us.

**Lara Knight/Michelle Rose**

**Telephone: (024) 7683 3237/3111**

**e-mail: [lara.knight@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:lara.knight@coventry.gov.uk) [michelle.rose@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.rose@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 12 October 2017**

Present:

Members:                                   Councillor M Mutton (Chair)  
  Councillor S Bains  
  Councillor R Brown (substitute for Councillor D Kershaw)  
  Councillor J Lepoidevin  
  Councillor A Lucas  
  Councillor P Male  
  Councillor C Miks  
  Councillor K Mulhall  
  Councillor P Seaman

Cabinet Members and                   Councillor B Kaur  
Deputy Cabinet Member               Councillor E Ruane  
Present:

Employees (by Directorate):

People                                    J Gregg, G Holmes, J Newman, L Pardy-McLaughlin,  
  M Rose, P Smith

Apologies:                               Councillor J Clifford  
  Councillor D Kershaw  
  S Hanson, K Jones and R Potter

## **Public Business**

### **18.     Declarations of Interests**

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

### **19.     Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 were approved.

Further to Minute 14/17 'Children's Services Redesign' members requested an all member briefing seminar on the proposed changes within wards.

### **20.     Improving the Quality and Performance of Social Workers**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which informed the Board of progress regarding improving the quality and performance of social workers who provide early help and protection for children in need, or children looked after, children placed for adoption and young people preparing to leave care. Social workers within the fostering service provide direct assessment and family placement services to foster carers.

The briefing note detailed the following:

- Recruitment
- Social work pathway
- Social work Academy
- Social work teaching partnership
- Social work accreditation
- Performance of social workers

The Scrutiny Board discussed the following:

- Comparisons with other authorities
- Exit interview information
- Accreditation and pathways
- Agency workers
- Support through studying
- Potential retention offers including rotation, transfers, sabbaticals
- Audits

Members were interested that the average career length for social workers was 8 years.

It was agreed that information about exit interviews and audit information would be shared with members.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board noted the report and requested a further progress review in 6 months or earlier.**

## 21. **Creation of a Regional Adoption Agency**

The Scrutiny Board noted a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided an overview of the proposal to create a Regional Adoption Agency via a shared service arrangement with Solihull Metropolitan Council, Warwickshire County Council and Worcestershire County Council. This new Regional Adoption Agency to be known as Adoption Central England (ACE). Cabinet would be asked on the 31st October 2017 to approve that Coventry City Council enters into a shared service arrangement alongside the three other local authorities to undertake the majority of functions of the City Council relating to adoption.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on the following:

- Sharing services
- Further detail
- Ofsted
- Financial implications
- Adoption support services

The Scrutiny Board requested that the Cabinet Report be circulated.

## 22. **Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board noted the Outstanding Issues.

The Scrutiny Board noted the communication the Carers Trust had made with a local school to identify and offer support to Young Carers.

23. **Work Programme**

The Board noted the additional meeting arranged for 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2017.

24. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 3.30 pm)

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Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: Thursday, 30th November, 2017**

**Subject: Implementation update, home to school/college travel assistance**

### 1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To report on the progress of implementation, of the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (Statutory School Age) and Post 16 Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policy.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- 1) Consider and note the content of the briefing note
  - 2) Identify any further recommendations for the Cabinet Member.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 Following a three month consultation period that ran between November 2016 and January 2017, the Council published a new home to school travel assistance policy for pupils of statutory school age and a Post 16 home to school/college travel assistance policy. (Appendices A, B and C)
- 3.2 The policies came into force in April 2017 for new applicants to the system and were applied to existing applicants with effect 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017
- 3.3 It is noted that on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017, the Government revised the statutory guidance 'Transport to education and training for people aged 16 to 18' which was originally published in 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training> It is confirmed that the Council's post 16 policy, remains fully compliant against the statutory provisions.

### 4 Implementation Update

- 4.1 The Council received the bulk of applications in respect of children and young people with SEN in July and August 2017. It was evident that the new process was labour intensive and the decision making process in relation to entitlement was complex. The following tables set out the volume of demand by age range and provide a breakdown of the appeals process and outcomes.

Table 1: Applications received by phase:

<b>Applications received</b>	
Pre-school	1
Statutory school age	801
Post 16	161
<b>Total</b>	<b>963</b>

Table 2: Initial decision – entitlement:

<b>Decisions</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Pre-school	0	1
Statutory school age	735	66
Post 16	95	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>133</b>

Table 3: Stage 1 appeal, outcome:

<b>Appeals submitted at Stage 1</b>		<b>Appeal dismissed (unsuccessful)</b>	<b>Appeal upheld (successful)</b>
Pre-school	0		
Statutory school age	50	28	22
Post 16	25	20	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>26</b>

Table 4: Stage 2 appeal, outcome:

<b>Appeals received at Stage 2</b>		<b>Appeal dismissed (unsuccessful)</b>	<b>Appeal upheld (successful)</b>
Pre-school	0		
Statutory school age	12	6	6
Post 16	8	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

- 4.2 Many applicants met the eligibility criteria on the basis of distance. In these cases, SEN criteria did not need to be applied and the applications were processed quickly. The application of entitlement on the grounds of SEN for children of statutory school age, was relatively easy to apply and most of these applications were processed quickly. Post 16 applications proved more problematic to process, because there is no automatic duty on the LA to make arrangements. Judgement therefore had to be applied on whether a young person could reasonably make independent arrangements to travel to school or college. This was particularly difficult when a student or their parent/carer declared that they had access to a car and a driver, but were seeking reimbursement for the cost of fuel.
- 4.3 During the process and taking into account ongoing parental feedback, it was evident that the application form and supporting guidance had led to confusion for some families. Consequently, occasion insufficient information was provided to support a decision. However, these cases were reconsidered in the light of additional information through the appeals process
- 4.4 The application of the exceptional circumstance criteria has proved effective in identifying those families who require assistance, because of their unique circumstances but do not necessarily meet the standard eligibility criteria.
- 4.5 School leaders have highlighted any students that they believe require assistance because of special circumstances where exceptional criteria can be applied but the family may not be able to confidently articulate their position. This has enabled the LA to reach the most vulnerable children.



## **5 Learning and System Improvement**

5.1 Following application of the process, learning and feedback has led to the following actions for improvement:

- The application deadline for 2018/19 will be brought forward to ensure that applicants receive a decision before the end of the current academic year
- The application form will be revised, to assist applicants in providing all necessary information to inform the eligibility decision making process. This will be tested with the assistance of parents before launch to ensure that it is easy to understand and as simple as possible to complete
- The application form will enable post 16 applicants to provide evidence of low-income eligibility where required, at the point of application. This will ensure that contributions towards the cost of transport are assessed accurately at the point of first application thereby avoiding the need to appeal
- The current Travel Assistance policies will be supported with an easy to follow parent/young person guide. The draft guide will be reviewed with and by parents to ensure that it provides all of the information necessary before publication.

## **6 Summary**

6.1 It is acknowledged that a minority of parents remain dissatisfied with the travel assistance policies because they object to:

- An equalisation of the mileage reimbursement rate to 45p per mile, where this has resulted in a loss of income, compared to the personal travel budget rate paid in the 2016/17 academic years
- Payment of the post 16 contributory fee of £600 per annum, which is halved to £300 if low-income is evidenced.

## **7 Appendices**

7.1 Report to Cabinet 7<sup>th</sup> January 2017: Education Travel Assistance – outcome of public consultation

7.2 SEN Home to School Travel Assistance Policy 2017

7.3 SEN Post 16 Home to School Travel Assistance Policy 2017

**Name: Jeannette Essex**

**Job Title: Head SEND and Specialist Services**

**Contact Details: Email [jeannete.essex@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:jeannete.essex@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: 02476 832715**

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Cabinet

7 March 2017

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – Councillor Maton

**Director Approving Submission of the Report:**

Executive Director of People

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Education Travel Assistance – outcome of public consultation

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**Is this a key decision?**

Yes - the proposals within the report are anticipated to have a city-wide impact

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**Executive Summary:**

Coventry City Council has statutory responsibilities for travel assistance for eligible children and young people. However, it currently over-provides traditional forms of transport for children and young people compared to statutory duties and the provision made by other local authorities.

There are two key consequences of this. Firstly, some children and young people are missing out on the opportunity to develop independent travel skills. Independent travel skills gained in adolescence can be taken forward into adult life. Secondly, there is significant forecast overspend on the Council's Home to School Transport budget (2016/17 forecast £3.6m spend against a £3.1m budget). Current policies and practice are not aligned with national statutory duties.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approved a public consultation at the Cabinet Member meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016. A public consultation took place from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

This report sets out the findings from the public consultation and recommends the implementation of revised policies. Where this leads to travel assistance stopping for some children and young people, alternatives will be discussed with family including particular consideration of independent travel as appropriate.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to approve:

1. A revised Travel Assistance Policy (Statutory School Age Children) which aligns the statutory walking distance eligibility criteria to national levels and has a stronger focus on the Council's travel assistance on public transport and innovative travel options aimed at reducing dependence on minibus and taxi options as appropriate.
2. A new Travel Assistance Policy for post 16 and post 19 students that fully reflects current statutory requirements. This policy includes a contributory charge towards the cost of travel assistance for all post-16 students whose families do not meet the criteria for low income household concessions.

**List of Appendices included:**

- Appendix 1: New Travel Assistance Policies: for children aged 5-16 years old of school age and post 16  
Appendix 2: Equality and Consultation Analysis

**Background papers:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **1. Context (or background)**

1.1 Coventry City Council has a statutory responsibility to assist eligible children and young people of statutory school age to travel to school. In certain limited circumstances, this duty may extend to young people age 16 to 18 and 19 to up to 25 where the young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan, attending Further Education institutions. It is evident that the Council currently makes provision for children and young people who do not meet the statutory eligibility criteria and that the mode of travel assistance is commonly in the form of door to door minibus or taxi.

