

# POST-16 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION & TRAINING

## DRAFT CROYDON ANNUAL POLICY STATEMENT 2018/19

### GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN POST 16 EDUCATION & TRAINING

This policy statement is available on the Croydon Council website at [www.croydon.gov.uk/education/adult/16-19-education-training-careers](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/adult/16-19-education-training-careers)

Published: May 2018

**Croydon Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy to  
Education and Training  
Annual Policy Statement for 2018/19 Academic Year**

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### 1. PURPOSE

In accordance with section 509AA of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the sections 54-57 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, this policy statement describes the arrangements for the provision of transport for 16-18 year olds (sixth form age) to access appropriate education and training.

This document operates in parallel, and/or on similar principles to Croydon Local Authority's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy which covers support for children up to 16 years old. The intention of this document is to provide relevant information for students aged 16-18 and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday (or in some cases up to the age of 25 if the young person has complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities) in relation to access to appropriate education and training.

Any available funds held by Croydon Council will be used solely to support learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LDD) in accordance with criteria described in section 4.

Any available support to help other learners with transport costs can be accessed via application to your school, college, training provider or the relevant funding agency.

**All young people in full-time education up to the age 18 are entitled to free transport on buses and trams, plus concessionary rates on other public transport, within London. In the light of this, Croydon Authority considers that this is sufficient to meet the transport needs of most of our students. It is therefore generally expected that learners study at the nearest reasonable and appropriate centre using fare concessions and the most cost effective mode of transport.**

**Learners should therefore carefully consider transport cost and travel time implications when selecting their venue of study, particularly if the learning venue is outside of the London transport boundaries (e.g. Surrey or Kent Council areas) for concessionary fares.**

**The Council will not provide financial support for travel other than described in section 4.**

## **2. SCOPE**

### **2.1 Academic year**

This policy covers the period 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019

### **2.2 Learner residency**

This policy applies to anyone who is resident in the London Borough of Croydon. Learners not resident in Croydon or who are looked after by another Council, but live in Croydon, should refer to the transport policy statement issued by their home local authority or go to [www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19](http://www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19)

### **2.3 Learner age**

This policy applies to young people aged over 16 but under 19 as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 (or in some cases up to age 25 if they have complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)), and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **2.4 Learning venue**

This policy provides for learners who are engaged in education or training at:

- a school (including academies);
- a further education institution;
- a sixth form college;
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education; ▪ an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) e.g. independent specialist providers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- a learning provider that is funded by the LA to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to a positive outcome (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers).

## **3. PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CYCLING**

### **3.1 Transport for London – free and discounted travel**

#### **3.1.1 16+ Zip Oyster Cards**

Young people aged 16-17 years that live in a London borough are entitled to a 16+ Zip Oyster Card that gives:

- free bus and tram travel
- child rate 7 day, monthly or longer period travel card and bus & tram passes
- pay as you go at half the adult rate on bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground and most National Rail services in London

If you are aged 18 on 31 August you may also be eligible for a 16+ Zip Oyster Card to get free bus and tram travel if you can evidence that you are still in full time education, defined as:

- At least 12 hours of guided learning per week, between 09:00-17:00, Mon to Fri
- At least 10 weeks on a further education course at Level 3
- In a sixth form college, academy, further education college or other training provider

It can also include apprenticeships and training courses funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), provided the student is 18 or under on 31 August. Your school, college or training provider will be able to confirm if the course qualifies.

### **How to apply**

Applications are usually made online. For further details visit <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/travel-for-under-18s/zip-oyster-photocards> or telephone the helpline on **0343 222 1234**

### **3.1.2 Apprentice Oyster Photocards**

If you are aged 18 or over, a London resident and enrolled on an apprenticeship, you may be eligible for an Apprentice Oyster Photocard. You can save 30% off adult-rate travelcards and bus & tram pass season tickets.

### **How to apply**

Applications are usually made online. For further details visit <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/apprentice-oyster-photocard> or telephone the helpline on **0343 222 1234**

### **3.2 Young Person Rail Card**

If you're between 16 and 25 years old, you're eligible. With the Railcard you'll enjoy 1/3 off rail fares when you go by train. An annual fee of £30 (or £70 for 3-years) applies.

