



**Consultation on Transport Policy for Post  
Statutory School Age pupils with an  
Education, Health and Care Plan for the  
start of the 2023/24 academic year**

**Consultation period from  
18 July 2022 – 7 October 2022**

## **Introduction**

We are proposing changes to the transport policy for post statutory school age children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for the start of the 2023/24 academic year. This means that every post statutory school age child and young person will be assessed under the new policy when attending school or college from September 2023 onwards.

We have produced a draft policy regarding the Council's proposed travel assistance arrangements. We are currently consulting on this policy, and would welcome your views on it as part of the consultation.

The full draft policy and consultation response forms are available at [www.bedford.gov.uk/stconsultation](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/stconsultation)

## **Who will be impacted by this proposal?**

The support for young people aged 16- 25 is very different to that for 5-16 year olds. This is because the legal duty to provide transport assistance for these age groups is not the same.

Young people with an EHCP who will be of post statutory school age in September 2023 may be impacted by the proposal.

Children and young people with an EHCP who are of statutory school age will not be impacted, until they become post statutory school age. We are not consulting on making any changes to the eligibility criteria or travel assistance arrangements for these children and young people. We will continue to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations in providing free home to school transport for those who are eligible.

However, in line with the Council's Mainstream Home to School Transport Policies, we propose to separate the combined Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport policy into two documents for children and young people with EHCPs; one for statutory school age and one for post statutory school age.

This will provide clearer information on the Council's duty to provide travel assistance to children, young people and families so they can make informed choices on education placements and the travel assistance arrangements that are available.

## **Why is Bedford Borough Council consulting?**

The Council is committed to supporting children and young people to have access to educational opportunities at school or other educational settings, helping them to achieve their potential and effectively transition to adulthood.

Bedford Borough Council's SEND school transport policy sets out the Council's approach to providing transport to schools and a range of other educational settings for 0 – 19 year olds (and up to 25 years for those with a continuing EHCP).

Local Authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual Post 16 transport policy statement. The statement must specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of young persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

Local Authority statements must include the details of the transport arrangements and the details of the financial support in respect of reasonable travelling expenses that the Local Authority considers it necessary to make, to facilitate access to education or training for learners of sixth form age for the following academic year. These arrangements could include but are not limited to:

- The availability of a concessionary fares scheme
- A bus pass or cash equivalent of a bus pass
- A bus pass or cash equivalent plus a companion pass or cash equivalent
- Independent travel training
- A fixed mileage allowance or personal travel budget
- Provision of commissioned transport

## **What are we consulting upon?**

We invite you to read the full draft policy alongside this consultation document and comment on it. We would also like to highlight the main revisions to the policy statement.

- Increased clarity on the Council's statutory duties in relation to post statutory school age travel assistance for young people with an EHCP
- Definition of the provision of travel assistance relating to young people aged over 19 years, covered under the 'Adult Duty'
- Enhanced information relating to travel assistance available through:
  - Concessionary Disabled Persons Bus Pass Scheme
  - The 16-19 Bursary Fund (Bursary for students in Vulnerable Groups and Discretionary Bursary)

Bedford Borough Council is proposing that families should endeavour to access these sources of travel assistance prior to approaching the Local Authority for support.

In the event that one of the above options is not suitable, the Council is proposing to implement travel assistance by the following means:

- An enhanced referral programme to support Independent Travel and the transition to Adulthood
- A banded payment scheme to award Personal Travel Budget, providing parents with increased flexibility to make their own arrangements by means appropriate for their child or young person. This could be used to support fuel payments as well as a variety of other means to support travel.
- A seat on shared transport services; If a young person is attending a local Special School or Provision, the Council will likely seek to implement travel assistance arrangements via existing shared transport provisions.

We are asking stakeholders and the wider public to express their views on this proposal, including levels of support or opposition and how you think this may impact people in the community.

We are also seeking views for ways in which the proposal could be improved, to offer parents increased flexibility together with any alternative proposals you may have.

Once you have considered the proposal and draft policy, please give us your views through one of the channels mentioned below.

## The Consultation Process

You can respond to the consultations in the following ways:

**Online:** [www.bedford.gov.uk/transportconsultation](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/transportconsultation)

**By post:** By returning a paper questionnaire to; Consulting Bedford, Freepost ANG5840, Bedford, MK40 1ZD.

**By email:** [consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk)

**By phone:** (01234) 718004

**In person:** Documents and response forms are available at any Bedford Borough library, Borough Hall reception area and the copies have been sent to schools and colleges in the Borough.

The consultation will run between **18 July 2022 – 7 October 2022**

Responses received will be published.

## What Happens Next?

Once the consultation is closed we will consider carefully all the responses that have been received. The final policy will be published as soon as possible after the consultation. A decision will be made by the Council's Executive as to whether to implement a new policy shortly afterwards.

All those who have taken part in the consultation will be kept informed and key stakeholders written to when a decision is made.

The revised home to school transport policy will be published on Bedford Borough Council's website in December 2022 to come into effect for the start of the 2023/24 academic year.