1.2 Current policies and practice do not align with current national statutory duties and guidance. The Council does not currently have a post 19 Travel Assistance policy for students with SEN, this is a new statutory requirement.

1.3 There are two key consequences of current practice. Firstly, children and young people who have the potential to travel independently are not given the opportunity to do so and thereby are not equipped with the necessary skills to independently access their community and the workplace in adulthood. Secondly, over-provision has resulted in a significant projected overspend on the Council's Home to School Transport budget (2016/17 forecast spend of £3.6m against a £3.1m budget). The average spend per child, is currently £4,260 per annum. This expenditure is set in the context of significant financial cuts to the Council's budget.

## **1.4 Children and young people of statutory school age (5-16 years old)**

### **1.5 Statutory guidance and duties**

1.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to make such travel arrangements as it considers necessary for eligible children and young people to facilitate their attendance at a qualifying school free of charge. These are set out in the Education Act 1996 and in the Department for Education's *Home to school travel and transport guidance – Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014*.

1.5.2 The guidance states that in order to comply with their home to school transport duties local authorities must promote the use of sustainable travel and transport and make transport arrangements for all eligible children. There are four factors that the Council needs to take into consideration when assessing eligibility: statutory walking distance, SEN, disability or mobility, unsafe routes and extended rights.

### **1.5.3 Statutory walking distance**

A child will be an eligible child where the distance from the child's home to the nearest qualifying school with available places that provides an education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs, exceeds statutory walking distances. Statutory walking distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely. Local authorities must offer travel assistance according to the statutory walking distance criteria if:

- a) The child lives 2 miles or more away from their nearest suitable school measured by statutory walking distance and they are under 8 years of age (and of compulsory school age); or
- b) The child or young person lives 3 miles or more away from their nearest suitable school measured by statutory walking distance and they are 8 years of age or over (and of compulsory school age).

#### 1.5.4 **SEN, disability or mobility**

Local authorities must provide travel assistance for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular travel assistance requirements.

#### 1.5.5 **Unsafe routes**

Local authorities must make travel assistance arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk.

#### 1.5.6 **Extended rights (low family income)**

This refers to eligibility related to family income levels. Local authorities must offer free travel assistance where pupils are entitled to free school meals or if their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit if there is compliance with any of the following:

- a) The nearest suitable schools is beyond 2 miles from the home address (for children over the age of 8 and under 11);
- b) The school is between 2 and 6 miles from the home address (if aged 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools);
- c) The school is between 2 and 15 miles from the home address and is the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

### 1.6 **Current delivery and approach**

1.6.1 The Council provides travel assistance to 711 children and young people aged 5-16 years with special education needs and disabilities which is forecast to cost £2.86m in 2016/17 including escort costs. Of this, £0.68m is spent on taxis, £1.96m on minibuses, £0.22m on personal travel budgets. Work has been undertaken during 2016/17 financial year to improve non-policy processes and monitoring to reduce costs.

1.6.2 The Council currently makes provision in excess of its statutory duties. Current policy and practice for children and young people with SEN, disability and mobility eligibility apply a one mile walking distance eligibility for travel assistance to a special school and a two mile walking distance for eligibility to primary schools age 8 to 11. An analysis of transport provision identifies an over-use of door to door taxis and minibuses when public transport options or pick-up points may be suitable.

### 1.7 **Proposals**

The proposal is that the Council revises its Travel Assistance Policies for children of statutory school age, post 16 and post 19 students. The proposed policy for statutory school age:

- a) Aligns the statutory walking distance eligibility criteria to statutory duty levels;
- b) Makes provision for exceptional circumstances;
- c) Sets out the decision making process for the type of travel assistance offered;
- d) Ensures that choice is tempered with the need to ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources;
- e) Promotes independent travel, the use of public transport and other innovative travel options
- f) Reviews the current personal travel budget to equalise entitlement to 45p per mile within City and 25p per mile out of City.

- 1.7.1 An analysis of the impact of applying the proposed national statutory walking distance criteria to current users, identifies that 343 children from a cohort of 711 children and young people would no longer qualify for travel assistance on the grounds of distance. However, it is estimated that 225 of the 343 children would satisfy other eligibility criteria as a consequence of the severity of their SEN or mobility. It is estimated that 118 children and young people would no longer qualify for travel assistance. This would mean that if changes were implemented, an estimated 118 (16%) of current users would not qualify for travel assistance as a result of these proposals.
- 1.7.2 These estimates are based on the assumption that children in the following categories are likely to remain **eligible** for travel assistance: profound and multiple learning difficulties; severe learning disability; complex communication disorder that has a severe impact on cognition; sensory impaired (registered blind or profoundly deaf); severe social, emotional and mental health difficulties requiring supervision to secure personal safety, physical disability that significantly impedes mobility e.g. wheelchair users.
- 1.7.3 Children with assessed needs in the following categories, are likely to be **ineligible for** travel assistance as a consequence of their SEN: moderate learning difficulties; speech and language difficulties; moderate social communication difficulties; moderate social emotional mental health difficulties moderate visual Impairment; moderate hearing loss. However, current users may still meet eligibility criteria in other areas, specifically distance, low income/extended rights, unsafe route or exceptional circumstances.
- 1.7.4 Where children are ineligible, parents/carers would take responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance at school.
- 1.7.5 The application of the policy would require families to formally apply for travel assistance on an annual basis. The Council would assess the most appropriate way of delivering travel assistance on an individual level applying the criteria set out in the policy. It is envisaged that this process would provide an opportunity for families independently or together to identify innovative modes of alternative travel and that Council arranged provision would prioritise the development of independent travel skills and the use of public transport.
- 1.7.6 It is proposed that the new policies would be implemented from 1 April 2017 onwards for new applicants and that the policy would be implemented for existing recipients from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 onwards.

## **1.8 Travel Assistance for 16-18**

### **1.8.1 Statutory guidance**

- 1.8.2 The Council's statutory duties are set out in the Education Act 1996 and the DfE publication: *Post-16 transport to education and training – Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2014)*. This guidance states that the overall intention of the 16-18 transport duty is to:
- ensure that learners of sixth form age are able to access the education and training of their choice; and
  - ensure that, if support for access is required, this will be assessed and provided where necessary.

- 1.8.3 Key factors set out are: the needs of those who could not access education or training provision if no arrangements were made; the need to ensure that young people have

reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided; the distance from the learner's home to establishments of education and training; the journey time to access different establishments; the cost of transport to the establishments in question; alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments; non-transport solutions to facilitate learner access; and preferences based on religion.

- 1.8.4 The statutory guidance states that local authorities may ask learners and their parents for a contribution to transport costs. The guidance goes on to say that when exercising this discretion local authorities should:
- ensure that any contribution is affordable for learners and their parents
  - ensure that there are arrangements in place to support those families on low income
  - take into account the likely duration of learning and ensure that transport policies do not adversely impact particular groups.
- 1.8.5 The guidance also states local authorities may take receipt of 16-19 bursary funding into account when assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport.
- 1.8.6 **Current delivery and approach**
- 1.8.7 The Council currently provides travel assistance to 110 young people aged 16 years and over at a forecast cost for 2016/17 of £0.60m. Of this, £0.52m is forecast spend on minibuses, £0.05m on taxis and £0.03m on Personal Travel Budgets.
- 1.8.8 Where young people have high needs, travel options are considered on an individual basis. Young people with high needs but able to travel more independently receive a bus pass. More vulnerable young people with physical/cognitive issues are offered assisted transport. Where young people are transported to out of area settings, they travel together in the same taxis where possible and drop off and collection times are harmonised to minimise journeys and costs.
- 1.8.9 The Council's approach is aligned to the statutory guidance, however, Coventry City Council does not currently ask for a parental contribution towards travel assistance.
- 1.8.10 The forecast average cost per young person of post-16 transport in Coventry for 2016/17 is £5,450.

## **2 Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 The option of no change in respect of travel assistance for statutory school age has been considered. However, this would mean a continuance of over-provision resulting in a growing over-spend against budget. All other West Midlands Local Authorities have successfully applied statutory eligibility criteria, evidencing that a change in policy is both justified and will meet need. A continuance of current provision will impede the development of independent travel skills. This option is not therefore recommended.
- 2.2 The option of no change in respect of post 16 travel assistance has been considered. However, non-SEN students have to take responsibility for securing attendance at post 16 provisions within school or college at their own expense. The Equality Act demands equality of access for disabled people, it does not require services to provide an advantage. Students with a disability receive mobility allowances to secure their access to the community, it is therefore difficult to justify delivering a free service. This option is not therefore recommended. The proposed contribution of £600 per annum is deemed to



be affordable and represents an average of other local authorities' contribution levels. The charge will be halved to £300 per academic year, if a financially dependent student is from a family on a low household income.

- 2.3 There is recognition of all the above issues and that potential changes to travel assistance can cause significant anxiety for some parents/carer and their children and some of the individual comments received reflect this.
- 2.4 There is particular recognition that issues including the safety of children and young people and their attendance at educational settings are of paramount importance.
- 2.5 The new policy (including the application process) is aimed at enabling those children/young people who really need travel assistance to get it and ensuring that Coventry City Council meets its statutory responsibilities. In addition to the new policy a range of practice and process changes are taking place which have been outlined earlier. Alternative suggestions will continue to be considered as part of policy and practice.
- 2.6 The new policy has a "safety net" of provision for exceptional circumstances and an appeals process.
- 2.7 The proposal is that the policies are implemented as consulted on and where this leads to travel assistance stopping for some children and young people, that alternatives are discussed with the family and worked through with particular consideration of independent travel as appropriate.

