



Education and Skills Board  
24 March 2016

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

**Purpose of the report:** To update the Board on progress to date in regard to Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport

### Introduction

1. This report will update the Board on what the Children, Schools and Families (CSF) directorate is doing in regard to SEND transport as part of the SEND 2020 programme.

### Context

2. The costs of SEN transport are directly related to SEND demographic trends and the eligibility as well as ensuring that a pupils needs are taken into account when agreeing.
  - 2.1 SEN transport costs have risen over the last four years although the increase is slowing down.
  - 2.2 The table based on period 10 budget monitoring is shown below.
  - 2.3 Gross expenditure is not much higher than 2014-15 but the cost per day is higher. This is because 2014-15 had 194 academic days in the financial year, whereas 2015-16 has 192 academic days in it.
  - 2.4 There is a net increase in the SEN transport budget of £1.5m in 2016-17, bringing the budget to £25m. There are 201 academic days in the 2016-17 financial year, which will put additional pressure on the budget.
  - 2.5 If the cost per day and pupil numbers remains at the same level as 2015-16, just the increase in days will add an additional £1.2m to the current projection.

<b>SEN Transport 2012/13 to 2015/16</b>				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015-16 (projection)
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	£20.6m	£22.1m	£24.2m	£24.7m
<b>Average no of children transported</b>	2,555	2,577	2,671	2,682
<b>Cost per pupil per day</b>	£43.18	£44.61	£47.89	£48.04

### 2015 /2016 outturn

- 2.6 The projected outturn for SEN transport is £24.7m in 2015-16 as at 31 January, 2016, an overspend of £1.2m, which is an increase in net expenditure of £901k compared to 2014-15. This overspend is partially offset by an underspend on mainstream transport – the net overall overspend on school transport is £0.5m.
- 2.7 There are 192 academic days in 2015-16, compared to 194 in 2014-15, therefore a more comparable figure is the cost per day, which has increased by 4.9%.
- 2.8 December 2014 and December 2015 taxi statistics are shown below, in order to compare changes in activity over the year.

	Pupils	Routes	Wheelchairs	Solo routes	Escorts provided	Behavioural / Medical escorts
Dec-14	2671	1075	193	79	461	12
Dec-15	2661	1076	184	87	438	10
% change	-0.4%	+0.09%	-4.66%	10.1%	-4.99%	-16.67%

Although there is forecast to be an increase in SEN pupils ages 5 – 19 of 1.36% in 2015-16, this does not correlate to an increase in pupils having transport by taxi as this figure has fallen by 0.4%. There has been an increase in solo routes over the period which reflects the higher needs of some of the pupils who are entitled to transport.

The reduction in medical escorts is attributable to the commissioning of Virgin care to do an assessment prior to any medical escort being allocated.

The reduction in escorts is attributable to the improved systems and processes to ensure accuracy of data, end dates where escorts are allocated to ensure regular review of this decision.

The main cost driver is the cost per mile, which has increased during the year. The average cost per mile has increased from £2.15 per transport mile in December 2014 to £2.18 per transport mile in December 2015. An increase of 3p per passenger mile equates to £304k over the year. A combination of

these factors has meant that the average cost per pupil per day in March 2015 was £47.89 had increased to £48.04 in January 2016 – an increase of 0.3%.

## **Vision**

3. The SEND Partnership Board has committed to the vision below in line with the CSF improvement programme:

“Children and young people will be happy, healthy, safe and confident about their future”.

## **SEND Transport – progress to date**

4. Priority areas during 2014 informed by feedback from Audit, feedback from a report completed by Policy team, feedback from finance and front line officers led to a focus and agreement of actions on systems and processes to be implemented:
  - 4.1 Deep dive work into cases to ensure that the transport data is accurately recorded – this has ensured that data is accurate which has led in the East to an identified £180K in savings 2015/16.
  - 4.2 New procedures in place to record end dates for transport to ensure that financial commitments are accurate – enables better budget setting.
  - 4.3 Regular reports to Area Special Needs Managers to monitor spend- this ensures ownership of decisions on budget managers.
  - 4.4 Case reviews for those in receipt of transport for a journey less than 10 miles, and letters to parents to offer them an allowance. The impact of this was small savings as numbers who replied were very small.
  - 4.5 Ensuring that systems are used to record accurate information to enable further analysis on the reasons transport arrangements are agreed; and through completing codes on the SEN management system to identify practices that we may be able to do differently – this will be completed by July 2016.
  - 4.6 Moving all data fully onto Transport Coordination Centre’s (TCC) new system (Mobisoft) for monitoring and managing the travel allowance allocations- preparing for the implementation of the Policies in September 2016.
  - 4.7 Development of independent travel training materials to work with special schools – will reduce the need for taxis.
  - 4.8 An online application form for parents is about to be launched – improving customer experience.
5. Actions on the SEND 2020 focus on new models of delivery:
  - 5.1 New Models of Delivery team wrote a report and presented to the SEND travel group on other Local Authority activity – it was assuring that Surrey has undertaken similar actions in relation to travel allowances to encourage parents to take their child to their school, contributions being sought from post 16 which we are

consulting on and that we have in our workplan and TOR a priority to further encourage independent travel.

- 5.2 Exploration of an opportunity to commission, through a social impact bond, a travel training project. A data analysis is being completed and a meeting arranged in April to discuss further with the company involved .
  - 5.3 Procurement looking at opportunities for a new transport commissioning strategy with the Transport Coordination Centre that will look at the make-or-buy options like purchasing fleet, employing drivers, devolving budgets or creating spin outs to deliver transport in the future.
6. Policies consultation
- 6.1 We are in a consultation period for our proposed updated Policies for Travel Assistance pre 16 and post 16 (two draft policies – appendices 2 & 3).
  - 6.2 We have responded to initial feedback and made the consultation more accessible including further guidance on proposed travel allowance.
  - 6.3 Feedback to date
    - a) 39 responses received
    - b) Agreement that policies are accessible
    - c) Agreement that the post 16 proposed change removes inequity
    - d) Some disagreement on whether the fixed rate charge is a fair way of charging
    - e) Queries re the post 16 charging proposal and how low income families will be supported – we have agreed this is unclear and are rewriting the relevant section (6) and adding a flowchart to ensure that we explain how low income families will be supported.
- 7 SEND travel group
- 7.1 The group met twice since September 2015 and is meeting three times further in 2016.
  - 7.2 The terms of reference are in appendix 1.
  - 7.3 The meeting in March will sign off a workplan for the next 18 months to be reviewed in light of the final version of the Policies published by end of May.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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1. ESB consider their feedback to the consultation on the Travel Assistance policies

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## **Appendices**

- 1 Draft Terms of Reference SEND Travel Group**
- 2 Pre 16 draft policy**
- 3 Post 16 draft policy**

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