

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE:** 26 APRIL 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

LEAD OFFICER: RACHAEL WARDELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

SUBJECT: HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY REFRESH

ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: GROWING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY SO EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT/TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE/ EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Purpose of the Report:

The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed updates to the Home to School Travel Assistance (H2S TA) policy for children and young people in mainstream schools and pupils attending specialist schools for children with additional needs (SEND). This report sets out the rationale for and the objectives of the changes, the changes being consulted on and the intended outcomes. It recommends that Cabinet approve the refreshed H2S TA policy, taking account of the consultation feedback, the equality impact assessment and the mitigations proposed for any potential negative impacts.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Notes the impacts and mitigations set out in the Equality Impact Assessment (Annex B)
2. Notes the outcomes of the engagement with residents and the 28 working day public consultation (Annex C)
3. Approves changes to the Home to School/College Travel Assistance policy having considered the above documents (set out in paragraphs 11-51)
4. Approves the revised Home to School/College Travel Assistance policy (Annex D)
5. Agrees the proposal to produce an enhanced Post 16 Policy Statement and agrees that the Cabinet member has delegated authority to approve the statement.

Reason for Recommendations:

The H2S TA policy sets out the way in which the Council discharges its statutory and discretionary powers and responsibilities in relation to school and college transport assistance available for pupils aged up to 25 years of age, both with and without additional needs. While Surrey County Council will continue to support those who most need help, the Council must manage increasing costs and demand within the overall resources available. The recommendations set out in this report will increase the options for children and young people who qualify for H2S TA, encourage people to use environmentally friendly travel and support independent travel as a means of preparing young people for adulthood.

Executive Summary:

Background:

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1. The Council is committed to meeting the educational needs of as many children and young people as close to home as possible within local schools. In many cases, this will mean that pupils can walk or cycle to school. Approximately 160,000 pupils attend education settings each day in Surrey. A small proportion (approximately 10,000 or 6%) of pupils find it difficult to travel to a setting, school or college without some assistance and require additional support from Surrey County Council. Residents may qualify for support for many reasons including distance between their home and education setting, lack of public transport options, their age, or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) because they have additional needs.
2. To support Surrey County Council's ambition for children and young people to live, learn and grow up locally, over the next five years the Council is investing £139m to expand existing specialist schools and create new specialist schools. This programme will create an additional 2,600 specialist school places in Surrey. This will mean more children will receive the specialist education they need in Surrey closer to their homes, which will in turn reduce the need for travel assistance services. Where it is needed, this will reduce distances travelled and the length of journeys.
3. Home to school travel assistance helps children and young people get to and from their education setting. This comes in several different forms, such as independent travel training (ITT), mileage re-imbursement, bikeability, driving lessons and taxi, minibus and coach services. H2S TA supports pupils and young people to travel to their school or college for children of statutory school age (5-16 years old), for children under 5 by exception, for young people aged 16 to 19 by exception and for young adults aged 19 to 25 where they continue to attend an education or training provision and have an EHCP.
4. The Council has a legal duty to ensure that transport provided is suitable. To be suitable, the transport must enable an eligible child to reach school without such stress, strain or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefitting from the education provided. This is set out in the Department for Education guidance to local authorities: 'Home to school travel and transport guidance: Statutory guidance for local authorities', July 2014, to which officers and members must have regard. A link is provided here: [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://Department for Education (publishing.service.gov.uk)). In this report, references to national or statutory guidance are all references to this DfE guidance.
5. The Council is seeing significant challenges in securing appropriate transport provision due to challenges in the labour market; this is a national issue. This is also in the context of a significant rise in provider costs linked to increased fuel costs and employer National Insurance contributions. This affects the Council's ability to ensure that children and young people who most need our support get it at the right time, against the backdrop of increasing demand. The County Council Network has recently produced a report 'Home To school Transport: The Challenge in Counties.' Rising costs are a concern across councils and there is a clear shift nationally towards scaling back H2STA offers close to or at statutory requirements only. This report can be found here (Councils face difficult decisions as spiralling fuel prices impact on

[school transport services, report warns - County Councils Network \)](#)

6. The H2S TA policy is being refreshed in several key areas so that it is reflective of the ambitions we have for our children and aligned to the context summarised in this County Council Network report. The Council is focused on ensuring children and young people in Surrey can attend local schools and settings, and travel to and from school with their friends and peers. Therefore, very significant investments have been made to create more school places in our specialist schools across the County and further work to promote inclusion is a key priority in our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 'SEND' Transformation. The refreshed policy will align to Surrey County Council's commitment to move away from an offer of school transport provision to a travel assistance model, with an increased focus on inclusion, sustainability and Surrey's greener future agenda.

Rationale for the proposed changes:

7. In Surrey, every day nearly 10,000 children and young people (attending mainstream and specialist schools and settings) access H2S TA. This is funded via Council Tax. The cost of this per annum is £44.7m. Excluding the 2020/21 financial year, and impacts of COVID lockdowns, this cost has increased consistently over the past few years and Surrey County Council, like other transport commissioners nationally, is seeing additional financial pressures as the country moves out of the pandemic, as well as more demand for transport services.
8. To illustrate the costs of providing transport services, as of January 2022, of the children and young people attending mainstream schools who are eligible for transport assistance, 18% are provided with a taxi or minibus service, costing the Council nearly £100,000 per week; the remainder access a range of other travel options including a bus or train pass or travel allowance. 98% of children and young people with additional needs who are provided with transport use a minibus or taxi, costing the Council nearly £1m per week, according to January 2022 data, or £200,000 per day.
9. While the Council will continue to support those who most need help, we must manage increasing costs and demand and we are therefore proposing to:
 - Increase the alternatives for children and young people who qualify for H2S TA, moving away from a reliance on solo taxi routes (when there is only one child or young person in the vehicle). Solo routes make up approximately one third of the spend on H2S TA.
 - Promote a greater use of travel assistance options used routinely by children and young people and communities such as buses and rail, where appropriate through Independent Travel Training (ITT).
 - Use environmentally friendly travel and transport. Greater use of green alternative travel options would help us mitigate the impact of climate change, through better use of walking, cycling and bus and train routes and where possible, increasing the occupancy in vehicles.

- Ensure young people do not face a ‘cliff edge’ when they become adults. For young people with additional needs, for example, their eligibility for transport is linked to their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and will expire at some point in the future. If they are not supported through Independent Travel Training (ITT) to travel independently this can create isolation and reduce access to employment as well.
10. Some pupils with additional needs will require lifelong support. Of those young people in post-16 education with an EHCP, we estimate that 11% will require lifelong support from Adult Social Care and 4% will have complex medical needs, which will require lifelong support from their Clinical Commissioning Group. For the remaining pupils with additional needs, their travel assistance will end once their EHCP ceases (for example, when their EHCP expires when they turn 25 years old).

Proposed changes:

11. To support Surrey County Council’s ambition of empowering and supporting children and young people, prepare them for adulthood and secure the best value from our limited resources, several changes to the H2S TA Policy are proposed. The proposed changes set out in the consultation that took place in February/March 2022 are in **Annex A**. The outcome of the consultation is set out in **Annex C**. A summary of the consultation responses is provided in this section of the report.
12. The Council will engage and communicate with families to inform them of the changes to policy as early as possible. This will include the co-production with Family Voice Surrey of a new Parent and Carer guide that sets out the Council’s policy in plain English and will explain what the Council will and will not provide. It will be available by early June.

Broader range of travel assistance options including collection points

13. The Council will offer a broader range of travel assistance options. This includes options such as bikeability (cycling safely and with confidence), driving lessons and access to TfL Oyster Cards (in some areas of the county). In addition, individual travel training assessments are proposed which will be undertaken in an agreed location rather than in the home. The range of travel assistance options is summarised as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bikeability scheme - training to cycle independently and safely, with reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfL Oyster Card (in some areas of the county) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other bespoke travel options that enable travel and the development of travel skills and independence (e.g. travel buddy).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a bus or train pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Travel Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimbursement of mileage costs for parents or carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-16 travel bursary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A private bus, coach or minibus or shuttle bus service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In extenuating circumstances, provision of contracted transport (taxis or licensed private car hire)

14. Alongside this expanded set of options, collection points will be introduced. Currently children and young people are collected from home, brought to school then collected and dropped off at home at the end of the school day. Children will be encouraged to use collection points and especially children attending mainstream settings. Where children and young people with complex additional needs or the parents' or carers' own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to use the collection points, we will assess individual needs to determine suitability to use designated collection points. The introduction of collection points is already enshrined in the existing policy. However, the consultation and the policy refresh has allowed the Council to understand and take into account the views of our community on the implementation of this approach.
15. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 32% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on collection points; 54% of respondents were against the proposal; 14% were neutral regarding the proposal. There were marked differences between those parents responding positively and negatively. Of the parents of young people with additional needs who responded, 66.8% responded negatively. Parents of young people who do not have additional needs were much more in favour of the use of collection points, with 66.7% agreeing.
16. Taking account of the public consultation on the revised policy proposals, where a route has been identified as suitable for collection points to be introduced, a further 4 week consultation will be undertaken with the families, children and young people on that route to ensure that the proposed arrangements are appropriate, for example the location of the collection point. Before the 4 week consultation, the Council will also assess the individual circumstances or needs which may mean that a collection point is not appropriate for an individual pupil to use. Following a decision to introduce a collection point, the Council will provide not less than 6 weeks notification to families (which includes any school holidays that fall in the 6 week period) before the collection point is established. It is proposed that once a collection point route has been established, that route will remain a collection point route and no further specific consultation will be undertaken. This means that any pupils joining the route will be informed that it is a collection point route and they will be expected to use the collection point. Parents will have the right to appeal.
17. There was strong support for collection points in the consultation responses from parents and carers with children without additional needs. The provision to use collection points is current Council policy. As a result, the Council is proposing to begin the assessment process for collection points for children in mainstream schools in the Summer term in academic year 2021/22. This will be undertaken in line with the 4 week consultation with families and children on a proposed route and if a collection point is established, the Council will provide not less than 6 weeks notification (including any school holidays) to families.

Variations to transport journey times

18. The Council currently aims to comply with the statutory guidance (referred to in paragraph 4 above) on best practice for the maximum length of journey times for a child to get to and from school. This is 45 minutes for a primary aged child and 75 minutes for a secondary aged child attending placements both within and outside the County. The national guidelines for journey times apply to children aged 5 to 16. They

were first included in Department for Education statutory guidance issued in 2007 (updated in 2014) for all local authorities which states that best practice suggests that journeys are completed in these times (see link above in paragraph 4).