### **3 Results of consultation undertaken**

#### **3.1 Consultation process**

3.1.1 The public consultation took place from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Awareness of the public consultation was through the following means:

- Communication to parents/carers of children current receiving travel assistance (through letters and information sheets at Special Schools)
  - Council social media
  - Web-pages on the Council's on-line website (proposed policies, information sheets)
  - Communication through One Voice Parent/Carer Forum and Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) networks
- There was also coverage in the Coventry Telegraph prior to the start of the consultation.

3.1.2 There were the following opportunities to give feedback on the proposed new travel assistance policies:

- 8 drop-in meetings across Coventry (Cheylesmore, Foleshill, Tile Hill, Central, Wood End) - including one hosted by One Voice/SENDIASS
- 3 sessions with young people at Sherbourne Fields School (whole school council), Riverbank Academy (post-16 year old students) and Hereward College (16-18 year old students).
- On-line survey (survey monkey) on the Council website

3.1.3 A total of 68 people were spoken to face-to-face about the consultation proposals. A total of 52 responses were received through survey monkey and 5 to the consultation mailbox.

- 3.1.4 At the Scrutiny Board 2 (SB2) meeting on 8th December 2016, SB2 members identified that some parents were not aware of the public consultation. This was addressed as a matter of urgency by a further round of communication to parents through letters and information sheets and the consultation was extended from ending 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Additional meetings and drop-in sessions were added to the schedule to ensure that there were multiple opportunities for people to express their views.
- 3.1.5 No petitions (e-petitions nor hard copy) were received regarding the proposals.
- 3.1.6 The consultation focused on understanding the views of people including the impact and concerns of the changes to policy and whether there were any alternative suggestions.

### **3.2 Impacts and concerns raised**

- 3.2.1 The following impacts and concerns were identified in the consultation and these were captured through the survey and in face-to-face meetings. The most frequently raised issue was that changes would cause additional strain to children and their families. This was raised by approximately 20-25 different people in the consultation. The next biggest concerns were the logistical challenges of getting siblings to schools in different locations – particularly considering the distance to some special schools and that changes would lead to a decline in attendance at educational settings. These concerns were raised by approximately 10-15 different people.
- 3.2.2 The next most frequently raised concerns related to: financial impact including the impact where parents/carers work; safety concerns if Council transport was not provided and a general concern of the impact of the changes on the most vulnerable in society. Each of these concerns was raised by approximately 5-10 different people.
- 3.2.3 The final category of concerns were raised by approximately 1 to 5 different people. These included: parents not able to drive; that changes would reduce independence; traffic/environmental issues – including traffic around school gates; impact on deaf children; challenges using public transport; the impact on 0-4 year olds as the school-age policy does not cover them; how the figure of £600 per year post-16 was arrived at (*note: this was based on a comparison of contributions in other West Midlands local authorities and proposing a charge at the lower end of these local authorities*) and potential impact on internships of post-16 policy.
- 3.2.4 Other concerns raised – outside the specific scope of this review – were the number of specialist places in Coventry and the need for more special autism schools in and around the Coventry area.
- 3.2.5 There is recognition of all the above issues and that potential changes to travel assistance can cause significant anxiety for some parents/carer and their children. There is particular recognition that issues including the safety of children and young people and their attendance at educational settings are of paramount importance.

### **3.3 Alternative suggestions**

- 3.3.1 The consultation gave the opportunity to put forward alternative suggestions. A total of 39 people answered this question on survey monkey in addition to comments made in face-to-face meetings. Many of these focussed on **practice and process rather than policy**.

3.3.2 The following suggestions were made by the public were: pick up stops around the city, sharing buses between different schools, having a more efficient transport provider and less money paid to contractors – with direct Council provision instead, fewer temporary staff, stopping taxis that only have 1 or 2 children in them, Travel training a wider range of children, better route planning, provision of breakfast and after-school clubs, escorts to help children travel via public transport, opportunities to cycle, paying for Uber taxis, having a nominated person in school to pick up children who need assistance, grants, sponsorship from local companies.

3.3.3 Some of the above suggestions are already taking place. Whilst this feedback does not directly relate to this consultation (entitlement criteria) the feedback will be used to inform contracting and commissioning arrangements going forward. Safeguarding and safety of children will be of highest importance in consideration of these suggestions.

3.3.4 The following alternative suggestions were about **policy** and the response to these is shown in italics:

- Ending transport for those who can afford it, to enable those on low income to have it/means tested. *This suggestion cannot be taken forward as national statutory guidance does not give the flexibility to take this approach for school-age travel assistance.*
- Checklist on criteria. *The new policies set out criteria.*
- Parents making contributions. *The Council does not have the statutory flexibility to charge parents for travel for school-age children. It does have the flexibility to ask for a contribution to post-16 travel and this is included in the new policy.*
- That parents should not receive payments (referring to Personal Travel Budgets) for taking their children to school as they should be doing this anyway and that parents are gaining financially unnecessarily. *The draft policy ensures value for money is considered when determining the offer.*

#### **3.4 Feedback from young people**

3.4.1 A strong theme in the consultation with young people was that they wanted to be travel trained to enable more independent travel both now and into adult life, but that their parents did not want them to be. There was also a theme about having better information regarding travel training for young people and their parents. The strongest theme for Hereward College students was accessibility to bus stops (both in the city centre, with the area large outside of pool meadow and that the bus stop is not in close proximity to the college and is on a sharp incline). Some students agreed that a contribution to travel may be fair.

#### **4 Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 This decision would be implemented from April 2017 for new applicants and from September 2017 onwards for existing recipients.

## 5 Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

### 5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 Spend on SEN Transport provision in 2015/16 amounted to £3.8m against a budget of £3.3m resulting in a £0.5m overspend. Spend has reduced in 16/17 as a result of work to review processes and find efficiencies within the existing policy and the forecast spend for 2016/17 £3.6m. However the forecast overspend for 16/17 is still £0.5m which is due to planned budgetary savings being applied.

5.1.2 Based on the proposed changes to the travel assistance policy it is forecast that of the 821 children and young people currently receiving travel assistance 118 school age children and 10 post 16 children will no longer receive assistance. The table below details the forecast reductions in spend:

Proposal	Forecast Reduction (£m)
Change to distance criteria in line with statutory guidance	0.43
Revision of door to door transport to the provision of bus passes for secondary age young people attending special school provision, able to access public transport	0.06
Revised mileage rate for Personal Transport Budgets	0.08
Proposed charging policy for Post 16 (Sixth form age)	0.03
Total Forecast Reduction in Spend	<b>0.60</b>

5.1.3 The forecast reduction in spend for 2017/18 is forecast to be in the region of £0.40m as a result of the proposed September 2017 implementation. The full forecast reductions will be realised from 2018/19 financial year.

5.1.4 The methodology used to forecast savings is based on estimated reductions in the numbers of children and young people transported as a result of the proposed changes to eligibility criteria. This will result in reductions to routes and also vehicles. The actual savings delivered will be affected by the cohort of young people being transported and the ability to reduce routes and vehicles in line with estimates.

5.1.5 Once the policy changes are implemented the SEN Transport budgets will be monitored through the budgetary control process to evaluate the actual level of savings achieved. In addition to the proposed policy changes work continues to promote existing alternative transport options such as personal transport budgets (PTB) and independent travel training which will help to promote independence for pupils and assist in reducing spend.

### 5.2 Legal implications

#### 5.2.1 Publication of general arrangements and policies (51)

“Local authorities must publish general arrangements and policies in respect of home to school travel and transport for children of compulsory school age. This information should be clear, easy to understand and provide full information on the travel and transport arrangements. It should explain both statutory transport provision, and that provided on a discretionary basis. It should also set out clearly how parents can hold local authorities to account through their appeals processes. Local authorities should ideally integrate their Sustainable Modes of School Travel strategies into these policy statements, and publish them together.”

## 6 Other implications

### 6.1 How will this contribute to the Council's priorities? <http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan>

A stronger focus on independent travel will contribute to citizens living more independent lives.

### 6.2 How is risk being managed?

Risks are being managed through project management processes.

### 6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

#### 6.3.1 Financial impacts

Financial implications were set out in paragraph 5.1.

#### 6.3.2 Staffing impacts

There are no specific staff impacts to these proposals.

### 6.4 Equalities / EIA

The Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA) outlined in Appendix 2 sets out the equality impacts.

### 6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

There are no specific implication for (or impact on) the environment.

### 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

There are no specific implications for partner organisations.

#### Report author(s):

**Name and job title:** Adrian Coles, Programme Delivery Manager

**Directorate:** People Directorate

#### Tel and email contact:

024 7683 3551 [Adrian.Coles@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Adrian.Coles@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Lara Knight	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Resources	13-2-17	14-2-17
Jeannette Essex	Head of SEND Services	People	10-2-17	13-2-17

Rob Orton	Accountant	Resources	13-2-17	13-2-17
Sharon Cassidy	SEN Management	People	13-2-17	14-2-17
Richard Adams	Lead Accountant	Resources	13-2-17	13-2-17
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Finance: Rachael Sugars	Finance Manager	Resources	13-2-17	13-2-17
Legal: Elaine Atkins	Solicitor, Legal Services	Resources	13-2-17	14-2-17
Director: Kirston Nelson	Director	People	10-2-17	14-2-17
Members: Cllr K Maton	Cabinet Member Education and Skills		10-2-17	11-2-17

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**Coventry Travel Assistance Policy**  
Statutory School Age  
(5-16 years old)

This policy is effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 for pupils currently in receipt of SEN Home to School Travel assistance.