### **How to apply**

For more details refer to [www.16-25railcard.co.uk/](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/) or telephone **0345 3000 250**

### **3.3 Cycling**

Cycling is an efficient, cheap, quiet, healthy and non-polluting sustainable form of transport. We seek to provide safe, convenient and clearly identified cycle facilities to make cycling easier and more fun, and also as part of our traffic management measures.

### **How to apply**

#### Cycle Training

Can be booked for individuals, groups or by your school or college through [www.cyclinginstructor.com/](http://www.cyclinginstructor.com/), or by the school calling **0845 652 0421**.

### Cycle Guides

Free cycle route guides are available from Transport for London at:

[www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/routes-and-maps](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/routes-and-maps)

### Cycle Rides

Cycling events and safe, accompanied rides for everyone from new cyclists to experienced riders are a sociable way to gain cycling confidence. See: [www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/sports/a-z-ofactivities/cyclingevents](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/sports/a-z-ofactivities/cyclingevents) and especially our programme of local Sky rides, see: [goskyride.com](http://goskyride.com)

### Cycle Storage

Most schools and colleges have secure cycle storage areas, or can apply to TfL for a grant. Students should contact their school, college or training provider for information.

### Inclusive Cycling

Wheels for Wellbeing is an award-winning charity supporting disabled people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the benefits of cycling. Cycling can be easier than walking, a way to keep independent, fit and healthy, a mobility aid, and a useful form of everyday transport. Inclusive cycling means EVERYONE can cycle regardless of age, health condition or impairment.” See: [www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/](http://www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/) for information, including regular off-road sessions at Croydon Arena Albert Road, South Norwood SE25 4QL.

## **4. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES (LDD)**

### **4.1 Context**

The Local Authority expects and encourages most learners of this age to use public transport and travel independently because of the beneficial effects this will have on the young person's development. However, we recognise that in some circumstances additional assistance with travel may be required.

Where a student has an Education Health and Care Plan, decisions will be based on parental or student application and assessment.

Croydon local authority will develop personalised travel plans for all students who are eligible for travel assistance. The personalised travel plan will be a living document that evolves as initiatives and activities are implemented and as students' travel needs change. We will be working very closely with families, young people and schools and colleges to enable alternative travel options resulting in greater service satisfaction and more positive outcomes for the young people and their families.

In most cases qualifying learners will be offered the default position of a personal transport budget to make private travel arrangements to the nearest education establishment offering their chosen course of study. The local authority will work with families to assess the most appropriate transport solution so that learners can continue to attend their training or education. However, in certain circumstances it may be more cost effective to offer travel assistance through other means, for example, where a vehicle has an available seat that could be offered at no incremental cost. There may also be exceptional cases where a Personal Transport Budget is not appropriate.

## **What is a Personal Transport Budget?**

A personal transport budget is an amount of money that will help you to get a learner to college.

## **How does a Personal Transport Budget work?**

- Each month we will transfer the young person's agreed Personal Transport Budget into your chosen bank account.
- Each year we'll review the plan with you and the college - to make sure it is the most appropriate arrangement.
- You must spend the money in a way that ensures the young person can get to college.

## **How can you use a personal transport budget?**

- Arrange for a friend or relative to walk to college with the young person
- Drive the young person to college or share with another parent
- Get a bus pass for a friend or relative to travel with the young person
- Pay for childcare for a younger child so that you can take the young person to college
- Work with the parents to join up with the college to make suitable transport arrangements.

## **How much Personal Transport Budget is on offer?**

This will depend on the young person's age, support needs, timetable, and the distance from home to college.

## **The benefits of a personal budget**

- It allows you the freedom to make your own arrangements – to suit your family
- It gives you control over how the money is spent
- You can share the cost and save money by joining up with other parents
- You could use the money to help the young person to become more independent

Transport needs will be also be re evaluated in the light of the desire to establish travel independence for students wherever possible.

Croydon Council is committed to promoting independence for children and young people with special educational needs so that their experiences can be similar to those of their peers. The local authority recognises the importance of extending the range of travelling options available so that the most suitable arrangements can be made to support individual needs. It recognises that travelling to the place of learning as independently as possible is a valuable experience for young people as they grow up. In order to do this some young people with special educational needs may need extra training to help them learn the skills for greater independence.