19. The County Council's current policy recognises the challenges of complying with the national guidance. Currently, circa 7,200 children and young people have journeys to and from school of up to 45 minutes in primary school and up to 75 minutes in secondary school in commissioned transport. Surrey's size, rural nature, dispersed population, traffic pressures and current lack of sufficient specialist places, which is being addressed through the £139M capital investment in maintained specialist schools, means that it can be challenging to adhere to these guidelines in practice. Surrey is geographically one of the largest local authorities in England covering an area of 648 square miles with close to 500 schools and colleges and other alternative provisions, including 25 specialist schools. Surrey has a distinctive character with large rural areas and conversely, in its larger conurbations, traffic density and congestion very similar to inner London.
20. In addition, the Council's H2STA policy has a contribution to make toward meeting the Council's Climate Change Strategy. In H2STA, this means offering a sustainable transport solution, which will contribute towards reducing emissions by 60% and improving air quality by 2035. As such H2STA will seek to reduce the number of vehicles used and the number of miles the service users travel individually. The service currently uses over 2,100 directly commissioned vehicles per day and travels 395,000 miles per week.
21. The Council is proposing that for some journeys, the upper limit on journey times may be varied in order to make suitable and sufficient arrangements for all children. This means that in planning routes, the maximum time guidance of 45 minutes for primary school children and 75 minutes for secondary school children would not override all other considerations. The Council will also take into account the benefits of allowing children and young people who could potentially share transport to do so in appropriate circumstances, the promotion of Independent Travel, more environmentally friendly travel and the economic use of resources. This will further develop the current policy (updated in 2020) which provides flexibility to make a decision to depart from the national guidance on recommended travel times following a careful assessment of the needs of every individual child, giving consideration to age and additional needs. Parents will have the right to appeal.
22. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 20% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on variations to journey times; 62% of respondents were against the proposal; 17% were neutral regarding the proposal. The length of journey time was of most concern regarding Key Stage 1 children, specifically those with additional needs (SEND) where an increase in travel time was perceived as detrimental to their health and wellbeing, as well as their ability to be able to learn on arrival at school.
23. Taking account of the public consultation on this proposal, if the Council departs from the national guidelines on journey times, this decision must ensure the planned route is not of such duration that the pupil is unable, because of stress and strain, to learn properly (whether at school or at home) i.e. it must be suitable (see paragraph 4). We

will take into consideration the child's age and stage of development. The 45-minute maximum planned journey time for primary-aged pupils contained in statutory guidance will be maintained and only exceeded in certain circumstances, such as journeys which enable a child to attend the setting which best meets their needs.

Proposing a change to the measuring system for determining Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) from a straight line basis to road routes.

24. Straight line route measurements have previously been used for Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) agreements but have occasionally been a barrier for agreeing transport funding for children, young people and families to make their own travel arrangements. Moving to a method that measures road route distance will simplify the process, will more effectively reimburse families for the costs of making their own arrangements and will increase the number of families able to take up this offer. It is recommended to move to a road route basis for calculation of ITA.
25. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 70% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on a change to the measuring system from a straight line basis to road routes; 12% of respondents were against the proposal; 18% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Mileage Reimbursement

26. The current H2S TA policy provides two modes of mileage reimbursement:
 - A tiered mileage allowance based on average distance between a home address and school. This tiered allowance is broken down into 3 bands.
 - A standard mileage rate.
27. It is proposed to introduce a simpler scheme to enable a more unified reimbursement process for parents and carers (including how and when they are reimbursed). The mileage rates to be used will still be based on Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), which will include provision for any inflationary uplifts.
28. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 47% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on milage reimbursement; 20% of respondents were against the proposal; 33% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Notice period(s) for the removal of travel assistance in certain circumstances.

29. In the instances where a family's financial circumstances change or a route to school within statutory walking distance (2 miles for those aged up to aged 8 and 3 miles for those over age 8) becomes safe to walk and therefore a child is no longer eligible for travel assistance, the Council's policy currently allows for travel assistance to remain in place unchanged for the child or young person until the end of the academic year. The Council proposes in future to end travel assistance in the circumstance where a route to school becomes safe to walk after four weeks or the end of the half term, whichever is longer, following notification to parents and carers. This notice period is considered reasonable, provides a longer notice period than was proposed in the public consultation, and will be considered in the context of the potential impact on the child. Parents will also have the right to appeal.

30. If a family's low-income status has ended, applicants who have been entitled to travel assistance will be written to with the explanation that assistance will end. Travel assistance will continue to be provided until the end of the academic year. The Council will also connect with families and offer support such as signposting to specific services if this would prove helpful to them. This is considered reasonable as the purpose of the extended entitlement for low income families is to give these families more choice of school. They may need time to consider whether to move their child to a different school if their status changes.
31. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 23% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on notice periods; 47% of respondents were against the proposal; 30% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Other reasons for withdrawal of transport

32. The current policy outlines in which circumstances transport will be withdrawn. The reasons include where fraud has taken place, or an application included misleading information. The Council proposes to expand this part of the policy to include if there are errors with the initial assessment. Parents and carers will have the right of appeal if assistance is withdrawn for this reason. This approach is in line with the prudential management of the Council's resources. In light of this, and taking account of the public consultation, it is recommended that the proposal to expand the policy on withdrawal of transport is agreed and implemented.
33. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 39% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on withdrawal of transport; 27% of respondents were against the proposal; 34% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Provision of travel assistance for under 5s.

34. The current policy states that the Council may provide travel assistance to children aged under 5 if it concludes that extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated. It is proposed that this discretionary assistance will only be provided to reception aged children (children aged 4). Currently 178 children under the age of 5 access H2STA, of which 16 are below the age of 4 and 162 are 4 year olds. Taking account of the public consultation, it is recommended that the Council may provide assistance to children who are aged 4 and entering into the reception year at primary school if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated. Parents will have the right to appeal if they believe extenuating circumstances have not been considered by the Council.
35. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 63% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on provision for under 5s; 10% of respondents were against the proposal; 27% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Medical and Health Interventions in the Travel Assistance Policy.

36. The current policy outlines in which circumstances a Passenger Assistant may be approved to support a child during travel to school. One of these circumstances is a child who has specific health and/or medical needs. The policy does not outline the operational standards or processes linked to the provision of medically trained transport staff. Taking account of the public consultation, it is recommended that the

new policy will provide guidance on the operational standards and processes which the Council follows if there is a requirement for a medically trained Passenger Assistant to support children during their journey to school. Information about this will be added to the Parent and Carer Guide. Parents will have the right to appeal if they believe their child's health or medical needs have not been considered.

37. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation 74% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on medical and health interventions; 4% of respondents were against the proposal; 22% were neutral regarding the proposal.

One child per vehicle transport

38. The current policy outlines in which circumstances individualised transport would be agreed. This refers mainly to taxis taking children and young people to and from schools and settings. The proposed change will mean that in the future, only in very specific circumstances will individualised transport be provided which will mean more children sharing transport and accessing a wider range of travel assistance options. Extenuating circumstances will be linked to medical needs or where the child or young person is receiving funded bespoke one-to-one support in their education or training venues.
39. Individualised transport involves provision of a single vehicle and a member of staff, for a single pupil. This carries a significantly higher unit cost than shared transport. The proposed change will clarify for families, Surrey County Council staff and partners the circumstances under which individualised transport will be agreed. Parents will have the right to appeal if they believe these circumstances have not been taken into account. Taking account of the public consultation, it is recommended that the proposal to provide individualised transport only in specific circumstances is agreed and implemented.
40. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 59% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on one child per vehicle transport; 28% of respondents were against the proposal; 13% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Safeguarding users of H2S transport

41. The current policy advises in some detail that the Council may look to withdraw transport assistance in instances of behaviour that poses risks to drivers and other passengers on transport. The Council understands its duty to provide travel assistance to children who are eligible. However, in circumstances where a child's behaviour potentially risks harm to themselves and others in a vehicle (including the driver), a review of the arrangements will be undertaken. This will start with the needs of the child and what may need to change to support them to access transport more safely. If this is not viable, then it is proposed that parents/carers will be asked to accept a mileage allowance instead of transport being provided. The majority of respondents to the public consultation were in favour of this proposal. Information about this will be added to the Parent and Carer Guide.
42. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 54% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on safeguarding users; 31% of respondents were against the proposal; 15% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Travel Assistance and post-16: Updated policy statement and post-16 bursary

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43. There is also statutory “have regard” guidance for transport for students aged 16-19. The guidance is that the Council has to make such arrangements for the provision of transport for these students as it considers necessary. The Council’s current policy states that transport will be provided in exceptional circumstances only i.e. where it is necessary to provide assistance to allow the student to get to and from their educational setting. Currently 653 young people over the age of 16 access H2S TA. This costs circa £7.8m per annum.
 44. As set out previously in this report, in future it is proposed that offers of travel assistance will focus on independent travel options, including the use of public transport and will move away from provision of private hire vehicles such as minibuses or taxis where appropriate.
 45. The proposal is to produce an enhanced post-16 policy statement, which will be reviewed and republished annually. This will ensure there is regular review and transparency regarding the Council’s intention to use its discretionary powers for post-16 travel assistance. The aim in the future is to provide support for young people over age 16 to help them transition into adulthood and explore independent travel, if they are eligible. While the public consultation was divided over support for this proposal, on the basis that it will give greater clarity to young people, parents and carers about the travel assistance available post-16, it is recommended that the proposal to publish an enhanced annual post-16 policy statement is agreed and the final detail be determined by the Cabinet Member under delegated authority.
 46. The consultation response is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 39% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on the introduction of a post-16 statement; 39% of respondents were against the proposal; 22% were neutral regarding the proposal.
 47. In addition, it is proposed that where the Council assesses a young person aged 16 to 19 years as eligible for travel assistance under its policy, the assistance offered in the first instance will be in the form of a post-16 transport bursary to support families and young people to make their own transport arrangements, unless due to severity of need or a requirement for specialist transport means this is not appropriate. Parents and young people will have the right to appeal. Taking account of the public consultation, there were more respondents in favour of this proposal than against.
 48. The consultation response is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 44% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on the introduction of a post-16 bursaries; 30% of respondents were against the proposal; 26% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Travel assistance appeals process

49. The DfE national guidance on home to school transport sets out how appeals against eligibility decisions made for H2S TA should be conducted. This includes a two-stage process. Stage two must be independent of the stage one decision-making process and include suitably experienced panel members. At present the stage two panel is made up of elected members of the local authority.

50. It is proposed to continue with a two-stage process and that the stage two panel will be independent of the first, but the membership of the stage two panel will now include Council officers in the future. This is in line with the DfE national guidance and will strengthen the experience and knowledge of the panel. The DfE's recommended appeals process is set out here: [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/publishing.service.gov.uk). This will also allow appeals to be heard more rapidly and regularly than is currently the case. Ensuring a wider pool of panel members will mean that appeals can be quorate and proceed in cases of ill health or lack of availability of councillors. However, is it still the intention to ensure that councillors remain a key component of appeal hearings and this change is not proposing to withdraw councillors from the appeals process. Taking account of the public consultation in which the majority of respondents were either neutral or in favour of the proposal, it is recommended that this proposal is agreed.

51. The consultation outcome is as follows: Of the 694 responses to the consultation, 30% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on the changes to the travel appeals process; 27% of respondents were against the proposal; 43% were neutral regarding the proposal.