This policy is valid from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 for pupils who are currently **not** in receipt of SEN home to school transport.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Coventry City Council (the “Council”) is committed to enabling all children to lead independent healthy lives, feel safe and secure and achieve their full potential. For children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, this includes enabling them to develop the skills to live an ordinary life in adulthood, and fulfil their entitlement to independent living and employment.
- 1.2 This Policy sets out the entitlement for children and young people of statutory school age (5 to 16), who have special educational needs or a disability to home to school travel assistance. This policy reflects the Department for Education’s *Home to school travel and transport guidance – Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014*<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.3 In determining travel assistance for eligible children and young people, the Council is committed to reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety and reducing the environmental impact of vehicle journeys by promoting the use of alternative forms of travel - such as walking, cycling and use of integrated public transport. In this regard, the Council has adopted the principles contained in its Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy and works closely with schools to develop School Travel Plans that help to achieve this aim. Wherever possible, in the provision of travel assistance the Council will consider travel options that minimise the number and length of vehicle journeys.

**2 Who this policy applies to**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all eligible children and young people of statutory school age (5 to 16) who are resident in Coventry and have special educational needs or a disability.
- 2.1 A child’s home is defined as the place where the child is habitually and normally

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/445407/Home\\_to\\_School\\_Travel\\_and\\_Transport\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445407/Home_to_School_Travel_and_Transport_Guidance.pdf)

resident in Coventry. Where a child lives at more than one address, the principal home address is the address at which the child spends at least 50% of their time, which would ordinarily be the address the child is registered at whilst attending school, and, where applicable, the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or Child Tax Credits for the child.

- 2.2 The Council does not provide travel assistance for children of pre-school age (0-4 year olds) except in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.3 The eligibility criteria for young people age 16 to 25 in further education, is the subject of a separate policy.
- 2.4 This policy covers the provision of home to school travel assistance at the beginning and end of a school day only.

### **3 Schools covered by this policy**

- 3.1 This policy refers to “suitable” and “qualifying” schools. “Suitable” means that the school is suited to the pupil’s age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the pupil may have.
- 3.2 Qualifying schools are: community, foundation or voluntary schools; community or foundation special schools, non-maintained special schools, pupils referral units, maintained nursery schools; or city technology colleges (CTC), city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or academies, including free schools and University Technical Colleges (UTC).
- 3.3 For children with special educational needs, an independent school can also be a qualifying school where this is named on the child’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement, and it is the nearest of two or more schools named and meets qualifying criteria on distance or needs led eligibility criteria set out in this policy.

### **4 Eligibility criteria**

- 4.1 The Council will take into account the following criteria and considerations (as set out in statutory guidance) to determine whether a child or young person is eligible to receive travel assistance from the Council:

- Statutory walking distance eligibility;
- Extended rights eligibility;
- Special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility;
- Unsafe route eligibility; and
- Exceptional circumstances.

#### **4.2 Statutory walking distance**

- 4.2.1 Statutory walking distance refers to the distance between the child’s home address and their nearest suitable school. The nearest suitable school is taken to mean the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs that the child may have. Statutory walking distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely.



4.2.2 Children will be **eligible** for travel assistance based on distance if they meet the following criteria:

- a) The child lives at least 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school (as defined at 4.2.1 above) measured by the shortest safe walking distance and they are under 8 years of age); or
- b) The child **or young person** lives at least 3 miles away from their nearest suitable school (as defined at 4.2.1 above) measured by statutory walking distance and they are 8 years of age or over (and of compulsory school age).

#### **4.3 Extended rights eligibility (low income levels)**

4.3.1 Extended right eligibility refers to eligibility related to family income levels. The Council will provide travel assistance where pupils are entitled to free school meals or if their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit in the following cases:

- a) The nearest suitable schools is beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11);
- b) The nearest suitable school is between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools);
- c) The nearest suitable school is between 2 and 15 miles and the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

#### **4.4 Special educational needs, disability or mobility**

4.4.1 If a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school accompanied by an adult, because of a disability affecting their mobility or associated health and safety issues relating to their special educational needs (SEN), they may be eligible for travel assistance. This is regardless of the distance between home and school. Eligibility will be assessed on an individual basis.

4.4.2 In determining whether a child can reasonably be expected to walk to school, accompanied by an adult, the Council will take into account the maturity of the child and whether it is reasonable to expect a parent to accompany a child of that age.

#### **4.5 Unsafe route eligibility**

4.5.1 A child will be eligible for travel assistance if it is agreed that all walking routes inside the distance criteria are judged to be unsafe.

#### **4.6 Exceptional circumstances**

4.6.1 Where a child or young person does not meet the eligibility criteria, parents may apply for travel assistance under the exceptional circumstances criteria. Applications will be determined on personal circumstances and consider whether on the evidence provided, a child would not be able to travel to and from school without support and that it would be unreasonable to expect a parent to meet the responsibility of securing attendance.

4.6.2 The following are examples of what would **not** be considered exceptional circumstances:

- Parents/carers work or care commitments

- Parents/carers experiencing difficulties in getting their child to a pick-up point

## 5 Types of travel assistance

5.1 In determining the form travel assistance will take the Council will consider the following factors:

- The special educational needs, disability or mobility needs of the child;
- The development of independent travel skills;
- The length of journey in distance and travel time;
- The efficient and effective use of public resources.

5.3 The travel assistance offer will include:

- i) **Independent Travel training:** the provision of independent travel training will enable young people to travel independently between home and school utilizing public transport when appropriate.
- ii) **Public Transport:** the provision of a bus pass for the child or if appropriate the child and accompanying adult.
- iii) **Innovative travel arrangements:** these may include a walking bus or cycling allowance.
- iv) **Personal Travel Budget:** A personal travel budget may be agreed with parents to enable them to make arrangements to secure their child's school attendance. This will be calculated at a rate of 45p per mile for journeys within the City and 25p per mile for out of City journeys.
- v) **Minibuses and taxis:** Where assessed as essential due to the particular needs of the child or young person, the Council may provide a minibus, taxi or adapted vehicle. Generally, the number of children in each vehicle will be maximised. Route planning may require children to be collected from agreed pick-up points. In these instances pick-up points will be secured at safe and convenient locations, within a reasonable distance from the child's home.

5.4 The Council will ensure that the travel assistance offer is reasonable and meets the need of the child. If a parent chooses not to accept that offer, the Council will not be obliged to offer an alternative option.

## 6 Escorts

6.1 The Council may determine an escort is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of children, the safe operation of vehicles and/or the care needs of individual children or young people. This will be determined during the eligibility assessment process.

## 7 Parental responsibility and preferences

7.1 Parents/carers are responsible in law, for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If a parent/carer exercises their right to choose a school other than the nearest suitable school, the Council does not have a duty to provide travel assistance. In these circumstances parents/carers will be required to make their own

travel arrangements.

- 7.3 If a family move home and elect to keep their child at a particular school, eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed, If the school is not the nearest suitable school or the family have moved closer to the school and it is deemed within reasonable walking distance, the child may not meet the eligibility criteria for travel assistance.

## **8 The Application and Assessment Process**

- 8.1 The application process is designed to be as simple as possible whilst ensuring that full consideration is given to the specific needs of the child or young person. Parents should allow up to three weeks from the date of application to the start of any assistance provided.

### **8.2 Stage 1: Application**

- 8.2.1 The parent/carer must make a formal application for travel assistance. The application form is available on-line on the Coventry City Council website (and through the following link: [Application Form](#)). Hard copies are available on request.

### **8.3 Stage 2: Assessment**

- 8.3.1 The application will be assessed against the Council's eligibility criteria. If the criteria is met the Council will then determine the most appropriate type of travel assistance to offer taking into account the factors set out in paragraph 4 of this policy.

### **8.4 Stage 3: Decision**

- 8.4.1 Following the assessment process, the parent/carer will be informed in writing of the outcome of the application and will be sent details of the travel assistance offer and any contact details they may require.

## **9 Appeals**

### **9.1 Making and appeal**

- 9.1.1 This section outlines the appeal procedure to be used where you believe that the decision made by officers with respect to your eligibility for travel assistance is incorrect. This is not a statutory right of appeal.

- 9.1.2 An appeal must be submitted in writing within **28 calendar days** of the letter refusing travel assistance or proposing changes to existing arrangements to:-

- 9.1.3 Appeals must be sent to the SEN Team, Coventry City Council, Floor 3, Civic Centre 2, Earl Street, Coventry Cv1 5RS or by e-mail to [SEN@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:SEN@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk) within 28 calendar days of receiving the decision not to provide travel assistance.

### **9.2 Stage 1**

- 9.2.1 The decision will be reviewed by a Senior Officer.

- 9.2.2 The letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging Coventry's refusal of

assistance or changes to proposed arrangements and include any fresh documentary evidence.

9.2.3 Your appeal will be reviewed and all evidence submitted will be considered. The original decision may be upheld, overturned or alternative solutions may be identified. If the application is not approved the young person will be notified of the decision in writing and will be informed of the next and final stage of the appeal process.

### **9.3 Stage 2 – Final Appeal**

9.3.1 This will be considered by an independent appeal panel. Final appeals must be submitted in writing within 28 days of the date of the stage 1 decision. This letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging the stage 1 decision and may include new documentary evidence.

9.3.2 The parent/carer will be informed of the final decision in writing.

9.3.3 If the parent/carer is unhappy with the decision reached they have a further right of appeal to the Secretary of State if it is considered that the Council has failed to comply with procedural rules or there were any irregularities in the way the appeal was handled.

9.3.4 If the parent/carer considers that the decision is flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

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

9.3.6 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 Removal of support**

10.1 The Council may 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 young person no longer being eligible for support or has been assessed as not requiring such support.

10.2 The Council expects young people to behave appropriately on transport and must ensure health and safety of all passengers and staff is maintained. Any behavioral issues whilst on transport will be dealt with by the Council in conjunction with young person's educational establishment. Transport may be suspended whilst an investigation is undertaken. In such circumstances, it will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that the young person attends the educational establishment in the interim period.