## 4.2 Independent Travel Training

Independent Travel Training (ITT) helps young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to travel to school or college by walking or on public transport.

Croydon's aim is to promote a happy and healthy lifestyle through alternative means of travel where possible and appropriate, including, walking, cycling and the use of public transport. We value independence and resilience and understand that the ability to travel without the need for support is a crucial life skill that helps give a young person the freedom to fulfil their potential and live a full life.

The training will help build the young person's confidence in other areas of their life such as:

- Future job and training opportunities
- Accessing new hobbies, leisure activities and social clubs
- Social Skills

Who is eligible?

To be considered for ITT a young person must have the potential, once trained to travel to and from school/college independently. Before any training takes place we will first assess whether the young person is suitable for ITT on an individual basis.

You may be offered ITT for free as part of travel assistance provided by Croydon Council. If you are not eligible for free ITT, you may still benefit from the programme by paying for the training yourself or through other sources of funding.

What are the benefits?

Young people who successfully complete the travel training will benefit from increased confidence, independence, freedom and better opportunities to access education, training, employment and other day to day activities, whilst helping them maintain better relationships with their peers. It will also help families find time to do things independently, as well as enabling them to do more things together. This all contributes to leading a more fulfilled life for the young person and those around them.

How is the training delivered?

Parents/Carers will be involved from the outset, starting with a meeting with the travel assessor who will work with the family and student to tailor the programme to the student's needs.

The training is delivered one to one from a trained professional. Until the young person is considered capable of completing the route on their own confidently they will be accompanied at all times. There will be regular assessments of progress which will be shared with the family. The young person will be taught the basic principles of travelling alone including the green cross code, how to get on and off transport and what to do in an emergency.

The training process consists of 4 key stages:

- Learning the route
- Travelling at peak times
- Confirming the young person is safe
- Recognising their achievement

All eligible Post-16 learners will be assessed for suitability for independent travel training. Special transport will not be provided by the local authority for pupils who are able but choose not to participate in the travel training programme.

## How to apply

Please contact the SEN Travel Commissioner on **020 8760 5454** for further information or visit: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs/transport-and-travel-assistance/transport-and-travel-assistance-for-home-to-school-travel/independent-travel-training>

Applications for travel assistance will be considered against the following criteria:

- The learner has a disability or learning difficulty that would make it impracticable or dangerous for them to try to undertake a journey to school or college of less than 3 miles. Applications will be assessed on their own merits
- The learner has an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- The learner is aged between 16 and 19 (and in some cases up to the age of 25) and is on a course of further education at a school, college or training provider.
- The learner is attending a course that is not available at a school/college closer to the student's home address. Where a similar course is available at a closer school/college, the student will be expected to demonstrate how their chosen course meets their needs above this other similar course in order to qualify for travel assistance.
- The course is deemed to be suitable and will provide an educational benefit to the learner – as assessed by the SEN Service.
- The need for specific travel assistance has been identified in the learner's statement of special educational needs/transition or Education, Health and Care Plan.
- The learner lives more than 3 miles from school or college and is unable to undertake the journey by free public transport.
- If a learner is in receipt of a 16-19 Bursary this will be taken into account in any decision about the amount of travel assistance that may be provided.

## ***Evidence and Information***

Any relevant evidence may be considered as part of the assessment of eligibility and may include:

- Education Health and Care Plan
- Annual Review reports
- Information about the nature and reasonableness of the route, i.e. journey times, changes, safety, nature of roads and pavements, congestion, other passengers etc.
- Information from Social Care (initial or core assessment/CAF if appropriate)
- An existing travel training plan (or assessment being undertaken)
- Reports from other relevant professionals relating to the request for travel assistance.

Please note that the type of travel assistance offered for Post-16 learners is discretionary and could be changed in the future subject to consultation.

## How to apply

Please contact the **SEN Travel Commissioner on 020 8760 5454** for further information relating to the application process. If deemed eligible a learner will be considered for a range of travel assistance solutions such as independent travel training or a personal transport budget as well as vehicle transport.

All applications will be considered individually and provision will be agreed on an annual basis.