Outcomes for Surrey residents:

- 52. The changes to the H2S TA policy are designed to increase the range of transport options offered to children who are eligible, promote inclusion and independence, support preparations for adulthood and be more financially sustainable. As financial assistance for transport does not always continue into adulthood, it is crucial that young people are equipped with the skills and capabilities to travel independently as they get older.
- 53. These changes will also support the Council's ambitions for children and respond to the climate emergency. Expanding travel assistance options and reducing reliance on one child per vehicle transport will enable the service to play its part in contributing to a greener county and reduce volumes of private transport on Surrey's roads.
- 54. The Council also has a responsibility to make effective use of public sector resources. These changes will enhance its ability to ensure value for money for residents.

Consultation:

- 55. The Council has proactively engaged with parents, carers, schools and colleges and other stakeholders. A public consultation of 28 working days on the proposals was launched on 22 February 2022 and concluded on Tuesday 31 March 2022. The consultation covered travel assistance services provided to both children attending mainstream provision and children and young people with additional needs attending specialist settings.
- 56. A hard copy letter with the consultation document was sent to all current mainstream and additional needs (SEND) H2S TA service users setting out the proposed changes and inviting them to respond to the survey. There were 694 respondents to the survey. In addition, four virtual public engagement events were held, plus a FaceBook Live session with Family Voice Surrey. Participants included parents and carers of H2S TA service users and Family Voice Surrey. The Council also received emails from both residents and local MPs. All engagement has been included in the

consultation analysis and taken into account for the equality impact assessment. A copy of a summary of the proposed changes as the companion document to the consultation is attached as **Annex A**.

57. A report summarising the feedback from the consultation is attached as **Annex C**.

The key themes coming out of the feedback include:

- Overall, it is clear that the support that young people receive for H2S TA is of great importance to both them and their families. Parents of young people with additional needs are especially concerned to ensure that the structure and consistency that this support provides for their children continues.
- Respondents were in support of the majority of proposed changes, and where this support has been indicated, decisions have been made in line with these views.
- However, for the proposals consulted on regarding the use of collection points, the variation in maximum journey times and the alteration of notice period, more respondents were against the proposals than were in favour. expressed a negative sentiment. For these proposals further consideration was given to understand the respondents' reasoning and adjustments to the proposals made in line with the equality impact assessment and mitigations identified.
- Finally, the consultation responses to the enhanced post-16 policy statement were more mixed in their support, therefore officer discretion has been used.

58. The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee was updated on the proposals and the consultation at its meeting on 7 April 2022 and provided feedback. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning was consulted on the proposals prior to the consultation launching and was updated on feedback as the consultation progressed. Informal Cabinet was briefed on the outcomes of the consultation on 19 April 2022.

Risk Management and Implications:

59. The Council's home to school/college travel assistance policy is a county-wide policy which will apply equally to all districts and boroughs and electoral divisions. The policy and the practice that results from it are intended to be consistent across all districts and boroughs and should enable greater consistency of practice and equity of provision of home to school travel assistance. It will encourage the use of more environmentally sustainable forms of transport, supporting young people to walk, cycle and use public transport such as local buses and trains.
60. The Council's Legal Services has provided expert advice and guidance throughout the development of the proposals and the consultation. Dedicated programme resource has also ensured risks are considered and mitigated where possible. The implementation timetable will implement travel arrangements that are predictable for the family and child or young person and for which they can reasonably prepare.
61. Further advice in relation to the robustness of the legal position on the policy changes proposed has been provided.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

62. Surrey County Council currently provides significant discretionary home to school travel provision for children with additional needs and some discretionary provision for mainstream children. As set out previously in this report, the CCN study has confirmed that all County Councils have seen an exponential increase in the cost of providing home to school transport.
63. As of 2020/21 the H2STA budgets for children in mainstream settings, those with additional needs and those attending alternative provisions are £40.1m. Due to current pressures within the service, the forecast for this financial year is £44.7m, an overspend of £4.6m. This overspend is a result of the position in SEND transport which accounts for an overspend of £4.8m with small underspends in the other areas offsetting this variance.
64. This variance has come about as a result of increases in both the number of pupils being transported, and the costs of routes since September. Increases in pupil numbers have begun to slow, but the cost of routes is continuing to rise meaning the full year effect of these pressures could be more than the current £4.8m in 22/23 without further action.
65. The budget for transport in 2022/23 contains a number of offsetting pressures and efficiencies which result in a net increase of c£600k. The actions listed in this report will therefore first be required to mitigate the current financial pressure before being able to make efficiencies against the overall Council budget position.
66. One of the key areas of pressure in recent months has been the rising increase in fuel prices. This has been linked to an increase in providers 'handing back' routes due to them no longer being affordable. These routes must then go back out to market and are coming back at circa 20% more. The contracts Surrey has in place mean that providers can hand back routes with 28-days' notice which reduces the protection against short term fluctuations in fuel prices such as this.
67. The current proposed changes to the H2S TA policy are part of a suite of proposals to improve children's educational experiences in the County. More such measures will be rolled out through different programmes in the future.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

68. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
69. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the recommendations of this report as the current pressures on the Home to School transport budgets are significant. Providing

these services in a more cost-effective manner is therefore key in supporting the Council's overall financial stability.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

70. Parents have a primary responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and this includes the obligation to transport them. However, the Education Act 1996 (as amended) sets out the Council's duties and powers to provide home to school/college transport and travel assistance in relation to pre-school children, children of compulsory school age, post-16 (sixth form) students and adult learners with education health and care plans up to the age of 25. In exercising these functions, the Council must have regard to statutory guidance (see paragraph 71 below).

71. In summary:

- There is no duty to provide free home to school travel assistance to children under compulsory school age, but the Council has a discretion to provide it.
- Eligible children of compulsory school age (5-16) must be provided with free home to school travel assistance. The categories of eligible children are set out in legislation and include children who live beyond the statutory walking distance from the nearest suitable school, children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school due to special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems, or due to the nature of the route. There is extended eligibility for children from low income families.
- The Council is required to publish an annual policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport that the Council considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training. There is no requirement that any travel assistance provided to 16-19 learners must be free of charge.
- In the case of adult learners (aged 19 or over), the Council is required to make such transport arrangements as are necessary, including in particular, for students aged 19 to 25 with EHCPs in residential education or attending further education colleges and must publish an annual policy statement. If assistance with transport is considered necessary for an individual learner, it must be provided free of charge.
- The Council is required to have regard to statutory guidance in discharging its functions in relation to school transport. Statutory guidance on transport for eligible children of statutory school age is given in 'Home to school travel and transport guidance: statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014'. It is proposed that the Council departs from the recommendations in the national guidance as to journey times. The requirement to "have regard" to the guidance, means that the Council must follow it unless it has cogent reasons not to. The Council will need to be satisfied that any change to the policy to depart from the national guidance on journey times is justified taking account of the factors outlined in paragraphs 18 to 23 above, the aim of encouraging greater independence and the focus on sustainability and Surrey's greener future agenda, and having regard to the equality impact assessment and the proposed mitigation in the application of the change. There is also statutory guidance on transport for post 16 year olds, entitled "Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training".

72. The Cabinet is being asked to approve changes to the Council's Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policy which means the Council will change travel assistance arrangements for some cohorts of children and young people. The proposals were subject to a 28 working day consultation as detailed early in this report and an analysis of the responses has been appended to this report. The Cabinet must consider the outcomes of the consultation and conscientiously take them into account in reaching its decision.
73. The Council owes a fiduciary duty to its council taxpayers which is analogous to that owed by trustees looking after property that belongs to others. Accordingly, in deciding how money should be spent, the Cabinet should take into account the interests of residents who have contributed to the Council's income and balance those interests against those who benefit from the expenditure.
74. The Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 applies to this decision. There is a need to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups and eliminate unlawful discrimination. These matters are dealt with below in this report and in the Equality Impact Assessment appended. The Cabinet will see that negative impacts have been identified and when reaching its decision, Members will need to take account of these and any mitigating actions.
75. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on the County Council along with a range of organisations and individuals to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 also requires the County Council to make arrangements for ensuring that their education functions, which include transport functions, are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Equalities and Diversity:

76. The policy changes regarding discretionary provision that were the subject of consultation affect the specific groups of children and young people set out in the Equality Impact Assessment (**Annex B**). This identified both potential negative and positive impacts based on the protected characteristics of age and disability.
77. The main potential negative impacts for these groups include challenges in accessing their education setting and impacts on health and wellbeing from disruption to their existing service provision. The Council will mitigate this by:
- a. Communicating the changes widely to children and young people and their families through the Surrey Local Offer, through schools and directly to the parents and carers of the specific groups of children and young people. This will enable them to prepare and make alternative travel arrangements where required.
 - b. Further engaging children and families on the introduction of individual collection points and variances to journey times to take account of children's needs and abilities and local circumstances.

- c. Work to develop and promote independent travel opportunities, such as Independent Travel Training.
- d. Continue to deliver the programme of work that will expand local specialist education provision in Surrey to make it easier for children and young people to attend settings closer to their communities and reduce demand for travel assistance.
- e. Co-produce a Parent Guide with Family Voice that will ensure that there is accessible information for parents and carers on travel assistance, as well as a policy on variance to journey times setting out the criteria we will consider.

Other inclusivity issues:

- 78. Delivery of the outcomes sought through the policy will promote inclusion, independence and preparation for adulthood for children and young people, environmental sustainability, more efficient use of public resources and enable the Council to continue to deliver its statutory responsibilities for home to school travel assistance.
- 79. A further potential positive impact is incentivising more children and young people to attend local provision in Surrey and their own communities with their family and friends.
- 80. For all children and young people there is a further positive impact of promoting independence and preparation for adulthood. The Council estimates that based on the cohort of approximately 3,000 post-16 students with an EHCP, 11% will meet the threshold for lifelong support from Adult Social Care and 4% will have complex medical needs and be supported by their CCG via Continuing Health Care support. The remaining 84% will only access additional support including transport assistance via their EHCP which will end when their plan ceases or expires at age 25. The majority of the post-16 additional needs group of young people are on a vocational pathway and the ability to travel independently is an essential employability skill. The refreshed policy will support this.
- 81. For each group, the Council will exercise its discretion to establish what travel assistance might be needed based on the needs, age and circumstances of children, young people and their families.

Other Implications:

- 82. The potential implications for the following Council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Looked after children will be supported with safe and suitable travel assistance. They will be eligible for the range of travel assistance options, including independent travel training,

	supporting them to prepare for adulthood.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	The Council will continue to ensure that, where it provides home to school transport for a child, it is safe and that children on transport continue to be safeguarded. This includes reviewing arrangements where a child's behaviour on transport potentially risks harm to themselves and others in a vehicle including the driver.
Environmental sustainability	The Council's policy will encourage the use of more environmentally sustainable forms of transport, supporting young people to walk, cycle and use public transport such as local buses and trains.
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	As above.
Public Health	Walking and cycling are healthy travel options and promoting independence provides mental health benefits.

What Happens Next:

83. Subject to decision making, the Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policy will be published on 6 May 2022 and communicated widely to children and young people and their families through the Surrey Local Offer, through schools and settings and directly with families.
84. Subject to decision making, the policy will be implemented for academic year 2022/23 which begins in September 2022, with changes to travel assistance arrangements as set out in this report commencing in September 2022. The introduction of collection points for children in mainstream schools will be implemented in academic year 2021/22, in line with the rationale set out in paragraph 17.

