

Committee:	Lead Members for Children's Services
Date	30 June 2014
Report By	Director of Children's Services
Title of Report	Post 16 Transport, 2014/15
Purpose of Report	To approve the Post 16 Transport Policy for 2014/15

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended:

- 1) to note the changes to the Post 16 Transport Policy;**
- 2) to agree the post 16 transport statement for 2014/15 for learners aged 16 – 18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and over and young people aged 19 – 24 with learning difficulties; and**
- 3) note the continuing support for Further Education students from low income families, and the continuation of subsidised rail fares open to all students regardless of family income as shown in Appendix 1.**

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 Transport for post-16 students is funded from two sources; the Home to School Transport Budget (HTSTB) and the Post-16 Transport Budget which funds the student transport grants. The cost of providing post-16 transport in the 2013/14 financial year was just over £631k from the HTSTB and £223k from the Post-16 Transport Budget.

1.2 In order to make the required Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings from HTSTB (as agreed by County Council), a number of discretionary payments for statutory aged pupils were reviewed. Following a consultation process it was agreed that students with SEND would be means tested and those that were not on low incomes, would pay an annual contribution of £370 towards their travel costs, with a 25% discount for second or subsequent students from the same family. This amount was the average charge of all the authorities with this policy at the time of the recommendation, and it was comparable with the annual contribution charged in West Sussex which is currently £360.

1.3 Mainstream post-16 students are already means-tested for all support for post-16 transport with the exception of subsidised rail travel. For students where there is no public bus service, annual grants are paid in three instalments. There are three levels of annual grant depending on the distance the student has to travel. Following a consultation process proposals were agreed by Lead Member to make minor reductions in the grants being paid and details are given in the draft Transport Statement attached as Appendix 1.

2. Background/Supporting Information

2.1 As a result of MTFP savings requirements the County Council consulted on a number of proposals to change transport policies and the changes were subsequently agreed by Lead Member. These include the changes detailed in 1.2 and 1.3 above. The Post 16 transport policy now needs to reflect the agreed changes.

2.2 Current post-16 transport guidance requires local authorities to consult annually on the support they are proposing to provide for post-16 learners. A statement of the provision to be made should then be published on the local authority's website, and this should be done by 31 May each year. We will be publishing slightly later than the guidance suggests due to unavoidable delays due to ongoing discussions with Southern Rail.

2.3 The draft post-16 transport statement was consulted on from 23 May 2014 until 27 June. Any comments received will be tabled at the Lead Member meeting. It was sent to FE providers in East Sussex and all secondary schools in East Sussex. Existing post-16 students and those currently in Year 11 have been asked for their comments through providers.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 Although there is an expectation that young people will remain in some form of education or training until they reach the age of eighteen, the statutory school age has not changed and remains at 16. Support with post-16 transport is therefore discretionary. Despite this and considering the difficult financial challenges faced by the County Council, support for students with the greatest financial need will continue for 2014/15. However, Lead Member is advised that provision will need to be reviewed again for 2015/16.

3.2 The full details of the support to be provided are attached in the draft Transport Statement which is attached as Appendix 1.

3.3 Lead Member is recommended to note the continuing support for FE students from low income families, and the continuation of subsidised rail fares open to all students regardless of family income. Lead Member is also asked to note the amendments that have been made to the policy to reflect the change agreed by Lead Member to reduce the annual travel grants in line with the required savings outlined in the MTFP and the introduction of means-testing post-16 students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Sheila Locke
Tel: 01273 35771

Local Members: All

Background Documents: Appendix 1 – Draft Post-16 Transport Statement 2014/15.

Transport policy statement for learners aged 16 – 18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and over and young people aged 19 – 24 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

1	<p>Summary of policy statement and its main objective</p> <p>The providers of post 16 education in East Sussex believe that limited discretionary travel assistance should be targeted at the most vulnerable learners. The providers have, therefore, developed policies which ensure there is provision for students in greatest financial need by assisting in whole or in part towards the cost of transport.</p> <p>The government has increased the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training, requiring them to continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17, and from 2015 until their 18th birthday.</p> <p>This does not mean young people have to stay in school to continue in education or training. Options include full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider, full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training or an apprenticeship. As a result, any transport support given to students up to and including Year 11 does not extend beyond compulsory school age.</p>
2	<p>Types of assistance available</p> <p>Seats on coaches serving schools with sixth forms Students attending schools with sixth forms, where hired vehicles are available, can purchase a travel permit. The cost from September 2014 is £124 per term (based on a six term year). The charge will be waived for students from low income families meeting the eligibility criteria (see section 4). Full details of the scheme are available from the Client Services Transport Team on 01273 335088.</p> <p>Bus season tickets Some students may be issued with a free bus season ticket if they meet the eligibility criteria (see section 4). This will be the case for most students attending courses in Brighton and Hove who are able to travel to and from college on a Brighton & Hove bus service and other students travelling solely on a Brighton & Hove bus service. We will issue a Freedom Ticket to students who travel on other bus services in the county.</p> <p>Travel grants Some students from low income families may qualify for a grant towards their travel costs. Please see the eligibility criteria in section 4 for more information.</p> <p>Link transport Some students (those living in the most rural locations) may be assisted to get to their nearest bus pick up point or railway station provided they attend the nearest appropriate provision. Contact the Admissions and Transport Team within the Children’s Services Department at County Hall for more details.</p> <p>College provision Some colleges provide their own transport. Details of this can be obtained direct from the colleges and contact details can be found in section 10.</p> <p>Concessionary rail and bus tickets <u>Rail</u> - Further Education students aged 16-19 are able to obtain season tickets offering one third off fares subject to a minimum cost of £8 per week and travel for a minimum of one month. Students will need to obtain a Sussex Student Card (application forms obtainable from www.connexions360.org.uk or Admissions and Transport Team) before they can apply for a season ticket at southernrailwaytickets.com This scheme is provided at the Council’s discretion and is currently due to cease in July 2015.</p> <p><u>Bus</u> – Under 19’s can buy the East Sussex Freedom bus Ticket for £14.50* per week. This gives 7 days unlimited travel on most bus routes in East Sussex. A Choice iD Card</p>

