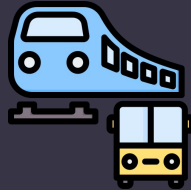


# Bitesize guide

---

## SEND travel assistance for learners entering Years 12 and above



Empowering children and young people to live happy and fulfilling lives



**achieving  
for children**

# Policy vision and objectives

---

The councils and Achieving for Children (AfC) are committed to ensuring that all pupils have a great start to life, are safe and healthy and have access to high quality education (at mainstream and SEN settings) so that they are able to achieve their full potential.

The Children and Families Act 2014 commits partners to work together to develop services which strengthen the abilities, resilience and increase the independence of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families.

## SEND Futures Plan

SEND Futures Plan, aims to ensure:

‘every child and young person with SEND belongs to a local, inclusive community that provides the education, health and social care support they need to develop their talents and skills, and that empowers them to live a happy and fulfilling life’

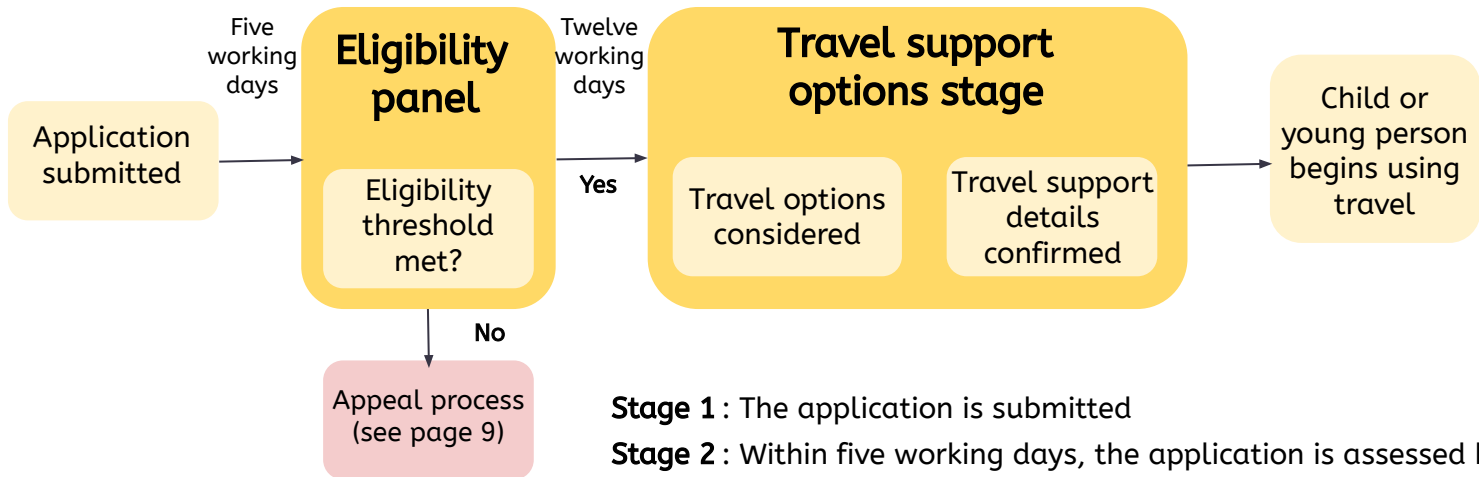
## Policy objective

This policy will enable the service to promote travel independence, where appropriate. This will support children and young people to develop and access travel arrangements where they are less dependent on others.

It will also increase opportunities as they progress into adulthood.

# Home to school travel assistance - summary

The image shows the stages and steps taken to assess eligibility to SEND travel assistance.



**Stage 1:** The application is submitted

**Stage 2:** Within five working days, the application is assessed by our SEND Transport Eligibility Panel

**Stage 3:** If the application is declined, this will be communicated to parents and they can follow our appeals process if they would like to (see page 9)

**Stage 4:** If the application is successful, the service would have 12 working days to consider suitable travel options, and confirm those details to parents

**Stage 5:** Child or young person begins to travel

# Eligibility criteria - travel consideration

---

It is expected that young people entering Year 12, will make their own travel arrangements to their education placement, where appropriate. The council will only consider assistance when the young person is unable to do this due to their SEND or disability. Any assistance provided will be to support and develop independence as they grow and develop into adulthood.

