

Response from Campaign for Better Transport



Derrick Coffee, County Officer

Campaign for Better Transport – East Sussex

9 Mayfield Place Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 8XJ

01323 646866 derrick.coffee@talk21.com. 0795 1084436

11th September, 2015.

Dear Cllr Glazier

Travel Support for post-16 and pre-school children with SEND

I am sending you our comments on the current consultation on your proposals, outlined below:

ESCC proposals are that:

- *We increase the level of contribution already made by families towards the total cost of travel support for their non-statutory-age child with SEND for everyone who is supported from September 2016. This includes both post-16 and pre-school age groups.*
- *We reduce the Council's spend on post-16 travel for young people with SEND by offering support to families in exceptional circumstances only, whilst striving to ensure that the most vulnerable continue to be able to attend their nearest suitable provision. A draft post-16 SEND travel policy which incorporates revised criteria is included for consideration. This change would be introduced for new starters from September 2016.*

Our Comments:

These relate to those students who may be able to benefit from Independent Travel Training (ITT) and also to the question of public transport availability, accessibility and affordability.

With recurring pressures on budgets for all areas of transport infrastructure – with the exception of major capital road schemes – it is relevant to consider the benefits to communities that flow from good quality, comprehensive and affordable public transport supported by judicious use of public funds, including:

- pump-priming measures which are judged to have a good chance of 'taking off' and becoming self supporting, and which:
- support those without access to a car;
- support the vulnerable;
- underpin healthy lifestyles;
- support local economies;
- help children to develop independence through a good experience of public transport which could spawn a healthy habit throughout their lifetimes;
- Are available to all.

None of the above objectives are contentious and are even discernible in current policy, and significant numbers of journeys made by SEND students may in practice or theory be made by public transport services fulfilling those multiple objectives.

The following obituary to a former transport planner in London (Redmond O'Neill) is a useful reminder that support for childrens' transport can deliver economic and social equity benefits:

'Of all the transport policies O'Neill implemented, the one he was possibly most proud of was the extension of free rail travel to the under 11s and free bus travel to the under 16s – a measure which at

a stroke removed a major source of money worries and social exclusion for many thousands of London households in poverty'.

This would also be true of continuing support for SEND related transport, alongside affordable fares and attractive ticket deals **for all** children and young adults, as are available in other areas of the UK.

Approaching the problems from this angle, a more affordable public transport network – both bus and rail – could make a big difference to quality of life for many, delivering all the objectives listed above, plus:

- Relief on hard pressed family budgets;
- Reduced 'education related' (and other) car trips;
- A more attractive market for transport operators, leading to more modern, accessible vehicles;
- Better air quality and lower CO2 emissions;
- More civilised, safer and attractive residential areas.

The burden on *revenue* budgets is likely to be worsened by the wrong sort of *capital* investment which currently is skewed towards unhealthy and unsustainable modes of transport – predominantly the private car. This will increasingly be the first choice for those living close to major road schemes planned or currently under construction. Bus services will become unviable and communities difficult to serve with (likely) lower density car based developments, making life even more difficult for those with no access to a car, or who cannot afford or choose not to own one.

Our suggestions:

1. No change to the current levels of support;
2. A dialogue with bus operators on the subject of reduced fares for the young (see attached summaries of current Stagecoach proposals in Carlisle and Liverpool: Why not in East Sussex?);
3. Collaborative working between ESCC and Stagecoach to bring about increased uptake of bus use and enhancement of supported and commercial services for all, including those who are the focus of this consultation.
4. Parking revenues to be allocated to supported public transport services and further enhancements to be funded through adoption of 'workplace car parking levies' as successful adopted in Nottingham with almost total acceptance and support from the population at large, including the business community.

Yours Sincerely,

Derrick Coffee.

County Officer, Campaign for Better Transport, East Sussex.

cc Rupert Clubb
Cllr Pat Rodohan

ESCC Response:

Whilst the Council agrees that it would be beneficial to offer cheaper transport for 16-19 year old students and implement better public transport provision in the county, in the current financial environment, subsidising transport for young people is not feasible given the significant additional cost pressures this would place on the County Council.



On Stagecoach buses a child's Megarider ticket will drop from £9.50 to £6.80 and a flat ticket will fall from £2 to £1.

Bus travel in Merseyside is set to get cheaper for children from this Sunday.

Bus firms [Stagecoach](#) and [Arriva](#) are reducing children's ticket prices to half adult fares and are raising the age limit so anyone 18 and under will benefit.

A spokesman for Stagecoach Merseyside and South Lancashire said the decision to raise the age limit was in line with the change in compulsory education attendance requirements.

Managing director Elizabeth Tasker said: "Bus travel is a key means of transport, particularly for young people who are now staying in education until 18. Our new ticketing structure reflects this change and we want to ensure that we are opening up our services for young people and making it easier for them to get about.

"Access to affordable transportation is a key factor in gaining independence and enabling young people to develop and take up opportunities – particularly as they take the first steps to starting up their careers.

"We hope that our new system will remove any cost barriers which might otherwise restrict this age group and help young people who really rely on our services."

On Stagecoach buses a child's Megarider ticket will drop from £9.50 to £6.80 and a flat ticket will fall from £2 to £1.

A Dayrider ticket will now be £2 for a child.

Area managing director of Arriva Merseyside Howard Farrall said: "We're making some changes to make bus travel even more affordable for young people in Merseyside.

"From Sunday, July 19, the child single fare will be reduced to half the adult fare and the age at which a young person can travel at child fare will be extended to those aged 18 and under.

"Following on from the success of MyTicket, we're delighted to be able to make these changes and reduce the cost of travel for our young customers. Our Merseyside child weekly saver price will be frozen at £10."

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STAGECOACH CUTS PRICES ON BUS JOURNEYS IN CARLISLE

By Freya Findlay

*Last updated at 11:23, Friday, 04 September 2015***Stagecoach has cut prices for teenagers and those making short bus journeys in Carlisle.**

The firm has extended child prices to anyone under the age of 19, giving 16, 17 and 18-year-olds access to cheaper travel for a trial period of four months.

Teenagers and children will also benefit from a new £2 child dayrider ticket, which includes unlimited travel on all city services.

Stagecoach has also mapped out a new '£1 to town' zone, from where passengers only have to pay £1 for a single journey to anywhere in the city.

The boundaries of the new zone are the Co-operative on Blackwell Road, Currock; Trevor Street, off London Road; Greystone Road, St Aidans; Stanwix Crown Inn, Scotland Road, Stanwix; McVitie's, Church Street, Stanwix; and Metcalfe Street, Denton Holme.

Michael Sanderson, commercial manager for Stagecoach in Cumbria, said: "By raising the age you can buy a child ticket we aim to increase the independence of many young people across Carlisle.

"We hope this trial will encourage more people in this age group to use our comprehensive network of routes.

"We are also trying to encourage more people to use the bus with our £2 child dayrider ticket and '£1 to town' zone."

If the extension is successful during the trial period, Stagecoach says it will continue it and could be introduced to other places.

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