## 4.4 Appeals

In line with statutory guidance, local authorities are required to operate an appeals process.

If an application for travel assistance is not approved by the Council, or the parent/carer disagrees with the type of assistance being offered, parent/carers have a right of appeal. The appeal should be made in writing within 20 days of the decision letter being received by the parents/carers.

Appeals are administered in 2 stages:

- Stage 1: Review by Head of Independent Travel SCC

Within 5 working days of the appeal form being received, the parent/carer will be sent confirmation that their appeal has been received and that their appeal is under review.

Further evidence may be requested to support the appeal and consultation with case workers and professional bodies may be required. Parents should receive their decision letter within 20 days of their appeal form being received.

- Stage 2: Independent Panel - Independent review of evidence

If the parent/carer remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they should notify the Council in writing within 20 days of receiving their Stage 1 appeal decision. The appeal will then be considered independently of the service and will involve consideration of all evidence gathered and the reasons for the decision being made. This will be undertaken by the "Independent Panel" constituted by a mix of panel members independent of the process to date and suitably experienced, this may include head teachers from primary and secondary schools.

Parents should receive their decision letter within 40 days of their appeal being received.

This decision is the final stage of the Council's appeal procedure in relation to travel assistance. If parents/carers remain dissatisfied they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. Details can be provided by the Council if necessary.

During the appeals process no new travel assistance will be provided or, in the case of existing arrangements, no change will be implemented.

If after the appeal, transport is agreed, it will commence from the date of the letter sent to the parent / carer. No backdated payments will be made nor will the Council accept any claims by parents/carers for costs incurred (e.g. for making alternative transport arrangements) during the process of appeal.

## 4.5 Complaints

Once travel assistance has been agreed any concerns regarding the provision of the service should be made in the first instance to the Travel Assistance Commissioner or in the case of vehicle transport to Croydon Transport Services on **0208 8686 2215**.

All complaints on the process for assessing eligibility for transport provision will be handled through the Council's formal complaints process. Full details are available on the Council's website. Any complaints regarding the outcome of the assessment process will be addressed as part of the appeals process.

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## 5. SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR POST 16 LEARNERS

### 5.1 16-19 Bursary Fund

You could get a bursary to help with education-related costs if you're aged 16 to 19 and: studying at publicly funded school or college (not university) in England or on a training course, including unpaid work experience. A publicly funded school is one that does not charge you for attending it.

A bursary is money that can be used to pay for things like clothing, books and other equipment for your course, transport and lunch on days you study or train.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursary:

#### ***Vulnerable student bursary***

You could get up to £1,200 if at least one of the following applies:

- you're in or recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself □  
you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- you get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

You may get the full amount if you have expenses and on a full-time course of at least 30 weeks.

You'll usually get less than the full amount, or no bursary, if one of the following apply:

- your course is shorter than 30 weeks
- you study part time
- you have few expenses

You'll be told what evidence you need, for example benefit letters.

#### ***Discretionary bursary***

You could get a discretionary bursary if you need financial help but don't qualify for a vulnerable student bursary.

Education and training providers set their own criteria for discretionary bursaries, e.g. they might look at family income, and how much you get and what it's used for.

#### **How to apply**

Apply to your school, college or training provider. Ask student services or your tutor to explain what you need to do.

For more information go to [www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview](http://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview)

## 5.2 Care to Learn

Care to Learn provides financial support to young parents (aged under 20 at the start of your course) who want to continue their education and need help with the cost of childcare and any associated travel.

Care to Learn is only available for publicly-funded courses in England. This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- sixth-forms in schools
- sixth-form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Your learning provider can tell you if your course is eligible.

It pays up to £175 per week (if you live in London) for each child to help with the cost of:

- your childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare taster session for up to 5 days
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to their childcare provider

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider and travel payments go direct to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

### How to apply

Learners can obtain more information and request a Care to Learn application form online from [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview)

Alternatively, you can contact the Student Bursary Support Service Helpline Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm on **0800 121 8989** or e-mail: [c2l@studentbursarysupport.co.uk](mailto:c2l@studentbursarysupport.co.uk)

## 5.3 16-18 Residential Bursary Fund (RBF)

The Residential Bursary Fund provides financial support towards the costs of accommodation for young people attending one of the designated providers delivering specialist provision, where their course requires the young person to be resident in order to participate because it is not available locally and/or because it requires students to be available at unsociable hours on a regular basis.