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**Coventry City Council – Post 16 Travel Policy Statement**

**March 2017**

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### **Appendix A: Detailed eligibility criteria**

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## **1 Context**

Coventry is a vibrant, compact and accessible city with excellent public transport links which enables the majority of young people studying in Post 16 education excellent access to their chosen provider through efficient and cost effective travel options.

The Council recognises that the future prosperity and well-being of the city depends in part on the achievement of young people in their education to maintain the future vitality and economic development of the city. To that end, this post 16 travel assistance policy is seen as crucial in ensuring that further education is accessible to all students irrespective of their economic or social background.

The Council has a clear aspiration to:

“improve accessibility for the whole community, with particular regards for the needs of disabled people, by promoting new or improved means of public transport, walking and cycling and by reducing reliance on the private car.”

The Council Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy actively promotes:

- Reductions in car usage
- Increased use of walking, cycling and public transport
- Reduced traffic speeds and improved safety particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

Public Transport is a key element in this strategy.

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1 Coventry City Council (CCC) is committed to ensuring that young people aged 16-18 are encouraged and supported to continue with their education and training where this is appropriate and suitable to their needs. This will enable young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for their personal development and progression into future employment or Higher Education.
- 2.2 This assistance is available to all young people aged 16-18 entering further education and to continuing learners aged 19 who started the course before becoming 19 years old. It also applies to learners aged 19 –25 with an Education Health and Care Plan who satisfy the eligibility criteria.
- 2.3 This document is the Council's Travel Assistance Statement. The Council is required by the Education Act 1996 to publish a transport policy statement each year, setting out what travel assistance is available from the Council and other bodies, to help young people aged 16-18 (and learners aged 19 to 25 with a Learning Difficulty and/or Disability (LDD) who satisfy the eligibility criteria to access post 16 education.
- 2.4 The policy statement supersedes all previous transport arrangements and entitlements. Funding for travel assistance is subject to annual budgets and financial affordability. The Transport Policy Statement will be reviewed annually. This version covers the academic year from 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018.

### 3 Eligibility Criteria

3.1 You may be eligible for travel assistance to facilitate attendance for the purposes of education and training at: a school; a further education institution; an institution providing further or higher education maintained or assisted by the Council; an establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency (e.g. independent specialist providers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; a learning provider funded by the Council to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to a positive outcome, if **all** of the following statements apply to you.

- a) You are a **resident of Coventry City**.  
*Learners not resident in Coventry, or who are looked after by another Council but live in Coventry, should refer and apply to, the Travel Assistance Policy of their own Local Authority*
- b) You must be under 19 years (or have begun a particular course of education at the Post 16 educational provider and continued to attend that course (31<sup>st</sup> August).  
*If you have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you may in **exceptional circumstances** be entitled to travel assistance up to the age of 25 years.*
- c) You **live more than three miles**, by the shortest route, away from your learning provider;  
*If you have an Education, Health and Care Plan which identifies the need for specific travel assistance you may be entitled to receive travel assistance if **you live less than three miles** away from your learning provider.*
- d) Your chosen **study programme takes place at a publicly funded provider**.  
*A list of eligible providers is supplied in Appendix A.*
- e) Your **study programme is at foundation learning level, level 1, 2 or 3** (see appendix A for further information).  
*Your study programme should normally be at a higher level than your previous achievements, thereby demonstrating academic progress towards a pathway to higher education, training or employment*
- f) Your **study programme is full-time** – equivalent to a minimum of 18 hours a week;  
*Your study programme does not have to last a full academic year.*
- g) Your learning provider is **the nearest provider** that can meet the majority of your needs.  
*You will not be eligible for travel assistance to an alternative/preferred provider on the basis that one of your chosen subjects is not available at your nearest learning provider.*

3.2 Before the Council will consider any application for travel assistance, you must demonstrate you have explored and exhausted all available sources of support as set out in section 4.

3.3 You will **not** be eligible for travel assistance if any of the following statements applies.

- a) Your study programme is at Level 4 or higher, including a foundation degree.
- b) You are employed and starting or continuing an apprenticeship.
- c) Your chosen study programme takes place at a privately -funded organisation.

### 4 Available Sources of Support

## 4.1 Fares and Concessions

There is no centrally available subsidy for student travel. However, a wide range of specific fare arrangements are available through transport providers, such as travel cards and special fare offers. See appendix C for useful contacts.

## 4.2 The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund

4.2.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund, is directly administered by individual education providers. It is available to support any student, who faces genuine financial barriers to participation, including transport costs. The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two elements.

4.2.2 Those most in need will be eligible for a **guaranteed bursary** of £1,200 a year. To qualify students must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You are in receipt of income support;
- You are a care leaver;
- You are in the care of a local authority (a 'looked after child');
- If a registered disabled student, you are in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (due to be replaced by Personal Independence Payment).

4.2.3 To receive the maximum bursary the programme of study must last for 30 weeks or more. If the programme is shorter than 30 weeks, the student may receive less.

4.2.4 Education providers may, at their discretion, distribute any remaining funds to young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of their students. The **discretionary bursary** is targeted at young people facing financial barriers to participation, including transport costs.

4.2.5 All education providers must make available a copy of their 16-19 Bursary Fund policy upon request. Applications should be made directly to the school, college or training provider

4.2.6 If a learner feels aggrieved about how their application for the 16-19 Bursary Fund has been handled, we recommend they follow the school's /college's /provider's standard complaints procedure.

4.2.7 For further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund visit <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>. Local providers and contact details are listed in Appendix B.

## 4.3 Residential Support Scheme

4.3.1 For students aged 16-18, if the Level 2 or Level 3 programme of study being followed is not available locally and is more than 15 miles from home or more than a two hour return journey away, they can apply for help with the cost of term-time accommodation.

4.3.2 How much assistance is offered will depend on household income and where the education provider is based.

4.3.3 For further information on the Residential Support Scheme, including eligibility criteria, visit <https://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/further-information>

## 4.4 Residential Bursary Fund

- 4.4.1 Students aged 16-18 may be able to get a bursary towards the cost of accommodation from some specialist residential colleges. This is different from the Residential Support Scheme.
- 4.4.2 Most of these colleges are 'Specialist Residential Centres' for subjects like agriculture, art and design or horticulture. Each has its own eligibility criteria, often including parental income. To apply for assistance you should contact the college directly.

#### **4.5 Support for students, age 19+ with LDD - Discretionary Learner Support (DLS)**

- 4.5.1 If you are aged 19 or over and have difficulty meeting the costs of participating in further education at your college, you should ask your provider about the Discretionary Learner Support fund (DLS). This is similar to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- 4.5.2 Discretionary Learner Support is available in colleges and sixth form colleges to help with learning costs, including transport.
- 4.5.3 You should apply directly to your learning provider (e.g. your college). How much you get depends on your circumstances. Local providers and contact details are listed in Appendix B.

### **5 Assistance offered by Coventry City Council**

#### **5.1 Principles**

- 5.1.1 For the majority of students, post-16 transport needs will be met by local travel schemes operated by local transport providers and/or the applications to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- 5.1.2 Where these schemes are insufficient to subsidise the transport costs incurred to attend post-16 education we may provide additional travel assistance. Learners in receipt of a 16-19 Bursary will be expected to use a proportion of the award towards transport costs. The value of any bursary/grant awarded to the learner must be identified on the application for travel assistance.
- 5.1.3 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 be provided only to the nearest available school or college, where a suitable study programme is available. Coventry City 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.
- 5.1.4 Where young people meet the eligibility criteria in section 3, Coventry City Council will award travel assistance using the most economical mode of transport. The Council will require a contribution of £600 per academic year from students or their parents towards the cost of travel assistance. The charge will be halved to £300 per academic year, if a financially dependent student, is from a family on a low household income (qualifying benefits as set out in Appendix A).

- 5.1.5 Any travel assistance agreed by Coventry City 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 education provider).
- 5.1.6 Students who apply for travel assistance before the start of the academic year in which they reach the age of 19, will remain eligible for the full academic year, subject to remaining on the course. The academic year is 1st September 2017 to 31st August 2018.
- 5.1.7 Travel assistance will cease on the 1st September immediately after a student reaches his/her 19th birthday, except where the student began a particular course of education or training before becoming 19 and continues to attend that course, or where a case is made to disregard the age criteria on the basis of LDD.

## **5.2 Additional information for students aged 16 – 25 years with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

- 5.2.1 The Council encourages learners aged 16+ to travel independently on public transport, to enable them to develop the skills for a successful transition into adulthood.
- 5.2.2 The Council operates an Independent Travel Training Scheme for young people attending special schools and in many cases young people will already have developed these skills during their secondary education. We expect that the parents and carers of young people will continue to practice independent travel throughout the summer holiday prior to starting any study programme.
- 5.2.3 The Council recognises that independent travel, including the use of public transport, is not always a possibility for students with severe and complex learning difficulties and disability, and additional assistance with travel will be required.
- 5.2.4 The eligibility criteria (section 3, 4) and principles (section 5) apply, with the following exceptions:
- a. young people with learning difficulties and disability in exceptional circumstances may receive transport assistance up to the age of 25 years; and
  - b. may receive assistance for journeys of less than 3 miles.
- 5.2.5 Travel assistance will be provided only to the nearest available school or college offering a programme of study that will reasonably meet the identified needs of the learner. The study programme must provide an educational or training benefit to the student. Coventry City Council will make this judgement based on discussions held throughout the transition reviews. Coventry City Council will not provide assistance to students who choose not to attend the nearest school or college offering a study programme that reasonably meets these identified needs.
- 5.2.6 Learners who qualify for travel assistance and who are attending the same provider may be expected to travel together at the start and end of the day. This may mean 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 parents and carers of the student to discuss the programme timetable with the provider.
- 5.2.7 If the learner is attending residential provision, for example an Independent Specialist College, the travel assistance offered by the Council will be limited to a maximum of

one return journey i.e. at the beginning and end of the academic year.