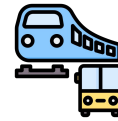
## Travel consideration



Whether the sixth form is an extension of the school previously attended by the student and named in their education, health and care plan (EHCP)



The distance from the student's home to their education or training establishment, plus journey time



Whether public transport to the nearest suitable placement is too complex for independent travel by the young person



Whether the young person has SEND or mobility difficulties, eg being a wheelchair user, that hinder access to their educational placement



Whether the learner receives or has applied for 16 to 19 bursary funding and the amount

# Eligibility criteria - 'why' consideration

---

Applications for learners post-16 must also evidence **why** the council and not the student or family must make suitable travel arrangements.

**Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis looking at the individual needs, circumstances and merit of each case.**

To assess this and understand the individual circumstances, the council will need to know the 'why' consideration:



What other arrangements have been considered or tried and why are they not suitable?



Is there a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student?



Is the student in receipt of higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Allowance? (The purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outside)



Is there a 'motability' vehicle for which the student may or may not be the driver?



Are there any other needs or circumstances that might need to be taken into account?

# Accessing post-16 education

---

Many forms of support exist for learners entering years 12 and above to help them access their post-16 placements.

AfC will only consider providing travel assistance if it can be shown that these other forms of travel are **not available**, or **not suitable** (due to an individual's special educational needs and disability).

**There is no statutory duty for local authorities to provide any travel assistance post-16, so any support offered would be on a discretionary basis, and there is no requirement any assistance to be free of charge.**

Existing forms of travel and support for accessing post-16 education include the following:



Concessionary tickets from public transport providers (bus, train, tram)

Travel support direct from schools or colleges

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

Young parents or Care to Learn

Other types of contribution provided to the young person of family for travel purposes

# How to apply

## Applying and timescales

01

### Parents to complete an application form

All requests for SEND travel assistance must be made by parent and carers using this [online application form](#) via the [Local Offer website](#). All other requests must be made via the Pupil and Student Finance and School Travel Grant webpages on the council website.

02

### SEND coordinator to complete a SEND referral form

Where a child or young person has an EHCP, the SEND service must provide a separate referral to the SEND Transport Service to confirm that the school on the application form is the nearest suitable school identified by the council.

03

### Assessment process up to 12 working days after the case being heard at the eligibility panel

Within 12 working days of the Eligibility Panel when the application is considered, where eligible, the council aims to put travel arrangements in place. Families should be prepared to make their own temporary travel arrangements if needed.



# Things to remember

## Applicant responsibilities or considerations

01

### Parental accompaniment

The Department for Education expects parents and carers to make suitable arrangements to accompany their child or young person, **or** make alternative travel arrangements. If a parent has a disability of their own which limits their ability to accompany, our service may be able to consider alternatives. Evidence of the parental disability would need to be provided.

02

### Apply early for start of academic year

Between May and October, applications take longer for us to process. Families are advised to apply before 14 June, unless another deadline has been emailed to them. We cannot guarantee that late applications will be processed before September. All applications received after a set deadline will be processed in order of receipt for fairness.