	<p>will need to be obtained from participating colleges and East Sussex libraries. For more information visit www.connexions360.org.uk/choice * The price is correct at the time of writing</p> <p>Some bus companies operate their own discount scheme so we advise students to check which deal suits them best before committing to the Freedom ticket. Please call 0345 60 80 193 or visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk for advice about public services.</p> <p><u>3i-D Card</u> – the 3i-D enables 16-19 year olds to prove their age, which ensures they pay the correct bus fare for their age and can be used in shops and leisure providers to obtain discounts and special offers. To find out more visit www.3i-d.co.uk</p>						
3	<p>Transport arrangements for students who reach the age of 19 whilst continuing on a course.</p>						
	<p>Where students receive support it is usually provided up until age of 19 (subject to a normal maximum of two years) but will continue until students complete their course.</p>						
4	<p>Eligibility for support</p>						
	<p>Students from families in receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support* • Income-based Job Seekers Allowance* • Income related Employment and Support Allowance* • Support received under part six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. • Guarantee element of State Pension Credit* • Child Tax Credit, you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and your family's annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) is not more than £16,190* • The maximum level Working Tax Credit <p>are entitled to help with transport from the County Council, if the distance between home and the nearest appropriate provision is over three miles measured by the shortest walking distance.</p> <p><i>*This criteria is correct at the time of printing, but may be subject to change during the academic year as some of these benefits are replaced by the new 'Universal Credit'. More information will be provided as it becomes available.</i></p>						
5	<p>What support is available</p>						
	<p>Help is provided in one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a free seat on a vehicle hired for students attending a school sixth form in East Sussex ➤ a season ticket on certain public bus services ➤ an annual grant payable in three installments. There are three levels of grant which are based on the distance from home to college measured by the shortest walking distance. <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td><u>Level 1</u> (distance between 3 - 7 miles)</td> <td>£300 per year (£100 per term)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Level 2</u> (distance between 7 - 10 miles)</td> <td>£450 per year (£150 per term)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Level 3</u> (distance over 10 miles)</td> <td>£600 per year (£200 per term)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Students who choose to use their own transport instead of a suitable public service will be paid either the correct level of grant or the cost of a bus season ticket (whichever is most cost effective for the local authority).</p> <p>In addition, the course normally needs to run for a minimum of one academic year and needs to be on a full time basis. Assistance will normally be provided for a maximum of two years.</p>	<u>Level 1</u> (distance between 3 - 7 miles)	£300 per year (£100 per term)	<u>Level 2</u> (distance between 7 - 10 miles)	£450 per year (£150 per term)	<u>Level 3</u> (distance over 10 miles)	£600 per year (£200 per term)
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To apply for assistance with transport students/parents should ask for an application form (PS1) which is available in colleges, from the Admissions and Transport team at Children's Services Department, PO Box 4, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE or online at www.connexions360.org.uk/education

Students not meeting the criteria for travel support but who still have genuine money difficulties, may be able to get a bursary from their school or college. The school or college will decide on the amount, and how the bursaries are paid. Ask your tutor or student support office at your college for more details.

Please note that students doing **Apprenticeships** should have reasonable expenses met in full by their learning provider. Students enrolled on a short course, for example, a 16 week programme, should seek help from the course provider should the cost of travel be a barrier to attending.

6 Help for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Wherever possible, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be treated in the same way as those students without i.e. in general they should walk or travel by public transport to their place of learning. A Disabled Person's Bus Pass gives free travel after 9:30am and if entitled, the Council expects students to use it if they are able and there is a suitable bus service.

In order to qualify for help from East Sussex County Council, you will need to meet all of the criteria below. If you do not meet all four requirements, you may still be able to get help through your learning provider's 16-19 Bursary Fund. You should ask at your school or college for further information.