5.2.8 Existing sources of support must be identified at the point of application, including but not limited to any mobility allowance, direct payment and awards made under the 16-19 Bursary Fund, and will be taken into account when making a decision about the level and type of travel assistance that may be provided. A decision may be taken that additional travel assistance will not be provided.

5.2.9 The Council will require a contribution of £600 per academic year from students or their parents towards the cost of transport. The charge will be halved to £300 per academic years, where a financially dependent student, is from a family on a low household income (qualifying benefits as set out in Appendix A).

## **6 Application**

### **6.1 Making an application**

6.1.1 Application forms for Post-16 Travel Assistance are available to download from [Application Form](#). All students are required to apply for travel assistance on an annual basis, at which point their eligibility will be reviewed,

6.1.2 Applications for travel assistance should be made before the beginning of the academic year or before the start of the study programme. Travel assistance will only be considered from the date the application for travel assistance is received and cannot be backdated.

6.1.3 The application form requires applicants to provide the following information:

- evidence of how the eligibility criteria is met
- the name of the education or training provider and confirmation of whether an offer of a place has been received and accepted
- reasons for the student's choice of learning provider (school sixth form, college or FE institution);
- what form of travel assistance is sought;
- details of any benefits or support which are or may be relevant to the application;
- details of any exceptional circumstances;
- evidence to support the application.

### **6.2 The decision**

6.2.1 If the eligibility criteria are met, the Council will decide whether to provide travel assistance and the level and type of assistance that will be offered. Applications which do not meet the eligibility criteria will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

6.2.2 In making a decision the Council will have regard to the following:

- a. The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable, to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
- b. The need to ensure that people in Coventry have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
- c. the Council's general duties to ensure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of 16-18 year olds;

- d. Distance and journey time from the student's home to the learning provider, the cost of transport and alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments;
- e. The nature of the route or alternative routes which the young person could reasonably be expected to take;
- f. Any preference to attend a particular educational establishment based on religion or belief;
- g. The nature of the young person's special educational needs, disability or learning difficulty;
- h. Anything recorded in an Education, Health and Care Plan or Transition Plan promoting independent travel skills.
- i. Whether there is a nearer learning provider which is suitable and can provide the same or similar qualification(s);
- j. The best use of the Council's resources.

6.2.3 If the eligibility criteria for Travel Assistance is met the Council will choose the travel assistance offer taking into account 5.2.2 above and will offer assistance in the following priority order:

- Independent Travel Training (If a young person is deemed able to travel independently and travel training is refused the Local Authority is not under a duty to make an alternative offer)
  - Bus Pass
  - Assisted transport – you may be expected to travel to a pick up point to access assisted transport

6.2.4 If your application for assistance with transport is refused, you will receive a written notification outlining the reasons for this decision. The letter will tell you that you have a right of appeal and advise you how to exercise that right.

### **6.3 Changes in circumstance and reviews**

6.3.1 Post 16 students (which includes those who started the course of study before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and who remain on that course) in receipt of travel assistance must inform Coventry City Council of any change of circumstance which will (or might) affect their entitlement to assistance.

6.3.2 The Council reserves the right to withdraw travel assistance from post 16 students where:

- a. The education or training provider state that attendance has not been satisfactory (measured over the previous term);
- b. It is proven that assistance was obtained on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, or
- c. Where changes in the individual or household circumstances of the person of sixth form age, result in either the person of sixth form age no longer being eligible for assistance or no longer requiring assistance.

\*

## **7 Appeals**

### **7.1 Making and appeal**

7.1.1 This section outlines the appeal procedure to be used where you believe that the

decision made by officers with respect to your eligibility for travel assistance is incorrect. This is not a statutory right of appeal.

7.1.2 An appeal must be submitted in writing within **28 calendar days** of the letter refusing travel assistance or proposing changes to existing arrangements to:-

7.1.3 Appeals must be sent to the SEN Team, Coventry City Council, Floor 3, Civic Centre 2, Earl Street, Coventry Cv1 5RS or by e-mail to [SEN@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:SEN@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk) within 28 calendar days of receiving the decision not to provide travel assistance.

## **7.2 Stage 1**

7.2.1 The decision will be reviewed by a Senior Officer.

7.2.2 The letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging Coventry's refusal of assistance or changes to proposed arrangements and include any fresh documentary evidence.

7.2.3 Your appeal will be reviewed and all evidence submitted will be considered. The original decision may be upheld, overturned or alternative solutions may be identified. If the application is not approved the young person will be notified of the decision in writing and will be informed of the next and final stage of the appeal process.

## **7.3 Stage 2 – Final Appeal**

7.3.1 This will be considered by an independent appeal panel. Final appeals must be submitted in writing within 28 days of the date of the stage 1 decision. This letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging the stage 1 decision and may include new documentary evidence.

7.3.2 The young person will be informed of the final decision in writing.

7.3.3 If the young person is unhappy with the decision reached they have a further right of appeal to the Secretary of State if it is considered that the Council has failed to comply with procedural rules or there were any irregularities in the way the appeal was handled.

7.3.4 If the young person considers that the decision is flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

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

7.3.6 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.

## **8 Ending of Travel Assistance and Complaints**

### **8.1 Removal of support**



8.1.1 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 young person 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 young person who, if necessary, has made alternative arrangements for them to travel to the education provision.

8.1.2 The Council expects young people to behave appropriately on transport and must ensure health and safety of all passengers and staff is maintained. Any behavioural issues whilst on transport will be dealt with by the Council in conjunction with the young person's educational establishment. Transport may be suspended whilst an investigation is undertaken. In such circumstances, it will remain the responsibility of the young person to ensure that they attend the educational establishment during the interim period.

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

## **8.2 Complaints**

8.2.1 Once travel assistance has been agreed any concerns regarding the daily provision of the service should be made in the first instance to the transport provider, young people will be given these details.

8.2.2 Any formal complaints should be handled through Coventry City Council's Corporate complaints process by contacting:-

Complaints Manager  
Coventry City Council  
The Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR  
<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/comments>

## **Appendix A: Detailed eligibility criteria Eligible learning and training providers.**

Your study programme or training must take place through a publicly-funded provider:

- A publicly-funded school or academy (including a free school or University Technical College (UTC));
- A publicly-funded further education institution, including sixth form college and further education college;
- A local authority maintained or assisted institution providing further or higher education;
- An establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), including independent specialist providers (ISP) for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- A learning provider that is funded by a local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers).

#### **Eligible Qualifications:**

- 1 Level 2 qualifications include: GCSEs, BTEC First Diploma, NVQ Level 2 and functional Skills qualifications at this level.
- Level 3 qualifications include: A Level, Access courses, BTEC National Diploma/Certificate, NVQ Level 3, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND).

#### **Proof of household income**

Travel assistance will be provided only to financially dependent students whose families or carers provide evidence that they are in receipt of one of the following support payments:

Income Support (highest level); or

- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; or
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance; or
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190; or
- Working Tax credit 'run on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit; or
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit; or
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Young people who receive Income Support or Income-based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also eligible.

Note: A number of the above benefits are being replaced by Universal Credit. This will include: Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit.

#### **Appendix B: Useful contacts**

Coventry local Providers with Post-16 Provision will supply information on 16-19 Bursary

and Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) Applications.

<b>PROVIDER</b>	<b>WEB PAGE</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>
<b>CWT Training</b>	<a href="http://www.cwt.org.uk">www.cwt.org.uk</a>	02476 231122
<b>City College</b>	<a href="http://www.covcollege.ac.uk">www.covcollege.ac.uk</a>	02476 791000
<b>Heart of England</b>	<a href="http://www.hoet.co.uk/full-time-courses">www.hoet.co.uk/full-time-courses</a>	02476 630703
<b>Henley College</b>	<a href="http://www.henley-cov.ac.uk">http://www.henley-cov.ac.uk</a>	02476 626300
<b>Hereward College</b>	<a href="http://www.hereward.ac.uk/our-offer/">www.hereward.ac.uk/our-offer/</a>	02476 461231
<b>Learndirect</b>	<a href="http://www.learndirect.com/centresearch/centre/details/WM03LC82">www.learndirect.com/centresearch/centre/details/WM03LC82</a>	02476 662096
<b>MGTS (Midland Group Training Services)</b>	<a href="http://www.mgts.co.uk/">www.mgts.co.uk/</a>	02476 630333
<b>Midland Training &amp; Development</b>	<a href="http://www.midlands.co.uk">www.midlands.co.uk</a>	02476 796422
<b>Solihull College</b>	<a href="http://www.solihull.ac.uk">www.solihull.ac.uk</a>	0121 678 7000
<b>Warwickshire College</b>	<a href="http://www.warwickshire.ac.uk">www.warwickshire.ac.uk</a>	01926 318000

**For information about school sixth forms see:**

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/directory/10/schools> and their contact details

**For further information about smaller training providers and third sector organisations offer post 16 provision see:**

[www.prospects.co.uk](http://www.prospects.co.uk)

## **Appendix C: Useful Contacts**

**Coventry City Council, Education and Inclusion Service**

Eligibility for support to travel to FE colleges for young people aged 16-18 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be assessed by the Local Authority in line with the eligibility criteria set out in this policy and taking account of the needs that have been identified in the young person's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Young people and their parents/carers should discuss this with their school in the first instance. Travel Assistance will be dealt with by the SEN Team, Civic Centre 2 Floor 3 New Council Offices, Coventry CV1 5RS Tel 02476831614 or e-mail [sen@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:sen@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk)

### **Coventry City Council – Independent Travel Team**

The team offer training in the practical skills required to travel independently. They also manage and assess risk by teaching safe practice and road safety and support people to build on their skills and develop their confidence.