Report Author:

Eamonn Gilbert, Assistant Director- Commissioning, eamonn.gilbert@surreycc.gov.uk

Consulted:

Cabinet

Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning
Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

ELLC Staff

Families of children and young people with SEND
Families of children and young people without SEND
Young people, with SEND and without

Family Voice Surrey

Healthwatch Surrey

Phase Council Headteachers – special, primary, secondary and early years

Other school professionals

Residents

Annexes:

Annex A: Copy of 'Proposed Changes Guide' companion document for the consultation survey

Annex B: Equality Impact Assessment

Annex C: Summary Consultation Feedback Report

Annex D: Revised Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policy

Sources/background papers:

'Home To school Transport: The Challenge In Counties – County Council Network

'Home to school travel and transport guidance: Statutory guidance for local authorities', July 2014

[Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Annex A – Proposed Changes Guide

11



HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY:

Proposed Changes Guide

Introduction

This document summarises proposed changes to Surrey County Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (H2STA). This policy explains the eligibility criteria for travel assistance for children, with and without special educational needs, of statutory school age (5-16 years old), for children under 5 and for young people aged 16-19 and 19-25, and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as set out in the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation and guidance.

The Council is refreshing the Home to School Travel Assistance (H2STA) policy in a number of key areas. In doing so we will proactively engage with parents, carers, schools and colleges and other stakeholders. The policy will help align the Authority's commitment to moving away from an offer of school transport to a travel assistance model, with an increased focus on sustainability and Surrey's green agenda. Moving forward, the Council wants to focus on:

- Enhancement of the independent travel training (ITT) offer
- Further promotion of collection points rather than home pick-up arrangements
- A review of the process for the provision of individual transport
- Not providing H2STA when the school attended is one of parental choice rather than the closest school to meet need
- The adoption of a more sustainable approach with greater use of public transport options where appropriate, reducing reliance on taxis and private cars

To complement the new policy, we are developing a parent guide that will sit alongside the agreed policy document. The parent guide will simplify guidance outlined in the new policy and explain the council's processes in greater detail.

The consultation uses the term 'additional needs' and 'SEND' to refer to children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities. We have agreed to use identify-first language (eg "additional needs" rather than SEND unless it refers to legislation or a policy as this was the preference of young people we spoke to).

The main areas the Council is proposing to change are as follows:

1. The Council plans to offer a broader range of Travel Assistance options, aligned with Surrey's commitment to its climate policy agenda, promoting more sustainable modes of travel assistance.

Our engagement with children and young people tells us that working towards and supporting their independence is important. These options will help empower them, prepare them for adulthood and as a result contribute to improving their quality of life.

- The Council will introduce options such as bikeability (cycling safely and with confidence), driving lessons and access to TfL Oyster Card (in some areas of the county).
- We will no longer require children and young people to undertake individual travel training assessment in the home. The assessment will be undertaken in an agreed location.
- We will be encouraging the use of collection points, the designated pick-up and drop-off locations for pupils to meet the bus or taxi. Where children and young people with complex additional needs or the parents or carers' own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to use the collection points, we will assess individual needs to determine suitability. Where the introduction of collection points is being considered, the Council will consult with the parents and carers already on those routes affected by this potential change in service.

2. We propose to clarify the Council's position on transport journey times

The Council currently aims to comply with national guidance on the maximum length of journey time for a child to get to and from school. This is 45 minutes for a primary aged child and 75 minutes for a secondary aged child attending placements both within and outside the County.

The Council is proposing that the national guidance on maximum journey times will not apply to pupils travelling to out of county schools, where distances and the frequency of journeys may vary. We are also proposing to change the maximum journey times for primary aged children to 75 minutes.

3. We propose to change the measuring system for determining Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) from Straight Lines to Road Routes.

The policy currently says that the calculation of independent travel allowance is based on a straight-line (as the crow flies) calculation between a home address and school. The Council proposes to change this to a calculation that measures distances via road route. This is a better and more accurate reflection of the journey distance undertaken.

4. We are proposing to introduce a simplified mileage reimbursement system which replaces the original tiered system with the aim of increasing the take-up of this offer.

At the moment, the policy provides two modes of mileage reimbursement:

- A tiered mileage allowance based on average distance between a home address and school. This tiered allowance is broken down into 3 bands (0-5.99 miles, 6-10 miles and 11+ miles) and there are corresponding allowance rates next to each band.
- A standard mileage rate.

The Council proposes to introduce a simpler scheme to enable a more unified reimbursement process for parents and carers (including how and when they are reimbursed). The mileage rates to be used will still be set in line with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Distances will be calculated using the shortest road route. In conjunction with this, the Council proposes to introduce flexibility to agree reimbursement rates on an individual basis with parents and carers where the alternative would be high-cost transport.

5. The Council proposes to change the notice period for the removal of travel assistance in certain circumstances.

The current policy requires travel assistance to remain in place until the end of the academic year in instances where low-income status of a child ends, and in instances where a walking route previously deemed unsafe becomes safe after review. The Council proposes to write to parents and carers when a walking route becomes safe with the explanation of the change and continue to provide assistance for four weeks at which point transport will be withdrawn.

If a family's low-income status has ended, applicants who have been entitled to travel assistance will be written to with the explanation that assistance will end. Travel assistance will be provided until the end of the academic year. The Council will also connect with families and offer support such as signposting to specific services if this would prove helpful to them.

6. The Council proposes to clarify the reasons for the withdrawal of transport and include the removal of assistance if an application approved for H2S TA has been done in error.

The current policy states in what circumstances transport will be withdrawn. The reasons include where fraud has taken place or a submission made included misleading information.

This part of the policy will be expanded to include the withdrawal of assistance if there are errors with the initial assessment. Parents and carers will have the right of appeal if assistance is withdrawn for this reason in the usual way.

7. The Council proposes to clarify its position regarding the provision of travel assistance for under 5s.

The current policy states that the council may provide travel assistance to children aged Under 5 if it feels that extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated.

It is proposed that this discretionary assistance will only be provided to reception aged children. The Council may provide assistance to children who are aged four and entering into the reception year at primary school if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated.

8. The Council proposes to add information on Medical and Health Interventions in the Travel Assistance Policy.

The current policy outlines in what circumstances a Passenger Assistant may be approved to support a child during travel to school, and one of these circumstances may be a child who has specific health and/or medical needs. It does not outline the operational standards or processes linked to the provision of medically trained transport staff.

It is proposed that the new policy will provide guidance on the operational standards and processes which the Council follows if there is a requirement for a medically trained Passenger Assistant to support children during their journey to school.

9. The Council proposes to reduce the reliance on one-child-per-vehicle transport.

The current policy outlines in what circumstances individualised transport would be agreed. This is mainly taxis taking children and young people to and from school and settings.

The refreshed policy develops a focus on enabling independence and preparing for adulthood such as employment or shared living away from home. The proposed change to individual transport will be that it will only be agreed in extenuating circumstances. Travel assistance options other than bespoke transport will be explored in the first instance. Where transport is needed, it would normally be in a vehicle shared with other students or pupils such as a taxi or minibus. Provision of individualised transport would normally be linked to medical needs or where child or young person is receiving one-to-one support in their educational training venues.

10. The council proposes to clarify the conditions in which transport may be withdrawn based on instances of dangerous behaviour and a more detailed process.

The policy advises in some detail that the Council may look to withdrawing assistance in instances of unacceptable behaviour. The Council understands its duty to provide travel assistance to children who are eligible.

However, in circumstances where a child's behaviour has been dangerous and/or potentially risks harm to themselves and others in a vehicle (including the driver), a review of the arrangements will be undertaken. It is proposed that parents and carers will be written to. If the occurrences are repeated, then a parent/carer will be asked to accept a mileage allowance instead of transport being provided.

11. The Council proposes to create an updated version of its statement for post-16 young people in-line with national guidance.

The Council's current policy states that transport will be provided in exceptional circumstances only.

National guidance states that the council does not have to provide free transport for students aged 16-19. The proposed change to the policy will be that the Council in the exercise of its discretion as to what travel assistance is necessary for learners of sixth form age may provide travel assistance for young people aged 16 to 19 who have additional needs in order to help them transition into adulthood and explore independent travel. It will also provide signposting to transport services for those young people who are not provided with H2S TA. Offers of travel assistance will now focus on independent travel, including the use of public transport and not on the provision of private hire vehicles such as minibuses or taxis.

12. The Council proposes to introduce bursaries for young people post 16 years of age.

The current policy outlines the types of travel assistance available if the Council deems a young person aged 16 to 19 eligible for travel assistance. It is proposed that where the Council assesses a young person aged 16 to 19 as eligible for travel assistance under its policy the assistance offered may be in the form of a post-16 transport bursary to support families and young people to make their own transport arrangements to develop independence and prepare for adulthood.

13. The Council is proposing to introduce changes to its travel assistance appeals process.

There is national guidance that sets out how appeals against decisions made on H2S TA are conducted. This includes a two-stage process. Stage two must be independent of the stage one decision-making process. At present the stage two panel can be made up of members of the local authority.

It is proposed to continue with a two-stage process and that the stage two panel will be independent of the first but that the membership will include Council Officers in the future.

For any questions regarding the survey, please contact research@surreycc.gov.uk

Equality Impact Assessment

Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment

HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY REFRESH

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Did you use the EIA Screening Tool?

No

1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Is this a:

- Change to an existing strategy or policy

Summarise the strategy, policy, service(s), or function(s) being assessed. Describe current status followed by any changes that stakeholders would experience.

The home to school travel assistance (H2STA) service helps children and young people to get to and from their education setting. This comes in several different forms, such as Independent Travel Training (ITT), mileage reimbursement, bikeability, driving lessons and taxi, minibus and coach services. The service supports children and young people of statutory school age (5 to 16 years) as well as a current policy to support children aged under 5 and young people aged 16 to 25.

In Surrey every day, around 10,000 children and young people access H2STA services. The cost to the Council is £40m a year, and these have increased as a result of the Covid pandemic as well as increased demand. In addition, the Council faces significant challenges in securing appropriate transport provision due to a challenging local and national labour market and significant increases in fuel costs. This is making it difficult to ensure children and young people who most need our support get it at the right time against the backdrop of increasing demand.

