

Post-16 LIF students cohort summary

As part of the proposal to consult on discretionary home to school/college transport, one of the options is to cease transport for post-16 students from low income families (LIF)¹ who are between 16 and 19 years old. This option is mitigated by the proposal to retain up to 25% of the forecast 2015/16 budget spend of £240k to act as a targeted hardship fund.

If post-16 transport as it now stands were to be 'ceased' for this group, this will be imposed on new starters only in September 2016. As travel support is offered in most cases for 2 years and for some students for 3 years, any changes will not be complete until the third year following implementation (2018/19).

The hardship fund allocation would increase in line with demand, as only new starters will be subject to the new regime (so the fund will be the equivalent of 25% of the funding the students will have received in 2014/15, for those no longer receiving this full support from September 2016 – students awarded support prior to this time will continue to receive the same assistance). The ideal would be to use this funding to offer hardship fund support to those who most need it in order to continue their education; however there are a number of options for the nature of this support.

	Potential savings by Financial Year			
	2016/17*	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Option a Removal of funding Students from low income families - HTST budget	£39,063	£117,147	£130,729	£130,729
Travel Grants (non-HTST budget)	£34,109	£101,818	£112,000	£112,000
<i>25% hardship funds</i>	£18,293	£54,741	£60,682	£60,682
Total for Option a minus hardship fund	£54,879	£164,224	£182,047	£182,047
Total for Option a	£73,172	£218,965	£242,729	£242,729

* adjusted for part-financial year with changes from September 2016 (68% of full year)

For the 2016/17 academic year, the identified hardship fund allocation would be approximately half of the figure for the entire cohort, as roughly half of applicants for support from September 2016 will be starting new courses.

	2016/17*	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Hardship fund available for academic year	£30,341	£60,682	£60,682	£60,682

¹ Low income families are those in receipt of one, or more, of the following:

- Income support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit based on income of up to £16,190
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related)
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

Recent changes impacting this cohort

It should be noted that spend on this cohort has already been reduced significantly from September 2014 as eligibility criteria for students in colleges/school sixth forms was adjusted to fall into line with school aged low income cases, and travel grant payment rates were also reduced by 4%. There are now 44% fewer young people being supported than a year ago, with an estimated reduction in annual spend of £190k between 2013/14 (the last full financial year prior to the change) and 2015/16 for total post-16 LIF transport including travel grants.

Analysis of the cohorts

A total of 473 post-16 students between Year 12 and 14 in the 2014/15 academic year are being offered free transport to sixth form or college by ESCC due to meeting criteria for low income (equivalent to the criteria for free school meals). They constitute 3.7% of the total 12,500 young people, living in East Sussex and age 16-19 years remaining in education.

236 receive free passes for public transport, with 5 using free organised or 'hired' transport - taxis and minibuses, via the HTST budget; and 233 receive travel grants (A&T budget). A further breakdown is below:

Travel Assistance via the HTST budget (bus passes and hired transport) 2014/15

Numbers by Year group	Freedom Pass*	Brighton & Hove ID**	Hired Transport	Total
Y12	78	23	3	104
Y13	82	28	2	112
Y14	18	7	0	25
Total	178	58	5	241

*£570 increasing to £608 from April 2015

**£290

The likely effect of removal of these free travel passes will be that the majority of these young people will still want to use the same passes but will need to purchase them (some may find other ways to get to college – walking, cycling, etc).

Where are they studying?

The following shows numbers of LIF students with free travel passes by post-16 provider:

Provider	Total	Provider	Total
ARK 6th Form at The Ridge	1	Plumpton Col@Plumpton	1
Bennett Memorial Diocesan Sch	1	Ringmer Community College	2
Bexhill College	51	Rye Studio School	2
BHASVIC	5	Sussex Coast Col@Hast MVC	4
BIMM	1	Sussex Coast Col@Ore Valley	7
Cardinal Newman	3	Sussex Coast Col@Station Plaza	22
City College	36	Sussex Downs Col@Eastbourne	59
DV8 Bexhill	4	Sussex Downs Col@Lewes	21
DV8 Brighton	1	Sussex Downs Col@Newhaven	1
Hailsham Community College AT	1	Uckfield Community College	3
Heathfield Community College	3	Uplands Community College	1
Homewood School and Sixth Form	1	Varndean College	6

Post-16 LIF students on Travel Grants 2014/15

This year, 232 post-16 students are receiving travel grants (A&T budget) – essentially cash payments to assist them with the full costs of transport to their sixth forms or colleges. The grants are paid in three instalments to a total of between £300 and £600 per year.

34% of this year's travel grant cohort attends Plumpton College – many students are presumed to pay for the Plumpton coach from the nearest stop. Another 28% attend Sussex Downs College (SDC) and 19% attend Sussex Coast College (SCC), with just 18% at the remaining 21 organisations. It is believed that most of these students use the grant as a contribution towards train travel costs.

