

Responses to consultation on East Sussex County Council's proposed Post 16 Transport Statement for 2017/18

7 people completed the survey online. We asked for views on any aspect of the statement.

Comments received

- 1) We should provide free transport for post 16 6th form students until they are 18.
- 2) I feel that pupils with SEN should receive transport assistance particularly the severe needs children as often they have to travel to the nearest special school and parents often need respite for the journey. Also it is important they stay in education until they are 18 or 19 as there are limited opportunities after school.
- 3) I don't think the new policy covers the severe behavioural needs of children with high end ADHD and ASD who have been provided with transport since age 5 and who are already experiencing an unsettling change as they move to post 16 education. This is one more unnecessary change they must endure at a very scary time for them.
- 4) As a parent of a severely disabled 16 year old, I have had to resign from my teaching career in order to transport my son to and from school since his taxi and escort was discontinued when he turned 16. The current policy is discriminatory (See The Equality Act) in that it provides transport solutions for able-bodied 16 year olds and those with difficulties who might be able to learn independent travel skills. However, it states it is up to parents of those with more severe difficulties to work out transport themselves, even if we are willing to pay the full annual financial contribution. I have been paying £500 each month to pay for a private taxi and escort, a large chunk of my earnings. Because this taxi and escort is also contracted to do a school run before he picks up my son, I have no guarantees that he will not be used for other contracted school runs from September this year. It was incredibly difficult to find an available wheelchair taxi and escort in the first place. The whole situation made me very ill and in turn, this caused stress and anxiety for my son. I am not the only parent forced onto benefits because of this policy.
- 5) I fail to understand, despite having attended relevant training... How a young person with complex special educational needs can lose the right to transport so ending a placement on what seems an arbitrary age cut off. These young people need constituency not uncertainty. By all means assess for developing independence but without the threat of losing support.
- 6) The current policy is impacting on disabled children and their parents and siblings. Parents can not work. It is adding extra stress. Bus already run on the routes that where previously used with less children.
- 7) I'm disappointed with the current system. My daughter is wheelchair bound & has a severe learning disability amongst many other problems. She is unable to use public transport & relies on a responsible adult for transportation. She currently receives school transport but come September 2017 this will cease. I work & start at 8am & I also have another child that I have to get to school. I'm just not sure on the logistics of this & this is one more stressful situation I could do without.

Council's response

Post 16 transport is not mandatory and legislation gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial support are necessary to facilitate young people's attendance.

Our policy allows cases to be considered on an individual basis and support is given where the evidence provided clearly demonstrates that the personal circumstances are

exceptional and the applicant (including wider family members) is unable to make their own travel arrangements.

There is no direct support available from the County Council to able bodied young people. Sixth form educational providers have their own funds to support attendance and set their own criteria for support.

The policy in East Sussex is similar to policies adopted by other local authorities.