Institutions may determine their own eligibility criteria and process for considering applications for RBF support. Priority must be given to young people who are unable to access relevant learning within daily travel from their home or where the costs of such travel are prohibitive.

### How to apply

Learners can find out more information at [www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/residentialbursary-fund](http://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/residentialbursary-fund)

You should apply directly to your institution for support and/or for further information.

#### **5.4 Residential Support Scheme (RSS)**

The Residential Support Scheme provides financial support with accommodation costs for learners aged between 16 and 18, who need to live away from home to study because their course is not available locally.

Learners must meet the eligibility criteria (which includes an income assessment) in order to receive support from the Residential Support Scheme. If you are assessed as eligible, the amount of award you receive will be based on your actual accommodation costs up to a maximum award level.

##### **How to apply**

Learners can find out more information at [www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme)

You can request an application pack from your school/college or contact the Student Bursary Support Service Helpline Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm on 0800 121 8989 or e-mail: [c2l@studentbursarysupport.co.uk](mailto:c2l@studentbursarysupport.co.uk)

#### **5.5 Dance and Drama Award**

The Dance and Drama Award (DaDA) scheme supports talented individuals to access high-quality training at some of England's leading private dance and drama schools. Awards are granted to those students who are assessed by the school at audition as being the most talented and likely to succeed in the industry. The amount of support an individual receives depends on their household income.

To be eligible to receive DaDA funding in the 2018/2019 academic year, students must be aged between 16 and 23 at the start of the academic year (for a dance course) and aged between 18 and 23 at the start of the academic year (for an acting course).

Only students enrolled on the Trinity College London (TCL) Level 5 and 6 Professional Diplomas in Dance, Acting and Musical Theatre at one of the institutions that are part of the DaDA scheme are eligible to apply for funding.

If offered an award, the amount of support for fees and living costs will be based on an assessment of the family's household income. The income assessment will be undertaken by the appropriate DaDA school, according to national scales.

##### **How to apply**

For help and advice you should contact your DaDA school.

#### **5.6 Discretionary Learner Support (DLS)**

If you are aged 19 or over, on a further education course and facing financial hardship, you could get DLS. The money can help pay for things like:

- accommodation and travel
- course materials and equipment
- childcare - if you qualify

### **How to apply**

You should apply directly to your institution for support or for further information, or go to [www.gov.uk/discretionary-learner-support](http://www.gov.uk/discretionary-learner-support)

### **5.7 Church Tenements Charity**

The aim of the Church Tenements Charity is to provide "one off" small grants for educational purpose to young people under the age of 25 years either resident within, or studying at an establishment within, the London Borough of Croydon. In addition to the grants for educational purposes, the Trustees will consider application for recreational, social and physical training or equipment.

### **How to apply**

Entitlement is not automatic. All applications will be considered by a committee who will decide whether to make an award of a part or full grant.

For more information contact June Haynes **0208 726 6000 extension 62317**

## 6. USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Church Tenements Charity:** T 0208 726 6000 ext 62317
- **Citizens Advice:**  
[www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/education\\_e/education\\_further\\_and\\_higher\\_education\\_ew/financial\\_help\\_for\\_students\\_aged\\_16-19](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/education_e/education_further_and_higher_education_ew/financial_help_for_students_aged_16-19)
- **Croydon Council SEN Travel Assistance Commissioner :**T 020 8760 5454
- **Croydon Transport Services:** T 0208 8686 2215
- **Gov.UK:** [www.gov.uk/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students](http://www.gov.uk/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students)
- **National Careers Service:**  
[nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/tools/funding/Pages/default.aspx](http://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/tools/funding/Pages/default.aspx)
- **National Rail:** [www.16-25railcard.co.uk](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk) T 0345 3000 250 or [railcardhelp@railcardsonline.co.uk](mailto:railcardhelp@railcardsonline.co.uk)
- **Student Bursary Support Service:** T 0800 121 8989 or [c2l@efalearnersupport.co.uk](mailto:c2l@efalearnersupport.co.uk)
- **Transport for London:** [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk) T 0343 222 1234 Textphone 0800 1123456