The college attended, and number of students supported by grants by home town is shown below:

PLUMPTON		SDC		SCC	
Home town	Number	Home town	Total	Home town	Number
Eastbourne	19	Seaford	18	Bexhill	18
Hastings	10	Newhaven	15	Rye	7
Polegate	6	Eastbourne	8	Battle	6
Lewes	5	Peacehaven	6	Eastbourne	5
Seaford	5	Bexhill	4	St Leonards	3
Uckfield	5	St Leonards	3	Hailsham	1
Peacehaven	4	Battle	2	Hartfield	1
Rob'sbridge	4	Hailsham	2	Hurst Green	1
Heathfield	3	Pevensey	2	Polegate	1
Newhaven	3	Polegate	2	Wadhurst	1
St Leonards	3	Firle	1	TOTAL	44
Bexhill	2	Hastings	1		
Crowborough	2	Plumpton	1		
Hailsham	2	Rob'sbridge	1		
Wivelsfield	2	Rye	1		
Battle	1	Telscombe	1		
Etchingham	1	TOTAL	68		
Forest Row	1				
Rye	1				
Telscombe	1				
TOTAL	80				

The following table gives the percentage share of all post-16 LIF travel support (bus tickets and travel grants) by organisation. Bexhill College and City College Brighton & Hove also have a significant number of supported 16-19 year old students (50 and 38 respectively). The 5 colleges with the majority of supported students are highlighted.

Provider	Bus tickets		Travel grants			Totals			25% hardship fund (Y2)
	Freedom Pass (£608)	B&H Bus ID (£290)	Band 1 (£300)	Band 2 (£450)	Band 3 (£600)	Total number of students	Total cost 2014/15	As % of total budget	
ARK 6th Form at The Ridge	1	0	0	0	0	1	£608	0.25%	£152
Bennett Memorial Diocesan Sch	1	0	0	1	0	2	£1,058	0.43%	£265
Bexhill College	50	0	0	0	0	50	£30,400	12.47%	£7,600
BHASVIC	0	5	0	0	0	5	£1,450	0.60%	£363
BIMM	0	1	0	0	2	3	£1,490	0.61%	£373
Brighton Academy	0	0	0	0	1	1	£600	0.25%	£150
Cardinal Newman	0	3	0	0	0	3	£870	0.36%	£218
City College	0	36	1	1	0	38	£11,190	4.59%	£2,798
CSC H Heath	0	0	1	0	0	1	£300	0.12%	£75
DV8 Bexhill / Brighton	4	1	3	2	3	13	£6,322	2.59%	£1,581
EBNE Borough FC	0	0	0	0	1	1	£600	0.25%	£150
Hailsham Community College AT	1	0	0	0	0	1	£608	0.25%	£152
Heathfield Community College	3	0	0	0	0	3	£1,824	0.75%	£456
Homewood Sixth Form	1	0	0	0	0	1	£608	0.25%	£152
Northbrook College	0	0	0	0	2	2	£1,200	0.49%	£300
Norton Knatchbull	0	0	0	1	0	1	£450	0.18%	£113
Plumpton College	1	0	7	3	70	81	£46,058	18.90%	£11,515
Ringmer Community College	2	0	0	0	1	3	£1,816	0.75%	£454
Rye Studio School	2	0	0	0	1	3	£1,816	0.75%	£454
Sackville	0	0	1	0	0	1	£300	0.12%	£75
Shoreham Academy	0	0	0	0	1	1	£600	0.25%	£150
St Pauls	0	0	1	0	0	1	£300	0.12%	£75
Sussex Coast College	33	0	35	23	54	145	£73,314	30.08%	£18,329
Sussex Downs College	75	6	0	0	0	81	£47,340	19.43%	£11,835
The Judd	0	0	0	1	0	1	£450	0.18%	£113
Tonbridge Grammar	0	0	1	0	0	1	£300	0.12%	£75
Uckfield Community College	3	0	0	0	0	3	£1,824	0.75%	£456
Uplands Community College	1	0	0	0	0	1	£608	0.25%	£152
Varndean College	0	6	1	0	0	7	£2,040	0.84%	£510
West Kent College	0	0	0	1	9	10	£5,850	2.40%	£1,463
Not recorded	0	0	0	2	1	3	£1,500	0.62%	£375

We will need to consider how to allocate the hardship fund as this should perhaps not be directly proportional to the current budget breakdown by college, as some students will have travel costs above the amount they are currently awarded through a travel grant. For example, the costs for a student at Plumpton College using their subsidised transport is as follows:

Plumpton Ticket costs	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4
Price per 10 journey ticket	£ 17.00	£ 25.00	£ 31.00	£ 37.50
Term 1 Ticket (14 weeks)	£185.00	£ 247.00	£ 308.00	£ 369.00
Term 2 Ticket (13 weeks)	£ 172.00	£ 229.00	£ 286.00	£ 343.00
Term 3 Ticket (9 weeks)	£119.00	£ 158.00	£ 198.00	£ 238.00
Total for termly Ticket	£476.00	£634.00	£792.00	£950.00

A significant number may therefore be faced with costs of £950 per year for a full-time course (and may be receiving a maximum of £600 via an ESCC travel grant). We will be exploring the fairest method for allocation with college colleagues as part of the consultation.

Plumpton College also have a greater proportion of students from low income families than other sixth forms and colleges and may therefore be disproportionately disadvantaged by changes impacting students receiving travel support due to low family income. 14.5% of their students aged 16-19 are currently receiving travel support, compared with 9.9% for Sussex Coast and 2.3% for Sussex Downs College.

Although a small number of individuals (5, with an average cost of £1,015 per year) we also need to consider if or how we will support those currently being offered organised transport.