Telephone number: 02476 294434. E-Mail: [itt@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:itt@coventry.gov.uk). Website [www.coventry.gov.uk/itt](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/itt)

**Coventry City Council Transportation (Place Directorate)** - Provides information on travel plans and cycle routes.

Transport Policy Senior Officer: Martin Wilkinson - 024 7683 1184

Transport Policy Senior Officer: Nigel Mills – 024 7683 1563

**Prospects Careers** - This is a service for 13 to 19 year olds (up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) encouraging continuing training at work or through full-time education. They keep full details of educational establishments and courses offered.

Careers Advisers also work from the Coventry Job Shop, Bull Yard, Coventry where there is a drop in service between 9.00 -5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

**National Express** - National Express is the main bus operator in Coventry; they provide information on bus travel in Coventry and the West Midlands including details of fares such as all-day and off-peak travel cards, plus route maps and timetables in the local area.

Information can be found at: [www.nxbus.co.uk/coventry](http://www.nxbus.co.uk/coventry) or the NX Coventry Travel Card and Information Centre, Pool Meadow Bus Station, Coventry.



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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: Thursday, 30th November, 2017**

**Subject: Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

1.1 To provide an overview of:

- The number of permanent exclusions that have been implemented by Coventry Schools over the last three academic years;
- The post exclusion process, leading to either an alternative school offer or alternative provision. This includes recent service developments which were implemented in September 2017, as an outcome of the Education re-design process;
- Elective Home Education (EHE), setting out the numbers of families who have made a decision to EHE and the reason, highlighting those that may have chosen that route to avoid a permanent exclusion.

### **2 Recommendations**

2.1 The Education and Children's Service Scrutiny Board are recommended to:

- 1) Consider and note the content of the report
- 2) Identify any further recommendations for the Cabinet Member

### **3 Information/Background**

3.1 The rules governing exclusions from schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, are set out in s52 of the Education Act 2002. This is underpinned by Statutory Guidance "Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units – A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion" (September 2012, updated September 2017). In summary, the guidance states that the head teacher of a publicly funded school, may exclude a pupil from the school for a fixed period or permanently

3.2 A fixed term exclusion is for a specific period of time. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light, a fixed period exclusion may be extended or converted to a permanent exclusion.

3.3 Pupils whose lunchtime behaviour is disruptive may be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. An exclusion that takes place over a lunchtime would be counted as half a school day. The legal requirements relating to exclusion, such as the head teacher's duty to notify parents, apply in all cases.

3.4 An 'informal' exclusion involves a child being sent off the school premises, without this being officially recorded as an exclusion (e.g. where a child is sent home for a 'cooling off' period). It is unlawful for a child to be informally excluded from school, even where the child's parent/s or carer/s agree to the exclusion

- 3.5 A permanent exclusion involves the child being removed from the school roll. However, the head teacher must not remove a pupil's name from the school Admissions Register until the outcome of the Independent Review Panel (if this route is followed by parents).
- 3.6 The DfE reports that 6,685 permanent exclusions were recorded in 2015-16, up from 5,785 the previous year. This represents an increase of 13%.
- 3.7 However, the Statutory Guidance is clear that exclusion should be a last resort and that early intervention should be used to address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour. Coventry schools invest heavily in social, emotional and behaviour support. Consequently, the level of permanent exclusions in the City, whilst rising remains relatively low.

#### 4 Primary Exclusions and Alternative Provision

- 4.1 Table 1 sets out the number of primary school permanent exclusions in Coventry, over the last three academic years, alongside the recorded reasons.

Primary Reason for Exclusion	Academic Year			Total
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	
Bullying - Racism		1		1
Damage		2	1	3
Other	1	1	2	4
Challenging behaviour	1	3	2	6
Persistent violation of school rules			1	1
Disobedience		1		1
Persistent Disruptive Behaviour	1	3	10	14
Physical assault against an adult	1	4	4	9
Physical Assault against an adult		1		1
Physical assault against a pupil			2	2
Aggressive behaviour against an Adult		1	1	2
Threatening behaviour against a pupil – carrying an offensive weapon		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>45</b>

- 4.2 Of the 45 excluded pupils, it is noted that only four were girls. Thirty three pupils were of white British origin and 9 had an identified SEN. Eleven (25%) of pupils were excluded during their final year in primary school (NCY6). In 2016/17, it took an average of 19 days to secure an alternative school placement.

#### 4.3 Provision

- 4.4 The vast majority of primary age pupils excluded from school, are offered an alternative mainstream primary school. In support, the Local Authority offer a specialist teaching, support and advice service to schools for social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The SEMH Team, which is part of the Traded SEND Support Service offer, deliver Team Teach Training across the City, this is a nationally accredited de-escalation behaviour management intervention. In addition, schools offer their pupils a range of highly specialist services including: nurture groups; the Thrive programme' language programmes; play therapy; psychology and counselling.
- 4.5 Consequently, the LA does not maintain a pupil referral unit provision for primary age children. Instead, in partnership with schools the LA delivers an intensive support programme known as the KEYS, which is targeted at children who are at risk of exclusion. The service is delivered from two designated bases within mainstream schools; Parkgate

Primary School and Frederick Bird Primary School. The 4 day a week programme is delivered by specialist teachers and support staff. It focuses on the child's individual needs, providing assessment, emotional support and intervention. Teachers offer an academic curriculum to enable children to fill gaps in learning. Children return to their registered school on Fridays.

- 4.6 In recognition of the number of permanently excluded pupils in the 2016/17 academic year, the KEYS programme was extended to KEYS+ from September 2017. The programme is delivered from a base at Gosford Park Primary School. The primary focus is assessment, with the aim of determining the child's individual needs and support requirements, before reintegration to a mainstream or special school begins. This intervention is designed to enhance the child's chance of success. When appropriate, children identified as requiring special school provision for SEMH, would be placed at Woodfield School. Woodfield is a special school for primary age pupils with SEMH. The school is rated 'good' by OfSTED.

## 5 Secondary Exclusions and Alternative Provision

- 5.1 Table 2 sets out the number of secondary school permanent exclusions in Coventry, over the last three academic years, alongside the recorded reasons

<b>Primary Reason for Exclusion</b>	<b>Academic Year</b>			
	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>Total</b>
Damage	1			1
Drug and alcohol related	7	5	5	17
Other	4	1	9	14
Persistent disruptive behaviour	6	11	12	29
Physical assault against a pupil		4	9	13
Physical assault against an adult	3	3	1	7
Racist abuse		1		1
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult	1	2	6	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>91</b>

- 5.2 Secondary schools across the City invest in a variety of internal behaviour support interventions, including specialist assessment, teaching, mentors and counselling. In addition, many schools have bespoke provision that enables young people to work in smaller focused groups organised through an internal unit. Key stage 4 students can benefit from a range of extended pathways including work experience and vocational training. Secondary schools have recently reviewed the managed move arrangements as part of a fair access protocol. It is intended that this process will facilitate fresh starts for those that might benefit from a change of school.
- 5.3 In addition, the LA has commissioned three school-based SEMH provisions at Barrs Hill, Lyng Hall and Whitley Academy. These places are used mainly for pupils preparing to re-integrate back into mainstream provision.
- 5.4 The LA maintains a Pupil Referral Unit (Coventry Extended Learning Centre), to secure an appropriate education for secondary age students who have been permanently excluded from school. The provision can provide assessment, intervention and reintegration and offer a full academic curriculum. Some students may benefit from personalised learning pathways that include vocational training and work experience. CELC operates from three sites
- Wyken (Key Stage 3 pupils)

- The Link (Key Stage 4 pupils)
  - Swanswell (Key Stage 4 pupils).
- 5.5 Depending on the most appropriate pathway for each individual student, full time suitable education is delivered onsite or through a combination of onsite and off-site work-related learning opportunities e.g. vocational courses delivered at a college or accredited training provider
- 5.6 The LA's Work Related Learning Team, work on behalf of schools to commission, coordinate and quality assure, off-site work-related learning provision for 13-19 year-old learners, particularly those who are most at risk of becoming disengaged from learning and 'not in education employment or training' (NEET). This provision complements and extends the education programme delivered by the responsible school. The team also work in close partnership with CELC to secure appropriate off-site courses for permanently excluded pupils. The service aims to positively impact upon participation, levels of progress and achievement and promote the social inclusion of all 13-19 year olds.
- 5.7 The LA also maintains a pupil referral unit for pupils admitted to the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW). The Hospital Education centre provides education for pupils aged 4-16 on three paediatric wards (Wards 14-16), who are well enough to access learning. The majority of children are short-term in-patients with one-off stays, of less than 3 days. Teaching is conducted mostly at bedsides.
- 5.8 A home teaching service is offered as part of 'Hospital Education', to make provision for pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons including physical or mental illness. The level of service is responsive to the child's specific medical needs. The service aims to provide a continuation of education until the child is well enough to return to school.

## **6 Elective Home Education (EHE)**

### **6.1 The Legal Framework**

6.2 Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, imposes a duty on the local authority to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children of compulsory school age in the authority's area; who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Local Authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education and do not have the power to meet with or directly speak to the child. However, if the Council believes a child is not receiving a suitable education or is at risk, separate powers are invoked to enable an appropriate intervention.

6.3 It should be noted that parents are not required to register their child for EHE, or to seek the local authority's permission or approval. Consequently, it is recognised nationally, that LA EHE registers do not include the whole EHE population.

6.4 Coventry City Council currently has a positive and respectful relationship with the EHE community and offers a supportive EHE service, delivered by a specialist teacher. The service routinely contacts all families on an annual basis and is responsive to any requests for information, advice and support. EHE meetings are held either within the home or at an agreed venue, subject to parental agreement.