The Council proposes to refresh its H2STA policy in several key areas to reflect the ambitions we have for our children and young people while also managing the challenging context the service is operating in. The proposed changes include:

- Broadening the options for children and young people who qualify for H2STA assistance, moving away from a reliance on solo taxi routes (when there is only one child or young person in the vehicle). Solo routes make up approximately one third of the spend on H2STA. We propose to move towards travel assistance options used routinely by children and young people and communities such as buses and rail, where appropriate through ITT.
- Encourage people, where possible, to use environmentally friendly travel and transport. Greater use of green alternative travel options would help us mitigate the impact of climate change, through better use of walking, cycling and bus and train routes and where possible, increasing the occupancy in vehicles.
- Ensure young people don't face a 'cliff edge' when they become adults. For young people with additional needs, for example, their eligibility for transport is linked to their Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and will expire at some point in the future. If they are not supported through ITT to travel independently this can create isolation and reduce access to employment as well.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposed changes to the policy are:

- Broadening the range of travel assistance options on offer such as bikeability (cycling safely with confidence), driving lessons, access to TfL Oyster cards and ITT.
- Introducing collection points so pupils are collected from designated pick-up and drop-off locations.
- In a minority of journeys, the upper limit on journey times may be varied in order to make suitable and sufficient arrangements for all children. This means that in planning routes, the maximum time recommendations of 45 and 75 minutes would not, as it currently does, override all other considerations. It would allow children and young people who could potentially share transport to do so. Changing the measurement approach for determining Independent Travel Allowance from straight lines to road routes.
- Simplifying our approach to mileage reimbursement for parents and carers.
- Reducing the notice period for withdrawal of travel assistance, if a walking route becomes safe from keeping assistance in place until the end of the academic year down to four weeks. If a family's low-income status ends, travel assistance will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year.
- Withdrawing transport if errors were made in the initial assessment, with parents and carers having a right to appeal.
- Reducing discretionary travel assistance provision for under 5s to be provided for Reception aged children only (aged 4 and above).
- Providing guidance on operational processes and standards the council will follow if there is a medically trained Passenger Assistant to support children during their journey to school.
- Individual transport will only be provided in very specific circumstances which will mean more children sharing transport and accessing a wider range of travel assistance options. Extenuating circumstances will be linked to medical needs or where the child or young person is receiving funded bespoke one-to-one support in their education or training venues.
- Reviewing arrangements in circumstances where a child's behaviour potentially risks harm to themselves and others in a vehicle (including the driver). This will start with the needs of the child and what may need to change to support them to access transport more safely. If this is not viable, it is proposed parents/carers will be asked to accept a mileage allowance instead of transport being provided.
- Focusing travel assistance for eligible post-16 pupils on independent travel options, including the use of public transport, and introduction of a post-16 transport bursary to support young people and families to make their own travel arrangements. A post-16 policy statement will also be introduced and refreshed annually.
- Retaining a two-stage travel assistance appeals process, with membership of the panel at the second stage including council officers.

Between 22 February 2022 and 31 March 2022, the council ran a public consultation on these proposals. 694 stakeholders responded to the consultation survey including parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), parents and carers of children and young people without SEND, education professionals, including school governors, and children and young people with and without SEND.

In addition, five public engagement events were held. Participants included parents and carers of H2S TA service users and Family Voice Surrey. The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee were also consulted on the proposals at their meeting on 7 April 2022.

This impact assessment has also been informed by data on H2S TA service users which is held on the Mobisoft Travel Centre system.

Based on this evidence, the protected characteristics most likely to be affected are:

- Age
- Disability

In addition, the key stakeholders who may be affected by these changes are:

Equality Impact Assessment

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- Children and young people of statutory and non-statutory school age
 - Parents and carers
 - Schools and colleges
 - Transport providers

How does your service proposal support the outcomes in [the Community Vision for Surrey 2030?](#)

- Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life
- Children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident
- Journeys across the county are easier, more predictable and safer

Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make an impact?

- County-wide

2. Service Users / Residents

Who may be affected by this activity?

There are 9 protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) to consider in your proposal. These are:

1. Age including younger and older people
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
6. Religion or belief including lack of belief
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Marriage/civil partnerships

Though not included in the Equality Act 2010, Surrey County Council recognises that there are other vulnerable groups which significantly contribute to inequality across the county and therefore they should also be considered within EIAs. If relevant, you will need to include information on the following vulnerable groups (Please **refer to the EIA guidance** if you are unclear as to what this is).

- Members/Ex members of armed forces
- Adult and young carers*
- Those experiencing digital exclusion*
- Those experiencing domestic abuse*
- Those with education/training (literacy) needs
- Those experiencing homelessness*
- Looked after children/Care leavers*
- Those living in rural/urban areas
- Those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage*
- Out of work young people)*
- Adults with learning disabilities and/or autism*
- People with drug or alcohol use issues*
- People on probation
- People in prison
- Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers
- Sex workers
- Children with Special educational needs and disabilities*
- Adults with long term health conditions, disabilities (including SMI) and/or sensory impairment(s)*
- Older People in care homes*
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities*
- Other (describe below)

(*as identified in the Surrey COVID Community Impact Assessment and the Surrey Health and Well-being Strategy)

Equality Impact Assessment

Age

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Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

As of January 2022, 8,921 children and young people received a form of travel assistance. 7,246 of them (81%) are provided with transport such as coaches, taxis and minibuses. For the 7,246 cohort provided with travel assistance in the form of a means of transport in January 2022, the age breakdown is as follows:

- 145 are aged 0 to 4
- 6,403 are aged 5 to 15
- 527 are aged 16 to 19
- 171 are aged 19 and over

The following potential impacts have been identified from these proposals based on age:

Journey times – Varying the upper limits on journey times may lead to potential negative impacts. Concerns were raised by stakeholders through the consultation, such as impacts on children and young people's health and wellbeing, including feeling tired and distressed following their journeys, leading to subsequent impacts on their ability to focus on their learning when they arrive at their education setting and ability to engage fully in family life. Children and young people who live over 45 minutes away from their school/college, or pupils of education settings based outside of Surrey, particularly children in Key Stage 1 (ages 5 to 7), are most likely to be impacted.

A potential positive impact of this change is through increased use of shared transport for such journeys, supporting children and young people to socialise with peers.

Broadening travel assistance options – Some children and young people will be able to access broader travel assistance options such as bikeability, driving lessons and TfL Oyster cards will provide them greater choice on ways to get to school or college, while also building travel independence skills for later life.

Concerns were raised by stakeholders about prioritising independent travel among younger age groups, such as 6-year-olds, which could lead to increased anxiety for them and their families about travelling to and from their education setting safely.

De-emphasising the use of private transport, and promoting changes to greener, more sustainable methods of travel and transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport, could benefit some children and young people's health and wellbeing. According to the National Institute for Health Research, children who switched to walking and cycling to school between the ages of 7 and 14 had healthier body weights than those who continued to travel to school by car, with benefits being even greater for children and young people from some deprived areas¹. It is recognised that this may not be feasible or practical for some service users with additional needs, and there may still be some cases where private transport is the only option.

Collection points – Through the consultation, some parents and carers have expressed concerns about the suitability of collection points for use by younger children. Parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs were much more likely to express concern compared to parents and carers of children and young people in mainstream education. This includes the extent to which the child or young person would be safe, and feel safe, to use a collection point, and the ability of adults to balance dropping off and picking up their

¹ School children who switch to walking or cycling may have a healthier body weight, National Institute for Health Research, September 2021, [NIHR Evidence - Schoolchildren who switch to walking or cycling may have a healthier body weight - Informative and accessible health and care research](#)

Equality Impact Assessment

child from a collection point while picking up siblings from other education settings. Questions were also raised about responsible adults for accompanying younger children to collection points.

Provision of travel assistance for under 5s – It is proposed that discretionary assistance will only be offered to children about to start Reception at age 4 if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated. This means that children aged 0 to 3 will no longer have access to transport. Currently this affects 162 children who are 4 years old, and 16 children who are 0 to 3 years old, 178 children in total. This figure is likely to change by the start of the 2022/23 academic year in September 2022.

For children who are 4 years old beginning Reception, their families may not start them in Reception at the beginning of the academic year. This could:

- Delay children accessing education;
- Be destabilising for Reception classes where children are joining throughout the year, particularly for specialist Reception classes with children with SEND.

Ceasing provision for 0- to 3-year-olds may affect these children being able to access early years education, including early intervention education placements, particularly where transport is a barrier.

Post-16 statement – Service users aged 16 and over will be impacted by moving to a focus on independent travel over the provision of private hire vehicles. The Council will exercise discretion over the travel assistance it will provide to young people aged 16 to 19 with additional needs to help them transition to adulthood and explore independent travel. Details will be set out in a new post-16 policy statement for home to school travel assistance.

This means that some young people of this age who have received services to date may have their service withdrawn, subject to appropriate notice periods. This statement also covers young people aged 19 to 25 who continue to be supported through their EHCPs.

This change in approach is designed to equip young people with the skills and independence they need in the long term to access social, educational, employment and leisure opportunities. It is, however, recognised that some young people with complex needs will continue to require some form of support from the service.

Post-16 bursaries – For young people aged 16 to 19 who qualify for travel assistance from the Council, bursaries will be introduced to support young people and their families to make their own transport arrangements to develop independence and prepare for adulthood. As with the post-16 statement, this approach aims to give young people longer term skills for independence and determine the travel arrangements to their education setting that works best for them.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

To mitigate these impacts, we will:

- Engage and communicate with families to inform them of the changes to policy and likely impact ahead of the new academic year starting in September 2022. This will include the introduction of a new guide for parents, carers and professionals working with children and families that sets out the Council's policy in plain English to manage expectations of what the Council will and will not provide.
- Work with schools to inform and promote alternative travel options and support to enable pupils to continue accessing to their placements.
- Where a route has been identified as suitable for collection points to be introduced, a further 4 week consultation will be undertaken with the families, children and young people on that route to ensure that the proposed arrangements are appropriate, for example, the location of the collection point. The Council will also take into account individual circumstances or needs which may mean a collection point is not appropriate for the individual to use.

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- Where the Council proposes to depart from national guidance on journey times when planning routes, decisions will ensure that the planned route is not of such length that the pupil is unable to learn properly. Consideration will be given to the child's age and stage of development. The 45-minute maximum planned journey time for primary-aged pupils contained in national guidance will be maintained and only exceeded in certain circumstances, such as journeys which enable a child to attend the setting which best meets their needs.
- Continue to assess eligibility for travel assistance on a case-by-case basis to establish if travel assistance is necessary based on the needs and circumstances of the child and family.
- Where appropriate, work with schools, colleges and families during the summer term and the new academic year to develop and enable independent travel opportunities. This includes promoting ITT, and other travel assistance options, for post-16 students.
- Continue to use the Council's discretion to determine if 0- to 3-year-olds require travel assistance under extenuating circumstances.
- Work to place more very young children, where possible, on our Early Years Inclusion Pathway to enable more of them to attend mainstream education settings and reduce demand for specialist school places, with associated demand for transport.
- Engage families and other stakeholders as the post-16 bursary offer is implemented to review its effectiveness.
- Continue as part of our placement strategy to develop and extend the local post-16 offer for both pupils with and without SEND to provide sufficient provision in Surrey.
- Explore use of technology to support and improved customer experience for children, young people and families.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

Over the next five years, we are investing £139m to create more local education provision so children and young people can be educated closer to home, reducing demand for travel assistance services.

For under 5s, we are undertaking extensive work to create and identify provision with investment in improving support and resources at existing education settings. The aim is for more children with SEND to be able to access education at their local school, reducing the need to travel and for the council to facilitate travel arrangements.

Similar work is underway with post-16 establishments to improve the study programmes available locally, ensuring improved choice of study locally rather than courses that require considerable travel to access them.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

There are no negative impacts that cannot be mitigated.