Students with Special Educational Needs will be provided with travel assistance provided all of the following apply:

1. Where the proposed further education course or a course appropriate to the level of needs is at the nearest school/college to the student's home address;
2. The course is full time; that is a minimum of 12 hours assisted learning per week
3. The shortest walking route to the nearest appropriate centre is more than three miles or the student has learning difficulties or a disability (evidence will be required) meaning that they are unable to manage the journey;
4. The family is able to provide proof of low income as set out in the 'Qualifying criteria'(Section 4 above)

If a student is able to meet numbers 1 to 3 of the above criteria but not number 4, parents will be charged £370 per year towards the cost of the transport or have £370 deducted from their travel budget for new applications from September 2014. Second or subsequent students from the same family will receive a 25% discount.

Where help with travel is agreed, it will be by one or more of the following, as appropriate;

- A. Free place on a contract or school bus;
- B. A Personal Travel Budget (PTB)
- C. By taxi, in exceptional cases only, usually only for students with severe disabilities

To apply for help, parents or young people themselves will need to complete an application form setting out the reasons why assistance is required.

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/SENDtravel

	<p>For students under the age of 21, the Children's Services Department will decide the outcome. If help is agreed, assistance may continue until the end of the academic year in which the students turns 21 years of age and not beyond. Help is provided in response to assessed need and is subject to regular review. Students wishing to undertake a new course at the same or similar level to a level of qualification already achieved may not necessarily be successful in their application for travel support.</p> <p>For students aged 21+, the decision rests with the Adult Services Department which set their own eligibility criteria.</p>																																
7	Training for independent travel																																
	It is the County Council's policy to encourage young people to become more independent by developing their ability to use public transport services where possible. Students will be assessed to determine whether they are ready for independent travel training. This is being provided by a centralised referral service for 2014/15.																																
8	When should I start to apply for transport support?																																
	Application forms will be available from June 2014 to enable students to apply for assistance with transport. Students should ask about help with transport as soon as they know what course they intend to undertake, and need not wait for a formal acceptance before applying.																																
9	What if I need to travel to a course that is outside of East Sussex?																																
	In some cases the nearest provision is outside East Sussex. Students attending colleges out of the county may be entitled to assistance depending on whether it is the nearest provision and the course being followed. The policies set out in sections 4 and 5 will therefore apply.																																
10	What help is available if my college is beyond daily travelling?																																
	East Sussex students should be able to attend a college which is within daily travel distance. Plumpton College offers limited boarding facilities for students and priority is given to those students living furthest away. Account is also taken of access to the college by public transport.																																
11	Contact information																																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Organisation</th> <th>Telephone number</th> <th>email address</th> <th>web address (www)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Post 16 support (ESCC)</td> <td>01273 481240</td> <td>admissions@eastsussex.gov.uk</td> <td>eastsussex.gov.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bexhill College</td> <td>01424 215245</td> <td>studentservices@bexhillcollege.ac.uk</td> <td>bexhillcollege.ac.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plumpton College</td> <td>01273 890454</td> <td>enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk</td> <td>plumpton.ac.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sussex Coast College, Hastings</td> <td>01424 442222</td> <td>studentadvisers@sussexcoast.ac.uk</td> <td>sussexcoast.ac.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sussex Downs College (Park)</td> <td>01323 637111</td> <td>info@sussexdowns.ac.uk</td> <td>sussexdowns.ac.uk /park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sussex Downs College (EvOC)</td> <td>01323 637637</td> <td>info@sussexdowns.ac.uk</td> <td>sussexdowns.ac.uk /eastbourne</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sussex Downs College (Lewes)</td> <td>01273 483188</td> <td>6thforminfo@sussexdowns.ac.uk</td> <td>sussexdowns.ac.uk /lewes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Try out www.connexions360.org.uk This site is designed specifically for young people giving information and advice on travel, money, education and health issues.</p>	Organisation	Telephone number	email address	web address (www)	Post 16 support (ESCC)	01273 481240	admissions@eastsussex.gov.uk	eastsussex.gov.uk	Bexhill College	01424 215245	studentservices@bexhillcollege.ac.uk	bexhillcollege.ac.uk	Plumpton College	01273 890454	enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk	plumpton.ac.uk	Sussex Coast College, Hastings	01424 442222	studentadvisers@sussexcoast.ac.uk	sussexcoast.ac.uk	Sussex Downs College (Park)	01323 637111	info@sussexdowns.ac.uk	sussexdowns.ac.uk /park	Sussex Downs College (EvOC)	01323 637637	info@sussexdowns.ac.uk	sussexdowns.ac.uk /eastbourne	Sussex Downs College (Lewes)	01273 483188	6thforminfo@sussexdowns.ac.uk	sussexdowns.ac.uk /lewes
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12	Appeals procedure																																
	If students are refused assistance by the County Council there is an appeals process. The first stage is to write to the Head of Admissions and Transport setting out why it is																																

	<p>felt the decision is wrong.</p> <p>The appeal will be considered by an officer not involved in the original decision. If the student remains dissatisfied they can ask for their case to be considered by the Transport and Student Support Panel. This Panel comprises three elected County Councillors. There is no further right of appeal once the Panel has made its decision.</p>
13	Consultation
	<p>Each year local authorities are required to consult young people of sixth form age and their parents as well as other stakeholders on the Post 16 Transport Policy statement before it is finalised.</p>