### **6.5 Current Analysis of EHE register**

6.6 As at November 2017, 192 children are registered with the LA as EHE.

- 82% (157 children) of families, are actively engaged with the LA
- 4% (7 children), have an Education, Health and Care Plan and are subject to statutory review



- 14% (28 children, 20 families), are currently refusing EHE visits or meetings
  - 2 (5 children, within 2 families), were referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) during 2017/18
- 6.7 During the 2017/18 academic year, 41 children ceased EHE: 34 returned to mainstream schooling; 3 were placed in specialist SEN provision; 4 left the area.
- 6.8 **Parental Reasons for EHE**
- 6.9 Parents are asked to categorise the primary reason they have chosen to EHE against a prescribed set of categories, at the point of registration.
- 6.10 The following table identifies that the majority of parents in Coventry, elect to home educate on philosophical grounds:

**Table 3**

Reason	Number of children	Percentage of cohort
Philosophical/religious/cultural	61	32%
Permanently excluded	2	<1%
SEN needs not met by school	10	5%
Dissatisfaction with School Environment	32	17%
Bullying	21	11%
Health/Medical	11	6%
Not preferred school	8	4%
New to area	6	3%
Mental Health/School Refuser/Avoiding fines	9	5%
Other	32	17%
Total	192	100%

- 6.11 Only two families have confirmed that they chose EHE following a permanent exclusion. Five more children are currently home-educated as a result of issues relating to permanent exclusion, including at risk of exclusion.
- 6.12 Summary of key issues in relation to EHE
- There has been an increase in the number of YR7 children being EHE, because parents have been unable to secure a place, at the secondary school of their choice.
  - The majority of parents that have chosen to EHE for reasons other than 'Philosophical/religious/cultural' have indicated that they would send their children to school, if they had confidence that the provision would meet their child's needs. In the vast majority of these cases, relationships between parent and school had broken down.
  - Integration with other services that can offer support, has led to an increasing number of children remaining in school following parental contact with the EHE team. For example, the parent of a child from a traveller family contacted the EHE Co-ordinator as she was receiving fines for non-attendance and initially wanted to EHE. The EHE team worked with the Ethnic Minority Support Service, who acted as an advocate for the parent.
  - It is recognised that there are many unidentified children in Coventry, who are EHE but have chosen not to inform the Local Authority, which is their right. The EHE team aim to build relationships with the EHE community and schools, to ensure that parents and carers feel confident in coming forward to receive support. In the meantime, the EHE team work continuously with all families that are known to the Local Authority to

encourage engagement, build links and thereby do all that can reasonably be done, to ensure EHE children receive a suitable education.

**Name: Jeannette Essex**

**Job Title: Head SEND and Specialist Services**

**Contact Details: [Jeannette.essex@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Jeannette.essex@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 02476 832715**

**Name: Sarah Mills**

**Job Title: Head Education Entitlement**

**Contact Details: [sarah.mills@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.mills@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Tel. 02476 832785**



Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board**  
**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

**Subject: Outstanding Issues Report**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the approach to be taken on progress, outcomes and responses to recommendations and substantial actions made by the Scrutiny Board.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are recommended to:
- 1) Note the attached outstanding issues at Appendix 1

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 When recommendations and actions are made following a scrutiny meeting, they are circulated to the relevant Cabinet Member and officer, and recorded on a recommendations tracker.
- 3.2 The purpose of this report is to bring to the Boards attention the responses received from Cabinet Members and officers in regard to recommendations and actions from previous meetings.
- 3.3 Once a response has been received or an action dealt with, it will be removed from this report and kept in the full recommendations tracker. The complete tracker can be viewed by contacting the Scrutiny Team on the details below.

Gennie Holmes  
Scrutiny Co-ordinator  
gennie.holmes@coventry.gov.uk  
024 7683 1172

## Appendix 1 - Outstanding Issues

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/ Responsible Officer	Recommendations/ Actions	Response/ Status
14th September 2017	CLSCB Interim Report		Requested information about the next round of training sessions that the Board can be invited to.	Information will be circulated when available.
12th October 2017	Improving the Quality and Performance of Social Workers		Exit interview and audit information be shared with the Board	There will be an item on audit and case files in January. The SW Retention T&F will look at exit interview data as part of their remit.
12th October 2017	Creation of a Regional Adoption Agency		Cabinet report be circulated to the Board when it is published	Link to the Cabinet Documents circulated 20/11/17

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

<b>29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 – formal/ informal meeting</b>
Ofsted Inspection Report Informal briefing of the Board
<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – 10am</b>
Young Carers Improvement Board Report Work programme briefing note
<b>14<sup>th</sup> September 2017</b>
LSCB Interim Annual Report Children's Services Redesign
<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>
Quality of Social Workers Regional Adoption Agency
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017</b>
Improvement Board Report – 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2017 Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education
<b>11<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>
Private Fostering Case File Audits
<b>14<sup>th</sup> February 2018</b>
SEND Transport Policy review Ofsted Progress and Improvement Board Report – 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2018</b>
Task and Finish group – Retention of Social Workers - recommendations Children's Services Redesign Parenting Strategy
<b>29<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>
- -
<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
Improvement Board Report – 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2018 -
<b>Date to be determined</b>
One Strategic Plan updates Education Performance including vulnerable groups Review of the Education Service redesign School Funding SCR – Baby L SCR – Child F School based police panels World Class Schools Quality Award Special Education Places
<b>Standing Items</b>
Serious Case Reviews Schools Ofsted Reports

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 – formal/ informal meeting</b>	Ofsted Inspection Report	Following the Ofsted inspection in March, the inspection report is published on 13 <sup>th</sup> June. This is an opportunity for Members to consider the outcomes of the inspection and the subsequent action plan.	Gail Quinton John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Informal briefing of the Board	To cover the work areas of the Board plus. Looking at the Council's Corporate parenting requirements and how the Council is meeting them.	
<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – 10am</b>	Young Carers	Referred from the Corporate Parenting Board, to look at support offered to children and young people who are carers, especially those that are children in need, child protection or who come into care because of the health of their parents.	Paul Smith Jon Reading Cllr Ruane Cllr Abbott
	Improvement Board Report	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice, to include follow up from the DfE visit	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Work programme briefing note	A follow up from the informal meeting to agree the work programme for the year	Gennie Holmes
<b>14<sup>th</sup> September 2017</b>	LSCB Interim Annual Report	Members requested to see the interim annual report of the LSCB following their consideration of the Annual Report at their meeting in January 2017	David Peplow Cllr Ruane
	Children's Services Redesign	Following on from the meeting in July, Members requested a full briefing on the changes proposed through the redesign.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>	Quality of Social Workers	A 6 month follow up report from the meeting on 27 <sup>th</sup> April	Lee Pardy- McLaughlin Cllr Ruane
	Regional Adoption Agency	With the creation of a regional adoption being headed by Warwickshire County Council, Members requested further information on implementation and timescales. A Cabinet report for 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2017 will be considered at the meeting.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017</b>	Home to School Transport	A new policy was introduced in April and September introducing new guidelines for home to school transport. Parents have been concerned and requested an item at scrutiny	Jeanette Essex Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education	Members requested a report on how children who are home schooled are supported by the LEA and also to discuss whether pupils excluded from school are being home schooled by parents	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
<b>11<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>	Private Fostering	Following the recommendations in the Ofsted report Members requested to look in more detail at private fostering arrangements – possible Task and Finish Group	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Case File Audits	Case File are regularly audited for quality assurance purposes. This report will summarise progress	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Improvement Board Report – 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Regular report – to include the refreshed Improvement Plan	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>14<sup>th</sup> February 2018</b>	SEND Transport Policy review		Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	Ofsted Progress and Improvement Board Report – 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2018	Following the recommendations in the Ofsted report, Members want to look at progress, particularly at how risk is managed, including with partner agencies such as health and schools	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2018</b>	Task and Finish group – Retention of Social Workers - recommendations	A report to consider the recommendations identified by the task and finish group to support the retention of social workers.	Gennie Holmes John Gregg
	Children’s Services Redesign	Following on from the meeting in September, Members requested a full briefing on how the implementation of Family Hubs has been effective, including partners.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Parenting Strategy		Harbir Nagra
<b>29<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>	-		
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<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>	Improvement Board Report – 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2018		
	-		
<b>Date to be determined</b>	One Strategic Plan updates	Progress on the information provided	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	Education Performance including vulnerable groups	A regular report, looking at school performance, in particular progress of vulnerable groups	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	Review of the Education Service redesign	Following a meeting where the proposals for a new structure for the Educations service were considered, Members requested a progress report following implementation.	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	School Funding	To look at changes to school's funding formula once finalised.	
	SCR – Baby L	For Members of the Board to consider how the recommendations from the SCR have been implemented	John Gregg David Peplow Cllr Ruane
	SCR – Child F	The Board will consider recommendations from a serious case review.	Cllr Ruane David Peplow
	School based police panels	A report on how the police are supporting improving behaviour in schools and tackling anti-social behaviour in partnership	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	World Class Schools Quality Award	President Kennedy School have been awarded this and the Board would like to know more about the process and what it means for the pupils.	Cllr Maton Kirston Nelson President Kennedy pupils
	Special Education Places	To consider the provision and demand for special school places across the city	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
<b>Standing Items</b>	Serious Case Reviews	The Board will consider recommendations from serious case reviews when they are published.	Cllr Ruane
	Schools Ofsted Reports	Members requested information on how schools with poor Ofsted reports are being supported, using Stoke Park as a case study. If	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton



<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
		any school in Coventry is rated Inadequate by OFSTED, the resulting action plan will be considered as an item for Scrutiny	

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