## 7. COMMENTS

Any comments relating to this policy should be sent to:

Julie Ralphs

Head of Service Education Commissioning & Youth Engagement

People Department 4th Floor Zone E Bernard Weatherill House 8 Mint Walk Croydon CR0 1EA

or

[julie.ralphs@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:julie.ralphs@croydon.gov.uk)

Public Consultation  
Proposed Post 16 Travel  
Assistance Policy

**Public consultation on proposed post 16  
provision of travel assistance for students  
with an Education, Health and Care Plan  
and/or disabilities in education or training  
November 2018**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Croydon Council arranges travel support for some children and young people with special needs and/or disabilities to attend school or college. Travel assistance is arranged when students meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Home to School and Post 16 Travel Assistance policies. Whilst part of this service is statutory (aged 5 to 16) some of the eligibility criteria employed in Croydon is discretionary. There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school/college transport for students aged 16 to 18, the council is required to provide the support that it deems necessary to facilitate the attendance of young people of sixth form age who are in education or training.

The policy is underpinned by the following general principles in line with Department for Education guidance:

- Students who are able to travel independently or use public transport will always be supported in the first instance to do this. 'Independent travel' training is the first option for those students who have the potential to travel independently.
- Students who have specific special needs will be offered the most independent and personally enabling solution to their situation.
- Croydon council will ensure that transport for eligible students is arranged when needed; after other potential options have been explored.
- Travel needs are reviewed regularly at least annually to ensure the arrangements are still appropriate to assessed needs.

## **THE CURRENT OFFER**

Currently, Croydon Council offers travel assistance to young people of sixth form age with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria. This support can include:

- Travel Assistance to the nearest suitable provider offering a course or programme which is designed specifically to meet their special needs, or;
- A provider further away if the EHCP states that the course they wish to attend is specifically designed for them; is essential for their job aspirations or is the most suitable placement for their needs.

The proposals in this consultation apply to the discretionary criteria and the post 16 policy for those students aged 16 to 18 who have special education needs or a disability in education or training. The Council will continue to meet its statutory duty for children aged 5 to 16.

Croydon currently transports over 1200 children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to schools and colleges, and it also provides a personal transport budget to 93 families.

## **ABOUT THE CONSULTATION**

This public consultation document outlines proposed changes to the Council's policy on providing post-16 travel assistance for those with SEND/disabilities in education or training. We are consulting because we want to hear your views on the proposals and how they may affect you.

We are seeking views on the proposals from all interested parties, including:

- Young people
- Parents/carers
- Parent and Carers Group (PIP)
- Schools, colleges and other learning providers
- Other Croydon Council departments
- Other local authorities (including ones bordering Croydon)
- Transport for London
- Other groups representing parents or carers (both locally and nationally)
- Anyone else who perceives they will be impacted by proposals.

We have set out below our proposal for the future of post 16 travel for SEND students in education or training. This is our preferred option.

## **WHAT ARE WE PROPOSING TO CHANGE, AND WHY IS IT OUR PREFERRED OPTION?**

The Council's aim is to support young people in developing independence skills for life. Where suitable the Council's first offer of travel assistance will be Independent Travel Training. Where Independent Travel Training is not appropriate, our preferred option will be to apply a personal transport budget to most learners aged 16 to 18 with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We recognise that there may be exceptional cases where a personal transport budget is not appropriate, for example students with severe learning or physical difficulties.

Both these approaches will provide young people with the opportunity to travel more independently and can be more cost effective for the local authority, as the increased demand may not be met with our current offer in the available budget.

If Independent Travel Training is not appropriate, we are proposing that when a learner meets our eligibility criteria, they will be offered the default position of a personal transport budget to make private travel arrangements to the nearest educational provision offering their chosen course of study.

A personal transport budget is an amount of money that will help you to get a learner to college. The personal budget is paid at 60p per mile for up to 4 journeys per day. In some exceptional cases there may be flexibility in the amount paid.

A personal transport budget is a more family centred approach giving more flexibility, freedom, independence and control for families. There are no tax or benefit implications for families receiving a personal transport budget.

