

## **Responses to consultation on East Sussex County Council's proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2021-2022 and proposed removal of the Sussex Student Card rail subsidy**

Comments were sought on the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2021/22

There were 15 responses to the consultation. The results are as follows:

### **Comments were sought on any aspect of the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement (15)**

- 1) It seems you are taking over 16s less seriously than under 16s, there is no age distinction in terms of their disability. If a child can't travel to school independently beyond an age where it would normally be expected (eg.14) or younger for another reason, then transport should be provided. If not it is discriminatory - they are being forced to find their own support and if for any reason they can't access that support (sickness or any other reason) then the individual would not be able to attend.

I am self-employed and have been deemed able to do all of my child's collecting and dropping. But this falls well within my normal working hours, which are being necessarily reduced, this means a loss of earnings in order to fulfil this role and so I am being discriminated against as well as my son because I don't have to go out to work. Until my child was sixteen he received transport to and from school, the same school he's going to now. So the only thing that has changed is the withdrawal of his transport. It has caused a great deal of added pressure to us as a family, and to our work, as well as importantly a loss of independence for our son, that this has suddenly stopped.

- 2) I believe that bus fares are too expensive, especially the fares given from bus drivers themselves.

From living in other parts of the country, I know that there are places which do give free travel for under 18s which I think is a good idea that could be applied down here.

However, I don't believe we need free transport at all times, so perhaps it could be made similar to the child busld , where it applies only during weekdays or school times.

Also, the post 16s should not be discriminated against when trying to get a child ticket, as they are under 18.

The arguments and abuse from bus drivers when trying to buy a child ticket with a in date child bus Id is entirely unnecessary as a child ticket applies to anyone under 18 and a child ticket is over half the price of an adult ticket, so if a child only brings enough money for a child ticket and is forced to buy an adult ticket, it causes problems.

- 3) No comments of any note. My son uses the Brighton & Hove bus network to travel to Varndean from Lewes and other than the usual traffic issues has been able to do so as he needed to. During the pandemic he was disappointed by the number of passengers who were allowed to board the bus without face coverings.
- 4) Please give full time education students free travel regardless of their age.

- 5) My two children travel from Hastings to Wadhurst each day. The transport is awful!

At the moment their journey consists of;

Hastings to Wadhurst train departing 7.50am - arriving 8.29am

Wadhurst station to Uplands CC U19bus departing 8.27am arriving 8.55am /Walk (if walking they arrive to school late) 9.30am?

Return;

Uplands C C U19 bus to Wadhurst Train station /walk (if walking they leave school 20mins early in order to catch their train on time)

Wadhurst to Hastings train

Since the covid19 outbreak the U19 bus has been held back so isn't able to take the children to and from the station due to timing so they have had special permission from Uplands CC to arrive late in to school and leave early to go home. This situation has left this group of children extremely vulnerable! The impact on their education is concerning too. They then have to walk to and from the Wadhurst train station and Uplands CC. This walk is a 45min ish walk, it is a very dark and gloomy walk, during winter months I am very concerned for the safety of the children doing this route! When trains are then also delayed they are left waiting in a very dark unlit station with no wifi signal.

Afterschool club - oast mini bus drops to Wadhurst station

Costing of this route per child is £25 per week for train and a further £6 per week for the U19 bus per child. Southeastern have just announced a rise in fare which I'm yet to know how much this will impact the cost.

Please could I ask that the Hastings to Wadhurst route is looked into with the greatest of urgency to ensure the safety of these children!

- 6) Hastings to Wadhurst route is extremely unsafe these children are very vulnerable and this route needs addressing with a matter of urgency!!
- 7) Ultimately these are students, we need affordable transport to support those who are using Public Transport to further their education and better their lives.
- 8) We live in Mark Cross, where there is no direct public bus service to Wadhurst. Whilst my son gets free school transport on the school bus from Mark Cross, my daughter in Y12 is currently having to get the public bus from Mark Cross to Frant where she has to wait for Tunbridge Wells to Wadhurst. We did apply for (and get) a paying space on the Mark Cross bus, however the cost of this significantly more than the cost of public transport. Could the cost of a vacant seat on the school bus be lowered to make it comparable with the public transport provision? We would much prefer them to be travelling in together, however we can't afford the additional cost.

9) Two of my three children are in Year 11 at school and first year of college. During the pandemic we are endeavouring to take and collect them as much as possible to avoid the use of public transport however this is not always possible especially when they both attend at different times. The Bus service in Eastbourne is very limiting and costly. Ideally I would like to see the option for us as a family to all sign in to the same account on the same stagecoach app and be able to buy one reasonably price ticket that either of my children could use on any one day. At the moment, I cannot buy a ticket on my phone which they can then use on theirs. Both my children got stranded on two different occasions before christmas as they were told they could not use cash and the card machines were not working either. Also, at the moment, if they want an under 19 fare they can only get a day ticket and not a single which is ridiculous and the fares are still too expensive.

10) I think there should be free travel passes for SEN students, and a heavy discount for all students, if the youth are made to be in full time education till they are 18, then transport costs should be covered too, a lot of families will struggle to get their children onto Public transport , let alone deal with money, and it's actually very expensive!! We didn't choose for our children to be in full time education till they're 18, the government did, so why should we be expected to pay.

11) My son will be staying on at his current school to study A levels, in 2021. I already purchase from the vacant seat scheme for him.

The scheme needs to remain in place for post 16 education students.

Their applications must have equal priority as younger students. Although it is a choice to study post 16, it is essential that the decision to study is not deprived due to lack of access to transport.

Without the scheme my son would not be able to access education. Rurality is a consideration as every available college still requires home to college transport.

One way journeys also must be available, ie home to school or school to home, and the costs reflected for one way or return journeys.

12) Transport is essential for those attending Beacon Academy from Withyham, as there is no public bus. As parents we both work so are unable to get a sixth former to Beacon. Beacon is our local school so should be assessable by sixth formers that are required to stay in education by the government.

13) make bus fares cheaper

14) make the prices cheaper for sixth formers and school students

15) Transport to Uplands needed