

Appendix 1. Education Transport Policy Consultation Outcome.
July 2019

There were 46 responses to the consultation. Please see below a profile of the respondents:

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	8	17.8%
Female	36	80%
Prefer Not to say	1	2.2%
Total	45	

Age Group	Number	Percentage
Under 30 years	3	7.1%
30 – 45 years	26	61.9%
46-59 years	11	26.2%
60 years and over	2	4.8%

Respondent with a disability:

Yes	5	11.1%
No	40	88.9%

Respondent completing the survey on behalf of someone else:

Yes	19	42.2%
No	26	57.8%

Relationship of respondent of completing the survey on behalf of someone else:

Relationship	Number	Percentage
Parent Carer	23	92%
Sibling	1	4%
Teacher	1	4%

Additional information asked:

Statement	Number	Percentage
I am a Sandwell resident	39	84.8%
I live outside of the borough	1	2.2%
I currently receive Transport Assistance from Sandwell Council	4	8.7%

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Someone I care for receives Transport Assistance from Sandwell Council	15	32.6%
I will receive Transport Assistance from Sandwell Council in the future	3	6.5%
I am an interested member of the public	12	26.1%
I am a Council Member	1	2.2%

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White	30	69.8%
Mixed Heritage	1	2.3%
Asian	7	16.3%
Black	3	7%
Prefer not to say	2	4.6%

A summary of the breakdown of the responses received can be found below. As a result of some of the responses a number of actions have been identified:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that creating one policy to cover all home to school / college travel assistance would be helpful?

73.9% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this question. The main comments were around how this would provide transparency for parents and carers and would remove the possibility of contradictions across policies.

6.6% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that one policy would be helpful. The main concern was related to how all childrens needs could be catered for within one policy however the policy does enable consideration of the needs of all children and young people. Another comment was that the policy was wordy and needed to be clearer.

4.3% did not know.

15.2% neither agreed or disagreed.

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Example of comments received:

- 'Will hopefully make it less complicated in the long run having a singular document'.
- 'One place to look for info, no contradictions across policies'.
- 'It would make sense for all those involved to be able to access all the information required from one source as long as the policy is comprehensive enough to consider all relevant factors and not leave anything to individual interpretation - it must be fair, transparent and accessible both in terms of location and content for parent/carers/young person's not just professionals'.
- 'I think the policy is very 'wordy' maybe a clearer version may have been helpful. Especially if a young person is living on their own. Even me as a parent found it a little dense. You also didn't provide a clear comparison of how the policy had changed without having memorized the previous document'.

Action to be taken as a result of responses.

As part of the transport operational group development plan a child friendly document related to travel assistance will be produced.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that requiring annual re-application will improve the application process?

39.1% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this question. 50% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that an annual re-application process will improve the application process.

4.4% did not know.

6.5% neither agreed or disagreed.

The main concern for parents/carers was that this would be an additional process and that this should be completed as part of the annual review. The policy states that 'The type of travel assistance/support provided for eligible students will be considered on an individual basis and reviewed annually (or more frequently in the case of travel assistance provided for temporary medical conditions/disability)'. Amendments have been

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made to the policy document to provide clarity that this review would be part of the annual review for children with an EHCP and for children with SEN every 12 months – the first review being 12 months after transport commences.

Example of comments received:

- ‘This is currently reviewed yearly by school during annual review process, would be an extra burden for parents/carers’.
- ‘Yes then if there are any changes in circumstances etc then can be factored in the decision making process’.
- ‘Annual re-application can take any changes into circumstances into consideration. I personally feel that parents of children with a Mobility car should be responsible for taking their child to & from school/college’.
- ‘To have to reapply on an individual basis each year is too much, especially for families who have more than one disabled member of the family requiring assistance. With regards to education, families are already required to review the Education, Care and Health plan on a yearly basis - if there has been significant change in that - only then should there be a separate reassessment’.

Action to be taken as a result of responses.

The proposed policy has been amended to provide clarity regarding how the review of transport will be undertaken.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that it would be beneficial to teach children and young people the life skills they require to be able to travel independently?

76.1% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this question. 13% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that it would be beneficial to teach children and young people the life skills they require to be able to travel independently.

6.5% did not know.

4.4% neither agreed or disagreed.

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The responses support the need to teach children and young people the life skills they require however it is evident that many of the respondents were concerned about safety and any associated risks in travelling independently. The policy is clear in terms of the travel training programme only being offered to those pupils who have been assessed as suitable to take part. Any child with SEND will receive their travel training from specialist travel trainers.

Example of comments received:

- 'I agree but this is not always appropriate dependent on the level of ability of the student/young person'.
- 'Depends on the situation/disability needs of the person'.
- 'Teaching children & young people life skills is extremely important, however, firstly & more importantly their safety should be considered. A young person with SEND may crave to have travel independence but it could be extremely unsafe for them to do so'.
- 'Each person is individual, and any associated risks must be assessed on an individual basis'.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed changes will provide clarity of definition for what is meant by exceptional circumstances?

45.6% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this question. 15.2% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the proposed changes will provide clarity of definition for what is meant by exceptional circumstances. A number of the respondents identified the difficulty in defining every form of exceptional circumstance. The policy stipulates that all requests will be considered on an individual basis.

17.4% did not know.

21.8% neither agreed or disagreed.

Example of comments received:

- 'Still based on individual circumstances but the best you can say, as it is not possible to give all circumstances'.

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- There will always need to be interpretation as we are talking about young people with complex needs and often, complex family situations. Guidelines are helpful but there will need to be professional interpretation’.
- ‘It will depend upon how it is used in practice, I don't know how you can clarify exceptional circumstances, because by nature of the very phrase everyone's circumstances are different, and the policy needs to reflect this’.
- ‘Exceptional circumstances should not be vague, it should be clearly stated’.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that giving families money in the form of Personal Transport Budgets, will allow more independence and choice for families?

53.4% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this question. 22.2% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that giving families money in the form of Personal Transport Budgets, will allow more independence and choice for families. There were some concerns regarding how families would use this money and the burden that this would place on them. A mileage allowance or personal travel budget for families to make their own arrangements is one form of assistance that the local authority will offer. This will only be put in place with parental consent. Currently mileage payments are made to some families.

2.2% did not know.

22.2% neither agreed or disagreed.

Example of comments received:

- ‘This should be subject to the capability of parents to use money correctly and places further burden on parents’.
- ‘Not all families with young people with disabilities get blue badges, higher rate DLA so would need to more information about personal Transport Budget and criteria before commenting’.
- ‘It will encourage families to consider the real costs of transport and to ensure that this is valued’.

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- 'As long as the money can only be spent on transport'

Action to be taken as a result of responses.

- Leaflet to be developed to inform parents of personal transport budgets which will also be available on the Sandwell Local Offer.
- Clarity will be added to policy regarding personal budgets will only be offered as a form of assistance with parent consent.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that a simplified appeals procedure will be beneficial?

84.8% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this question. 4.3% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that a simplified appeals procedure will be beneficial. The majority of respondents welcomed a more simplified process. One respondent made reference to the need for independence and that officer that have been part of any decision making should not be part of the appeal.

2.2% did not know.

8.7% neither agreed or disagreed.

Example of comments received:

- 'simple, transparent'.
- 'A simplified appeals process because some parents may be deterred from appealing against a decision if the process is to complicated'.
- 'will offer more inclusion'.
- 'Any simplified procedure is beneficial for all involved'.

Action to be taken as a result of responses.

The appeals section of the policy will stipulate that any officers dealing with the appeal would not have been involved in the original decision-making process.