Disability

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

Of those children and young people who use H2S TA services, just over 4,000 have EHCPs. As of January 2022, 4,011 pupils were provided with transportation in vehicles:

- 3,983 use either a mini-bus or taxi, while 28 use a coach. 36 children and young people were given alternative travel assistance, such as season tickets.
- 107 are aged 0 to 5, 3,224 are aged 5 to 15, 509 are aged 16 to 18 and 171 are aged 19 and over.

Broadening travel assistance options – Some of the broader travel assistance options being considered, such as bikeability and Oyster cards, are likely to be unsuitable for some children and young people with additional needs. Some of the respondents to the consultation survey suggested some children would not have the capacity or capability to understand the concept of travelling independently, including the specific options being proposed in the consultation, meaning this would be unworkable in practice for them. Parents were concerned with the level of risk this could expose their child to.

There were also concerns raised in the consultation about the policy encouraging the use of public transport, particularly for children with autism and are unable to communicate verbally, leading to their child's safety potentially being compromised.

Collection points – 88% of parents or carers of children and young people with SEND said they would not consider their child using collection points for using transport to get to school or college as this would create barriers for them to access education. Reasons respondents gave for this included:

- The physical or cognitive needs of the child or young person in making the journey to and from a collection point increasing levels of personal risk and distress for them.
- Anxieties precluding children and young people with SEND from staying safe, particularly for autistic children and young people, and those with anxiety.
- Dangers for children who could not communicate verbally, exposing them to safeguarding risks.
- Changes to routine for some children and young people could trigger sensory reactions.
- Inaccessibility for some children and young people with specific medical needs.
- Greater risk of exposure to Covid for more clinically vulnerable children and young people from gathering in groups at collection points – increased exposure to Covid for clinically vulnerable.

Journey times – Varying the upper limits on journey times may lead to potential negative impacts. Concerns were raised by stakeholders through the consultation, such as impacts on children and young people's health and wellbeing, including feeling tired and distressed following their journeys, leading to subsequent impacts on their ability to focus on their learning when they arrive at their education setting and ability to engage fully in family life. In line with national guidance, the Council will need to continue ensuring transport solutions are appropriate so children are unstressed when they arrive at school. Children and young people who live over 45 minutes away from their school/college, or pupils of education settings are based outside of Surrey, particularly children in Key Stage 1 (ages 5 to 7), are most likely to be impacted.

Reduction in notice period – The introduction of a shorter notice period for withdrawal of transport provision could have potential negative impacts for children and young people with additional needs. This includes children with autism whose wellbeing could be affected by disruption to their transport routine. The likelihood of this happening is lower as we anticipate more 'mainstream' students being affected given students with additional needs are normally eligible for transport provision under different circumstances.

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Medical and health interventions – The introduction of operational standards will be beneficial for children and young people with complex medical needs to maximise the safety of those children so they always receive the appropriate support to travel to their education setting with the right equipment and a skilled Personal Assistant.

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Reduced reliance on one child per vehicle transport – Provision of individual transport will still apply for children and young people with medical needs and for those children with bespoke one-to-one support in their education or training venues. Some students with SEND will be offered access to shared transport and other travel assistance options, supporting. These will be assessed based on the needs and circumstances of the child and family.

Safeguarding policy for use of transport – There may be potential impacts for some children and young people with additional needs. For some children where behaviours may potentially put drivers and other passengers at risk, transport may be withdrawn meaning accessing their education setting may become more challenging.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

To mitigate these impacts, we will:

- Continue to develop support and expertise available to children, young people and families to enable safer travel on public transport.
- Where the Council proposes to depart from national guidance on journey times when planning routes, decisions will ensure that the planned route is not of such length that the pupil is unable to learn properly. Consideration will be given to the child's age and stage of development. The 45-minute maximum planned journey time for primary-aged pupils contained in national guidance will be maintained and only exceeded in certain circumstances, such as journeys which enable a child to attend the setting which best meets their needs.
- Where appropriate, deliver ITT as bespoke training for individuals to ensure they learn to travel independently and minimise any potential impact relating to their SEND to ensure capacity is in line with demand. Young people will be given the opportunity to learn the necessary skills to travel independently at their own pace and will reflect the specific route and environment they will be expected to use. Schools, families and the young person will have the opportunity to feed back during the training process to establish when the young person is suitable to begin travelling independently. As part of the training, young people will be assessed as to whether they can demonstrate and understand how to deal with unplanned situations and how to keep safe.
- Where a route has been identified as suitable for collection points to be introduced, a further 4 week consultation will be undertaken with the families, children and young people on that route to ensure that the proposed arrangements are appropriate, for example the location of the collection point. The Council will also take into account individual circumstances or needs which may mean that a collection point is not appropriate for an individual pupil to use, including for those pupils with additional needs where it is unfeasible for them to access a collection point. Following a decision to introduce a collection point, the Council will provide not less than 6 weeks notification to families (which includes any school holidays that fall in the 6 week period) before the collection point is established. It is proposed that once a collection point route has been established, that route will remain a collection point route and no further specific consultation will be undertaken. This means that any pupils joining the route will be informed that it is a collection point route and they will be expected to use the collection point. Families will have the opportunity to make representations in the usual way and these will be determined using existing processes.

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- Review the needs of children with and without SEND receiving transport provision on a case -by-case basis where they are at risk of having this provision withdrawn due to behaviour issues which may place other service users or staff delivering the service at some safeguarding risk. If transport has been withdrawn due to behaviour issues, we will work with the children, young people and families to provide Independent Travel Allowance to enable alternative means of travel assistance to be secured so they can continue accessing their education setting while we work with the school to review arrangements.

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We will work with families through the EHCP and Annual Review process to identify opportunities to develop independent travel skills as early in their life as appropriate that will reduce future dependency on family members and increase access to opportunities for all family members, improving overall quality of life for those families.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

As with 'Age', over the next five years, we are investing £139m to create more local education provision so children and young people can be educated closer to home, reducing demand for travel assistance services. This includes the creation of more local specialist places across Surrey.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

There are no negative impacts that cannot be mitigated.

3. Recommendation

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Based your assessment, please indicate which course of action you are recommending to decision makers. You should explain your recommendation below.

- **Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required.** This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken
- **Outcome Two: Adjust the policy/service/function** to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?
- **Outcome Three: Continue the policy/service/function** despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are:
 - Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact
 - Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact.
- **Outcome Four: Stop and rethink the policy** when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).

Recommended outcome:

Outcome Two

Explanation:

The proposed changes to the H2S TA policy ensure the council delivers its statutory obligations for H2S TA. They will impact on stakeholders in positive and negative ways. Where an impact restricts an individual's attendance at their education setting, we will review each case individually to consider the most appropriate approach to travel assistance for them and ensure we meet our duty to provide suitable transport that enables eligible children to reach their school or college without such stress, strain or difficulty that prevents them from benefitting from their education.

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4. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

Insert your action plan here, based on the mitigations recommended.

Involve your Assessment Team in monitoring progress against the actions above.

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/people Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed/Ongoing
1	May 2022	Engage and communicate with families to inform them of the changes to policy and likely impact ahead of the new academic year starting in September 2022.	Eamonn Gilbert	End August 2022		Open
2	May 2022	Work with Family Voice Surrey to produce a new guide for parents, carers and professionals who work with children and families that sets out the Council's policy in plain English to set expectations of what the Council will and will not provide.	Eamonn Gilbert	June 2022	May/June 2022 – Launch parent guide with policy updates and operational guidance, following further stakeholder engagement.	Open
3	May 2022	Work with schools to inform and promote alternative travel options and support to enable pupils to continue accessing to their placements. A communications strategy will be developed to support this.	Eamonn Gilbert/Abbey Cortazzi	Ongoing – becomes business-as-usual (BAU)	This will be an ongoing activity to identify support in line with the new policy. We will engage schools via the Primary, Secondary and Special Phase Councils.	Ongoing

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Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/people Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed/Ongoing
4	May 2022	<p>Where a route has been identified as suitable for collection points to be introduced, a further 4-week consultation will be undertaken with the families, children and young people on that route to ensure that the proposed arrangements are appropriate, for example, the location of the collection point. The Council will also take into account individual circumstances or needs which may mean a collection point is not appropriate for the individual to use.</p> <p>It is proposed that once a collection point route has been established, that route will remain a collection point route and no further specific consultation will be undertaken. This means that any pupils joining the route will be informed that it is a collection point route and they will be expected to use the collection point.</p>	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU	Consultation with stakeholders will occur on a case-by-case basis as new collection points are considered.	Ongoing
5	May 2022	Where the Council proposes to depart from national guidance on journey times when planning routes,	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU	Engagement with stakeholders will occur on a case-by-case basis as route planning progresses.	Ongoing

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Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/people Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed/Ongoing
		<p>decisions will ensure that the planned route is not of such length that the pupil is unable to learn properly.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the child's age and stage of development.</p> <p>The 45-minute maximum planned journey time for primary-aged pupils contained in national guidance will be maintained and only exceeded in certain circumstances, such as journeys which enable a child to attend the setting which best meets their needs.</p>				
6	May 2022	Continue to assess eligibility for travel assistance on a case-by-case basis to establish if travel assistance is necessary based on the needs and circumstances of the child and family.	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU	New and existing service users will be assessed against the new policy so the service can work with them to identify the most appropriate solution for their needs and circumstances.	Ongoing
7	May 2022	Work to place more very young children, where possible, on our Early Years Inclusion Pathway to enable more of them to attend mainstream settings and reduce demand for specialist	Carol Savedra	Ongoing – becomes BAU		Ongoing

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Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/people Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed/Ongoing
		school places, with associated demand for transport.				
8	May 2022	Where appropriate, work with schools, colleges and families during the summer term and the new academic year to develop and enable independent travel opportunities. This includes promoting ITT, and other travel assistance options, for post-16 students.	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU		Ongoing
9	May 2022	Engage families and other stakeholders as the post-16 bursary offer is implemented to review its effectiveness.	Eamonn Gilbert	August 2022		Open
10	May 2022	Continue as part of our placement strategy to develop and extend the local post-16 offer for both pupils with and without SEND to provide sufficient provision in Surrey.	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU		Ongoing
11	May 2022	Explore use of technology to support and improved customer experience for children, young people and families.	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU		Ongoing
12	May 2022	Where appropriate, expand and deliver ITT as bespoke training for individuals to ensure they learn to travel independently and minimise	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU		Ongoing

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Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/people Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed/Ongoing
		<p>any potential impact relating to their SEND to ensure capacity is in line with demand</p> <p>Young people will be given the opportunity to learn the necessary skills to travel independently at their own pace and will reflect the specific route and environment they will be expected to use.</p> <p>Schools, families and the young person will have the opportunity to feed back during the training process to establish when the young person is suitable to begin travelling independently.</p> <p>As part of the training, young people will be assessed as to whether they can demonstrate and understand how to deal with unplanned situations and how to keep safe.</p>				
13	May 2022	Review the needs of children with and without SEND receiving transport provision on a case-by-case basis where they are at risk of having this	Eamonn Gilbert	Ongoing – becomes BAU	This will be require continuous review in line with the new policy.	Ongoing

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Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/people Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed/Ongoing
		<p>provision withdrawn due to instances of behaviour which may place other service users or staff delivering the service at some safeguarding risk.</p> <p>If transport has been withdrawn due to safeguarding risks to other passengers, we will work with the children, young people and families to provide Independent Travel Allowance to enable alternative means of travel assistance to be secured so they can continue accessing their education setting while we work with the school to review arrangements.</p>				

5a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	First draft completed.	Adam Whittaker	28 March 2022
2	Second draft completed with Executive Director input	Adam Whittaker	29 March 2022
3	Updated to reflect outcomes of the public consultation.	Adam Whittaker	5 April 2022

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Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
4	Updated further following feedback from Executive Director and Director of Commissioning	Adam Whittaker	8 April 2022

The above provides historical data about each update made to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Please include the name of the author, date and notes about changes made – so that you can refer to what changes have been made throughout this iterative process.

