



Consultation

Post-16 Travel Assistance

2 June 2014 – 4 July 2014

Introduction

Solihull Council must publish details of travel or financial assistance that it considers necessary to ensure access to education or training for learners of sixth form age.

In June 2013 Solihull Council published a Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy and in December 2013 the level of contribution that was expected to be paid by applicants who qualified for assistance was determined.

Following feedback on this new policy we are carrying out a further period of consultation on three key elements:

- Eligibility criteria
- Types of travel assistance
- Level of parental contribution

Requests for contributions have been suspended for this academic year (2013/14), whilst we seek views on these key areas.

The consultation will run from 2 June 2014 to 4 July 2014. It is expected that a decision on the policy will be made in September 2014 and it will be published in the Autumn Term 2014.

The full proposed Post-16 Travel Policy can be viewed at www.solihull.gov.uk/consultation. The policy should have regard to the relevant Department for Education guidance for Local Authorities (February 2014) and the Education Act 1996.

Proposals for consultation

1. Proposed eligibility criteria

This is an extract from the proposed policy showing the proposed eligibility criteria:

Eligibility criteria	
The student must:	
1	live in Solihull
2	attend a full-time, suitable course at the nearest school, further education college or institution or 16-19 academy (school or college)
3	be aged 16-18 years at the time of application, or have started the course before turning 19 and continuing to attend that course
4	be in receipt of the mobility component of Personal Independent Payment or Disability Living Allowance
If the application meets <i>all</i> of the above criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 the student will be eligible for travel assistance	

We are keen to hear your views on the proposed eligibility criteria.

2. Types of travel assistance

We are proposing to offer two types of travel assistance to eligible post-16 students, either:

- a **seat on a vehicle** currently making that journey; or
- a **mileage or fuel** allowance for those who choose to use their own transport.

Students who qualify for assistance will be able to choose the type of travel assistance.

We are keen to hear your views on the proposed types of travel assistance.

3. Proposed travel assistance offer and level of contribution

Students who qualify for post-16 travel assistance and choose a seat on a vehicle option will have to make a contribution towards the cost.

There is a number of ways that we can calculate the contribution towards a seat and we would welcome your views on the different options.

3.1 A single rate of contribution

The current average cost of a seat on a vehicle per student is £5,000 per year. The current level of contribution towards a seat on a vehicle is set at £990 per year. This figure was determined by considering the lower and higher rates of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance; £1092 and £2873. This is because the mobility component is paid to assist towards the cost of travel and transport for those with a disability.

The contribution of £990 was set at a point between these rates so that it did not completely absorb the lower rate payment. At the time it was considered better to have a single contribution rate. Following feedback we have decided to review how the contribution is calculated.

Option 1 : £990 per year

A single rate of **£990** per year for everyone who qualifies, which is the current rate.

3.2 Contribution calculated using the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance

As we are proposing to use the mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance as part of the eligibility criteria, this could be used to determine the level of contribution towards a seat on a vehicle.

The contribution would be adjusted at the beginning of each academic year taking into account any increase or decrease in the value of the mobility component.

Option 2 : Contribution calculated at 50% of mobility component

This allows for a proportion of the mobility component to be used in term time for activities other than travelling to and from school or college.

Level of mobility benefit	Travel assistance offer
Mobility component £21.55 per week Personal Independence Payment at the standard rate Disability Living Allowance at the lower rate	Pay towards a seat on an existing vehicle £558 per year Payable at £186 per term.
Mobility component £56.75 per week Personal Independence Payment at the enhanced rate Disability Living Allowance at the higher rate	Pay towards a seat on an existing vehicle £1473 per year Payable at £491 per term
Mobility component - Motability Scheme *	Pay towards a seat on an existing vehicle £1473 per year Payable at £491 per term
The contributions have been rounded to make 3 whole termly payments	

Option 3 : Contribution calculated at 73% of mobility component

The contribution could be calculated by taking a proportion of the annual mobility component which represents 38 weeks which is the number of weeks in a school year. This is 73% of the mobility component.

Level of mobility benefit	Travel assistance offer
Mobility component £21.55 per week Personal Independence Payment at the standard rate Disability Living Allowance at the lower rate	Pay towards a seat on an existing vehicle £816 per year Payable at £272 per term
Mobility component £56.75 per week Personal Independence Payment at the enhanced rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at the higher rate	Pay towards a seat on an existing vehicle £2154 per year Payable at £718 per term
Mobility component - Motability Scheme *	Pay towards a seat on an existing vehicle £2154 per year Payable at £718 per term
*Applicants who are in receipt of the higher or enhanced level of mobility component and choose to access the Motability Scheme are treated the same as those in receipt of the cash value of this benefit. Under the terms of the Motability Scheme, the vehicle must be used for the benefit of the disabled client.	
The contribution has been rounded to make 3 whole termly payments.	

3.3 Mileage or fuel allowance

If you choose to make your own travel arrangements we propose paying you a mileage or fuel allowance. We will pay for each journey you make between home and school, normally 4 each day. The rates are proposed to be:

Level of mobility benefit	Travel assistance offer
Mobility component £21.55 per week Personal Independence Payment at the standard rate Disability Living Allowance at the lower rate	Mileage allowance of 45p per mile (home to school x 4) less £280**
Mobility component £56.75 per week Personal Independence Payment at the enhanced rate Disability Living Allowance at the higher rate	Mileage allowance of 45p per mile (home to school x 4) less £280**
Mobility component - Motability Scheme	Fuel allowance of 20p per mile (home to school x 4) less £280**
**If an applicant qualifies for mileage or fuel allowance payable at the rate published in the table, the sum of £280 will be deducted from the total annual amount. This represents the cost of a local travel pass that would be incurred by any other student travelling to post-16 education who was not eligible for assistance.	

4. How will these proposals affect students currently receiving assistance and those applying for September 2014, and beyond

We are proposing to phase-in any changes to our Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy so that students who have started under one set of travel arrangements continue to benefit from them until they either finish that course or move to another school or college.

It is proposed that any new arrangements are introduced as follows:

Students aged 16 or over who started their post-16 course before 1 September 2014, will not be affected by the new policy. Whatever arrangements are in place now will continue until the student has finished that course. This means that any seat on a vehicle the student has now will continue to be available free of charge.

Students aged 16 or over, starting a post-16 course on or after September 2014 will be considered for travel assistance using the existing charges approved in December 2013. This means that if the student qualifies for a seat on a vehicle to a special school a payment must be paid towards the cost. The current charge is £990 but this may change following the outcome of this consultation. We will not ask for the first term's contribution before the outcome of this consultation process is known, and any actual charge will not be higher than £990, on the grounds that this was the position when the student chose their course.

Students aged 10 or over, starting a post-16 course at any time after September 2015, will be considered against the new policy and charges that are agreed as a result of this consultation.

5. How do I make my views known?

You can register your views by completing our online survey which can be found at www.solihull.gov.uk/consultation. If you are unable to access the survey online we can send you a paper version for you to complete and send back.

The closing date for responses is **4 July 2014**.

6. Consultation Meetings

We will be holding consultation meetings for parents where you will have the opportunity to ask officers about the proposals and find out more information. You can choose which meeting suits you best.

The meetings will be held on:

Monday 16 June	5pm	Reynalds Cross School
Tuesday 17 June	5.30pm	Forest Oak School / Merstone School
Thursday 19 June	10am	Hazel Oak School

7. What happens after the consultation?

The outcome of this consultation process will be reported back to Cabinet Member in September when a final decision on the proposals will be made. We expect to publish the new Post-16 Travel Policy in the autumn term 2014.

8. Contact us

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