03

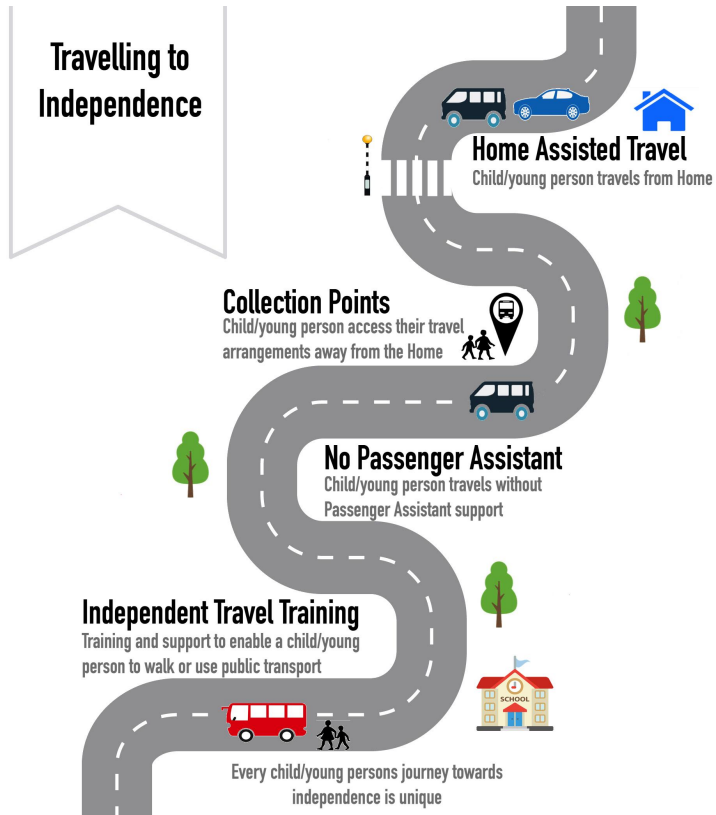
### Shared custody arrangements

A child's home is the place where they normally reside. The primary address for transport purposes is the one recorded with the school or college (when securing the school place) and with any benefits received on behalf of the child or young person. Where it can be evidenced that a child lives equally between parental homes, the councils will consider transport on a case-by-case basis.





# Travel support available based on needs



The primary goal for all children or young people, with or without SEND, is to be as independent as safely possible. The pathway towards independence may begin with home assisted travel, and move onto young people accessing collection points, travelling without a passenger assistant, and independent travel training or skills building.

We understand that each young person's pathway towards independence is different, and know that not all young people will be able to reach that level.

Subject to meeting the eligibility criteria of this policy, the following support will be considered (in the following order) and will reflect the needs of the child:

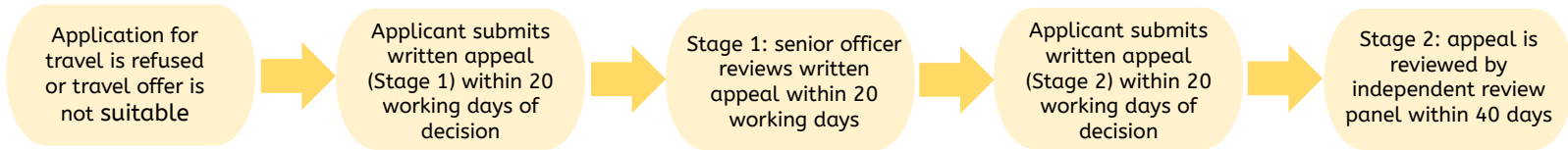
- use of free travel provided by TfL using an Oyster photocard and Freedom pass (most young people with EHCPs would be eligible)
- TfL travelcard for the pupil (including parent or carer where necessary)
- provision of a travel buddy
- independent travel training (including skills-building)
- training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment)
- provision of a cycling allowance
- provision of a personal travel budget (PTB)
- provision of shared minibus transport (using collection point if appropriate)
- provision of alternative shared transport (using a collection point where appropriate)

# Appeals process

---

The eligibility assessment we complete is based only on the information provided by parents or carers on their application form. If we assess that a child does not meet the eligibility threshold, parents and carers have the right to appeal. They can appeal decisions made about travel support or the travel arrangements offered.

## Process for appealing an assessment decision or travel arrangements offered



If an application for travel assistance is declined, parents and carers can submit a Stage 1 appeal within 20 working days of AfC issuing their decision. The Stage 1 appeals panel (including a senior officer) will then consider this appeal, and respond within 20 working days. If parents remain unhappy, and would like to progress to a Stage 2 appeal, they must submit this within 20 working days of the Stage 1 appeal outcome. A Stage 2 appeal panel will then be convened by our Democratic Support Services to review the decision within 40 days.

## Extenuating circumstances

- Parents have a legal duty to get their child to and from school. Councils will need to be satisfied that parents and carers have demonstrated why they - for social, medical or financial reasons - cannot do this.
- Councils are not required to consider:
  - the level of a child's independence - parents are responsible for assessing their child's independence and are also responsible for accompanying any children who are not yet independent or for making alternative travel arrangements
  - parents' and carers' working arrangements
  - parents and carers having multiple children, attending more than one school
  - parents and carers with other caring responsibilities