- It allows freedom to make arrangements – to suit your family
- It gives control over how the money is spent
- The cost can be shared and saved by joining up with other parents
- The money can be used to help the young person to become more independent,

We anticipate any changes to the current home to school transport services may impact more on the following:

- Young people aged 16 to 18 with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

We anticipate impact from our proposals. Therefore, if changes are made to current services, we recognise support will need to be provided to students and families affected. This includes developing personalised travel plans with families and professionals to help identify how a personal transport budget can best be utilised. We will listen to what that impact will be from students, parents, groups representing affected people and schools/colleges.

## **HOW WE PROPOSE PERSONAL BUDGETS WILL WORK?**

The Council will work with families to assess the most appropriate transport solution so that learners can continue to attend their training or education. The local authority will meet with families and professionals, such as school/college staff to develop a personalised travel plan, which will look at the young person's travel/transport needs and support families to make suitable travel arrangements.

In certain circumstances it may be more cost effective to offer travel assistance through other means, for example, where a Council-provided vehicle already travelling to an educational provision has an available seat that could be offered at no incremental cost. There may also be exceptional cases where a personal transport budget is not appropriate, for example where a young person has complex needs requiring specific interventions when travelling.

Personal transport budgets are already successfully supporting young people attending post-16 provision, many of whom have complex needs. For example, a young person with high levels of anxiety travelling to college with a family member makes the journey to college less stressful and enables the young person to enjoy and participate fully in the college environment. Personal transport budgets have been used to repair a family car, allowing the family to benefit from having access to the vehicle for other purposes.

- Each month we will transfer the young person's agreed personal transport budget into your chosen bank account.
- Each year we will review the plan with you and the school or college - to make sure it is the most appropriate arrangement.
- You must spend the money in a way that ensures the young person can get to

school or college

## **EXAMPLES OF HOW A PERSONAL TRANSPORT BUDGET CAN BE USED**

- Arrange for a friend or relative to walk to college with the young person
- Drive the young person to college or share with another parent
- Get a bus pass for a friend or relative to travel with the young person
- Pay for childcare for a younger child so that you can take the young person to college
- Croydon council can work with the parents to join up with the college to make suitable transport arrangements.

## **HOW MUCH PERSONAL TRANSPORT BUDGET IS ON OFFER?**

This will depend on the young person's age, support needs, timetable, and the distance from home to college. Generally the personal transport budget will be paid at 60p per mile for 4 daily journeys. Personal budgets will however be flexible and could include for example meeting the cost of a chaperone to travel with the young person.

## **ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS**

It maybe that through the consultation process another viable option emerges. We will consider other options with an open mind for example to keep the policy as it is or modification of our proposals for personal budgets, or a completely new suggestion. We will consider the benefits, drawbacks, and impact of all proposed alternative suggestions.

## **HOW ARE WE CONSULTING?**

We are asking a number of questions, in a survey, about our proposals and for any other ideas and suggestions. It is important that we get your feedback, we want to hear the views of parents, students and other interested stakeholders regarding the changes that we are considering.

We want to know if you support/do not support/ or are unsure of our preferred option, of the introduction of personal budgets. If you don't support this option we'd like to understand why and if you support any other option; including any that you would suggest (alternatives).

We also want to understand the impact of our preferred option and how it may/may not affect you.

The survey will be available online, at [www.croydon.gov.uk/SENDConsultations](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/SENDConsultations) and via the Local Offer website. We will also provide paper copies and an 'easy read' version. We will also hold events around the borough, during the day and evening, to talk about the consultation and these will take place during term time during the consultation period. We will also be holding focus groups for young people and parents/carers through our local schools, Parents in Partnership and Waddon Youth and Community Centre.

If you need this document in any other format, including **large print** or easy read please contact: [SENenquiries@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:SENenquiries@croydon.gov.uk) or telephone 020 8604 7263

### **WHAT ARE THE TIMESCALES?**

We are consulting from **3 December 2018 until 31 January 2018**. Once the consultation has closed, we will review all of the responses and prepare a report for councillors on the results. The results of this consultation will help inform a decision by Council Cabinet on the 25 March 2019. A report will be published after this date which will detail the decisions made and the reasons for doing so.