

APPENDIX 2

DRAFT

Coventry City Council – Post 16 Travel Policy Statement

Version: November 2016 for public consultation

Proposed policy for public consultation

Contents

- 1 Context
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Eligibility Criteria
- 4 Available Sources of Support
 - 4.1 Fares and concessions
 - 4.2 The 16 -19 Bursary Fund
 - 4.3 Residential Support Scheme
 - 4.4 Residential Bursary Fund
 - 4.5 Support for LDD learners 19+ - Discretionary Learner Support
- 5 Assistance Offered by Coventry City Council
 - 5.1 Principles
 - 5.2 Additional information for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- 6 Application
 - 6.1 Making an application
 - 6.2 The decision
 - 6.3 Changes in circumstance and reviews
- 7 Appeals
 - 7.1 Making an appeal
 - 7.2 Stage 1 – Initial appeal
 - 7.3 Stage 2 – final appeal
- 8 Removal of Travel Assistance and Complaints
 - 8.1 Removal of Support
 - 8.2 Complaints

Appendix A: Detailed eligibility criteria

Appendix B: Post 16 Providers

Appendix C: Useful Contacts

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 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 to their home Transport Policy
 - 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 (31st August).
*If you have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which identifies the need for specific travel assistance in exceptional circumstances you may receive 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 receive travel assistance if **you live less than three miles** away from your learning provider.*
 - d) You have a **low household income**.
Travel assistance will be provided only to students whose families or carers in receipt of one of the support payments listed in Appendix A.
 - e) Your chosen **study programme takes place at a publicly funded provider**.
A list of eligible providers is supplied in Appendix A.
 - f) 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.
 - g) 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.
 - h) Your learning provider is **the nearest provider** that can meet the majority of your needs.
Transport will not be provided on the basis of one subject being unavailable 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 are no centrally available subsidies for student travel. However, a wide range of specific fare arrangements is 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, administered by individual education providers, 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:

- Be in receipt of income support;
- Are a care leaver;
- Are in care of a local authority (a 'looked after child');
- If a registered disabled student, be 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 should 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 the 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 LDD learners 19+ - Discretionary Learner Support (DLS)

- 4.5.1 If you are aged 19 or over and having trouble 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 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 identified in section 2. Coventry City Council will fund 50% of the cost for the most economical mode of transport.
- 5.1.5 Any transport assistance agreed by Coventry City Council will be paid on a termly 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 young people 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 2) and principles (section 4) 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 or later than their course starts or 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 expect an average contribution of £600 per academic year from students or their parents towards the cost of transport. The amount of travel assistance offered may depend on household income.

6 Application

6.1 Making an application

6.1.1 Application forms for Post-16 Travel Assistance are available to download from www.coventry.gov.uk. The Scheme operates on an annually reviewed basis. All students are required to apply annually and to confirm their eligibility annually.

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 will ask for the following information:

- how the eligibility criteria are met
- the name of the education or training provider and whether an offer of a place has been received and accepted
- reasons for the choice of named learning provider;
- 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 Where 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 above 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 order of preference:

- Independent Travel Training (if deemed appropriate)*
- 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 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:-

* 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

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 within 28 calendar days of receiving the decision not to provide travel assistance.

7.2 Stage 1

7.2.1 This will be considered by a Senior Officer within SEN Service.

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 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. 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 young person's educational establishment. Transport will 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 in 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>

Proposed policy for public consultation

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 students whose families or carers provide evidence that they are in receipt of one of the following support payments:

- Income Support; 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.

| | | |
|---|--|---------------------|
| CWT Training | www.cwt.org.uk | 02476 231122 |
| City College | www.covcollege.ac.uk | 02476 791000 |
| Heart of England | www.hoet.co.uk/full-time-courses | 02476 630703 |
| Henley College | http://www.henley-cov.ac.uk | 02476 626300 |
| Hereward College | www.hereward.ac.uk/our-offer/ | 02476 461231 |
| Learndirect | www.learndirect.com/centresearch/centre/details/WM03LC82 | 02476 662096 |
| MGTS (Midland Group Training Services) | www.mgts.co.uk/ | 02476 630333 |
| Midland Training & Development | www.midlands.co.uk | 02476 796422 |
| Solihull College | www.solihull.ac.uk | 0121 678 7000 |
| Warwickshire College | www.warwickshire.ac.uk | 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

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

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. Website 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

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 or the NX Coventry Travel Card and Information Centre, Pool Meadow Bus Station, Coventry.