For further information, please see the EIA Guidance document on version control.

5b. Approval

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Approved by	Date approved
Head of Service – Hayley Connor, Director of Commissioning	11 April 2022
Executive Director – Rachael Wardell	11 April 2022
Cabinet Member – Denise Turner-Stewart	11 April 2022

EIA author: Adam Whittaker

6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Team Role
Adam Whittaker	Senior Strategy and Policy Lead	Surrey County Council	Equality Impact Assessment author
Eamonn Gilbert	Assistant Director, Commissioning	Surrey County Council	Service lead and subject matter expert
Chris McShee	Admissions and Transport Manager	Surrey County Council	Subject matter expert
Tracey Coventry	Transport Co-ordination Team Manager	Surrey County Council	Subject matter expert

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, on CD or in another language please contact us on:

Tel: 03456 009 009

Textphone (via Text Relay): 18001 03456 009 009

SMS: 07860 053 465

Email: contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk

Annex C – Summary Consultation Feedback Report

HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY CONSULTATION REPORT

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Surrey County Council’s (“the Council”) Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (H2S TA) explains the eligibility criteria for travel assistance for children, with and without special educational needs, of statutory school age (5-16 years old), for children under 5 and for young people aged 16-19 and 19-25. It also describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as set out in the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation and guidance.

The Council is aiming to refresh the H2S TA Policy in thirteen (13) key areas, reflecting the Authority’s commitment to move away from being a school transport service, and towards adopting a new travel assistance model with an increased focus on sustainability and Surrey’s “green agenda” via its Climate Change Strategy. The public consultation was delivered through participation in virtual public meetings, and the completion of an anonymous online survey, open from the 22nd of February to the 31st of March 2022. This report brings together the findings from all data sources and provides recommendations in regard to the Home to School Travel Policy refresh.

CONTEXT AND CONSIDERATIONS

A hard copy letter with the consultation document was sent to all current mainstream and additional needs (SEND) H2S TA service users setting out the proposed changes and inviting them to respond to the survey. 694 people responded to the online survey, with additional participation through four virtual public engagement events, plus a Facebook Live session with Family Voice Surrey. Participants included parents and carers of H2S TA service users and Family Voice Surrey. During the period that the survey was live the council also received emails from a number of residents’ as well as local politicians. These emails have been incorporated into the analysis and included within this report.

Ground up coding, an inductive method which allows codes to be derived from the raw survey data, was used to analyses all open-ended questions. It involved systematically giving an answer a number and grouping the answers into categories and themes. In analysing the themes, all answers are treated as equal in weighting, although one response may cover multiple codes. Not all respondents replied to all qualitative questions. The insights and human experience shared by the respondents form an important part of the analysis. The code indices for the five open-ended questions can be found in the Annex section of this report. Where quotes from respondents have been used, they have been edited for spelling grammar.

Finally, it is important to note that all forms of engagement and consultation have been self-selecting, and therefore all findings should be understood as indicative of the views of those

who took part in the consultation, rather than representing the views of all residents and users of Home to School Travel assistance.

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The sample base (694 total) for this report includes education professionals and transport providers; parents/carers of children with and without additional needs; and children and young people with and without additional needs, who currently access or intend to apply for the H2S TA².

Parents/carers of children with additional needs were the majority respondent group (70%, Figure 1). Therefore, it is important to recognise that the findings represent the views of this group primarily. Where appropriate analysis has been carried out to identify where difference between the majority group and Parents/carers of children without additional needs which were the second highest response group (16%, figure 1).

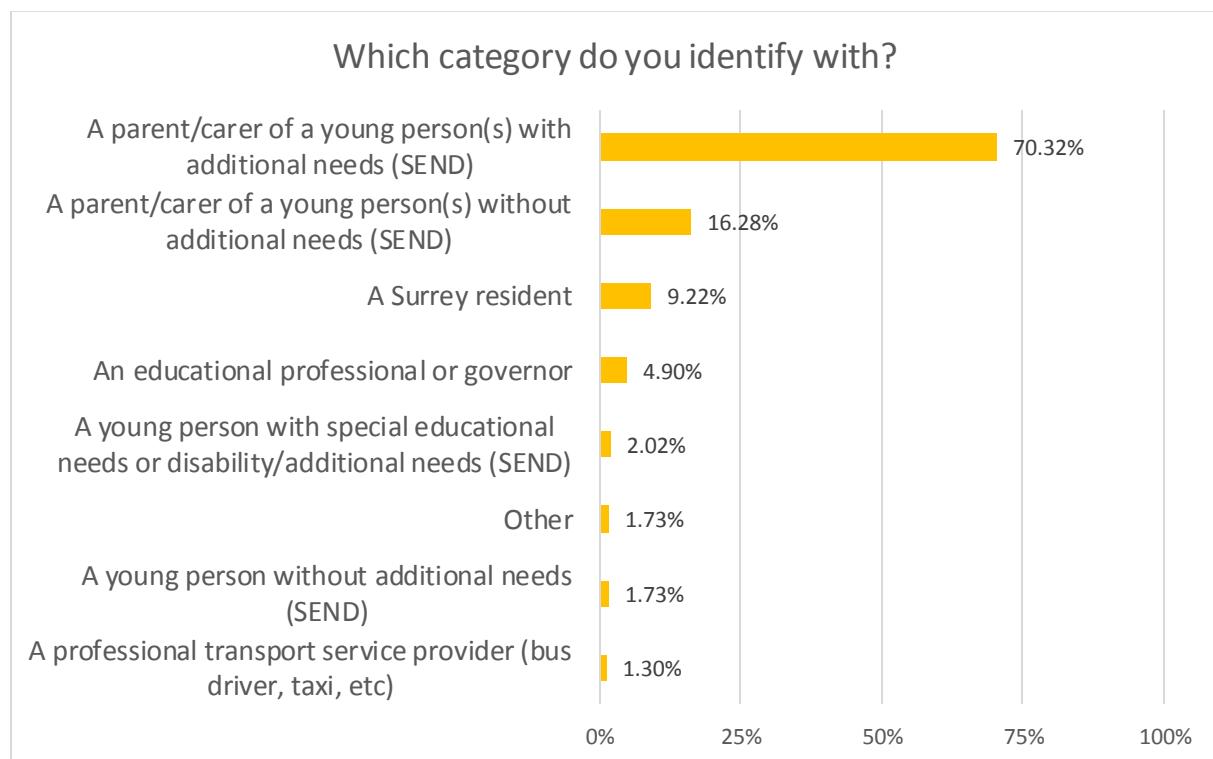


Figure 1: Identity Category (n=694)

² A full breakdown of respondent demographics including equalities data can be found the annex of this report.

KEY FINDINGS

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

The council recognises the importance of independence for all the young people in Surrey and acknowledges the role that independent travel will have in preparing for adulthood. This is reflected in the responses to the survey. Independent travel is seen by respondents as important to enable young people to be able to share school transport with other children/young people (45%), being able to travel without a parent or carer in attendance (35%) and be able to plan and undertake any journey independently using public transport (24%).

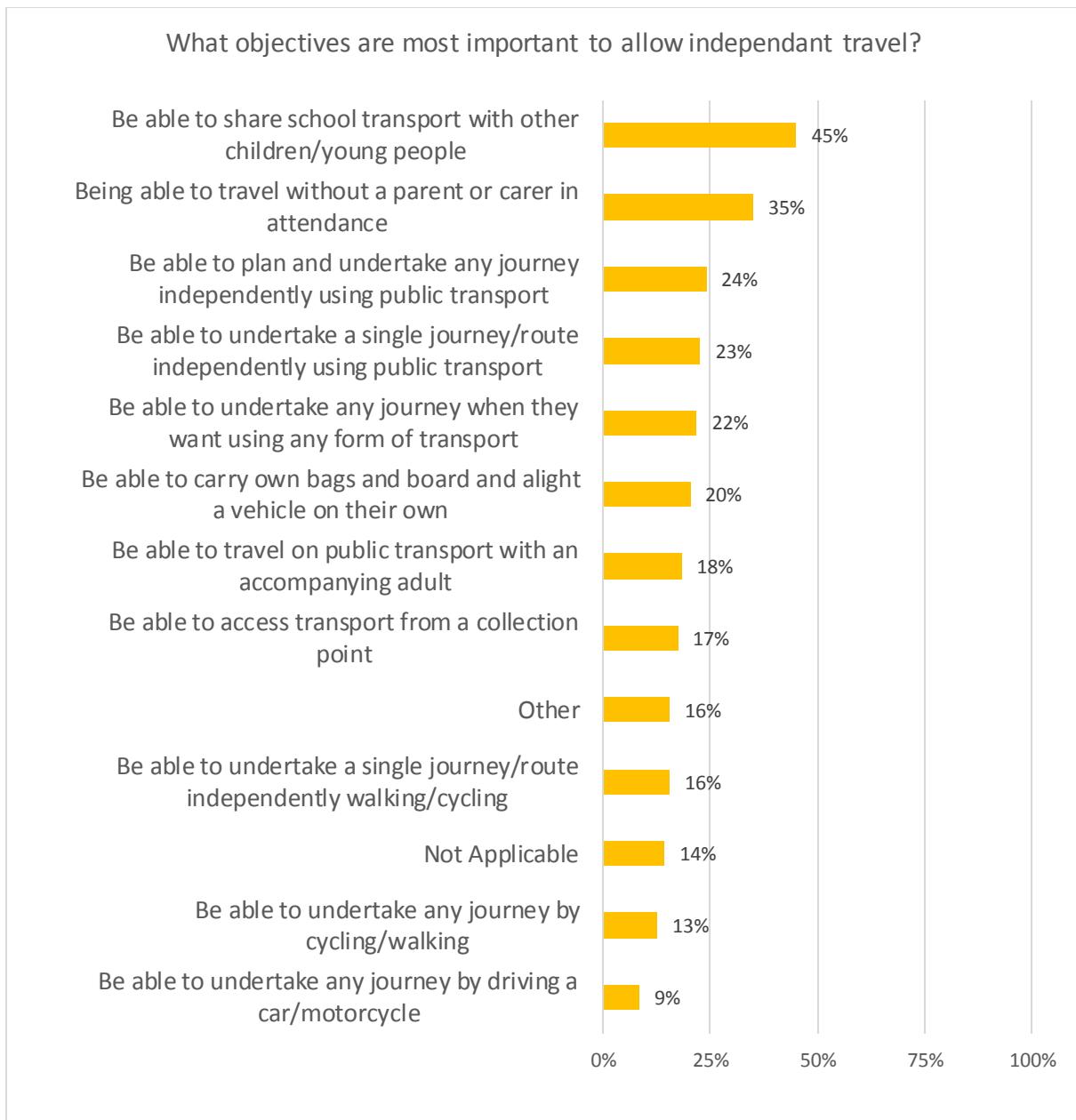


Figure 2: What objectives are most important to allow independent travel? (n=694)

Figure 3 shows that for young people increased self-esteem and confidence (55%), improved access to friends and social or leisure activities (39%) and reduced reliance on family members or friends to assist with travel needs (39%) were the key benefits of independent travel. Additionally, responses show that increased independence for the young person also provides increased independence for their families (figure 4). Respondents identifying the increased time to do their own thing (40%), reduced need to accompany their young person (39%) and reduced financial dependency on others (34%) as the three most important benefits for families.

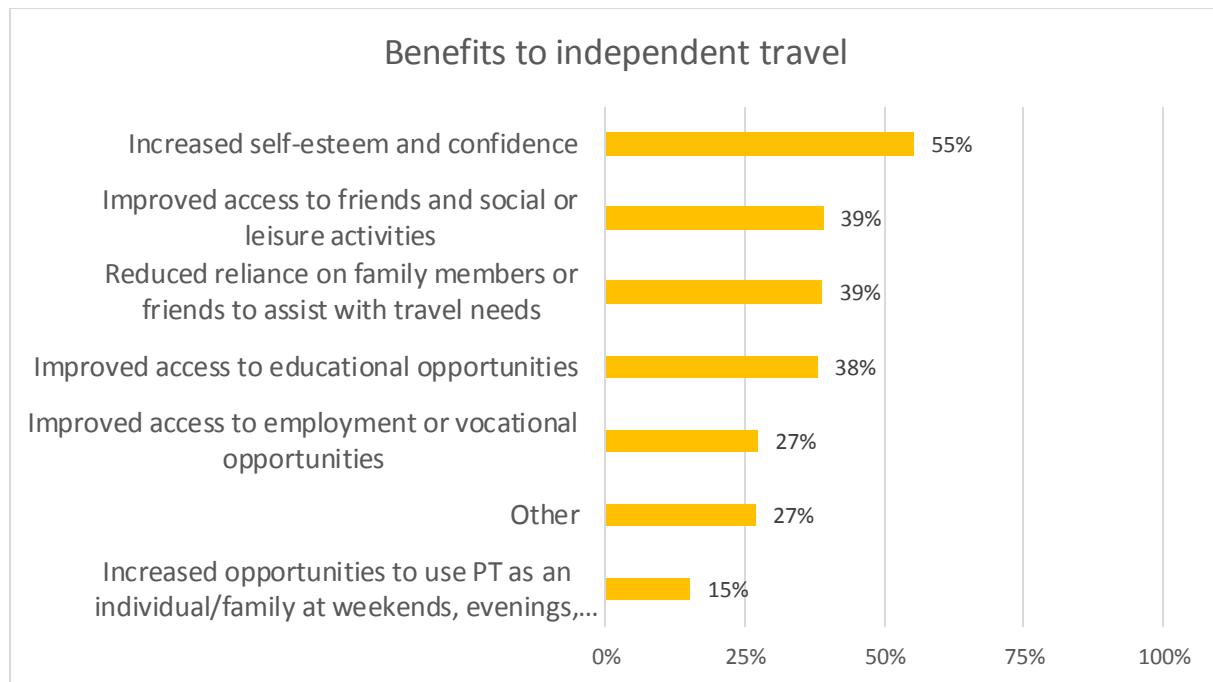


Figure 3: Benefits to independent travel for young persons (n=694)

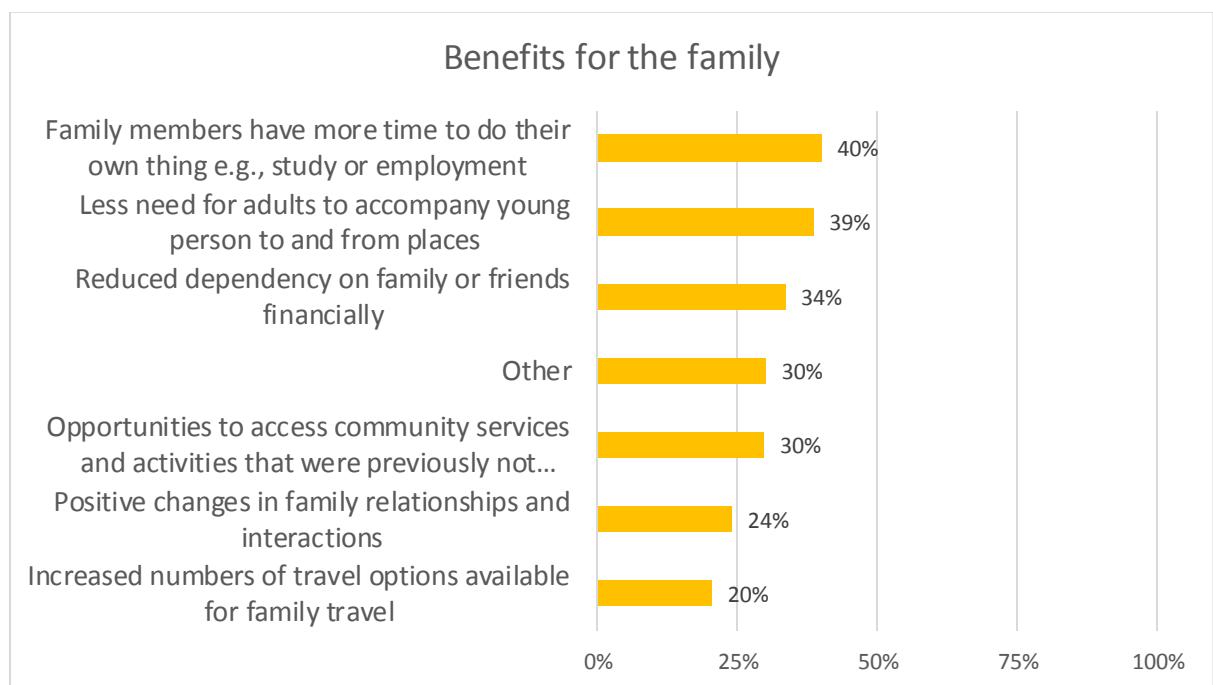


Figure 4: Benefit of Independent Travel for Families (n=694)

However, it is important to also note the barriers to independent travel such as limited awareness of danger or unable to keep safe (63%); inability to manage situations that aren't planned or are out of routine (48%) and risk of getting lost or missing stop (48%) (figure 5). Respondents also highlighted that for many young people with additional and complex needs independent travel would be impossible (12%).

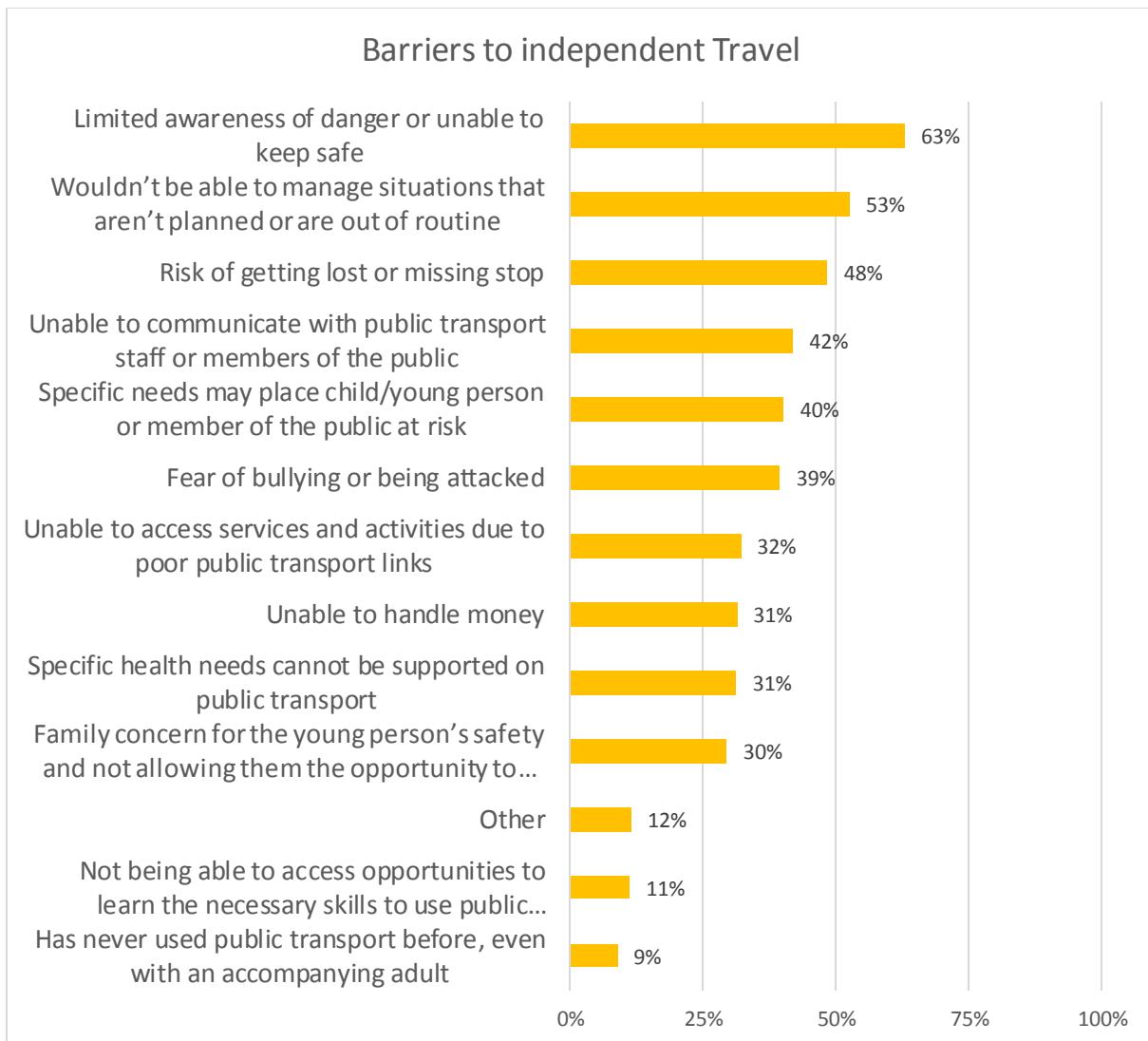


Figure 5: Barrier to independent Travel (n=694)

This inability to travel independently was reiterated when asked what could be done to improve a young person's confidence to travel independently (figure 6). 54% of those who responded to this question stated that there was no solution to this. For those that did come up with ideas 17% highlighted the need to provide holistic support to the young person and their families.

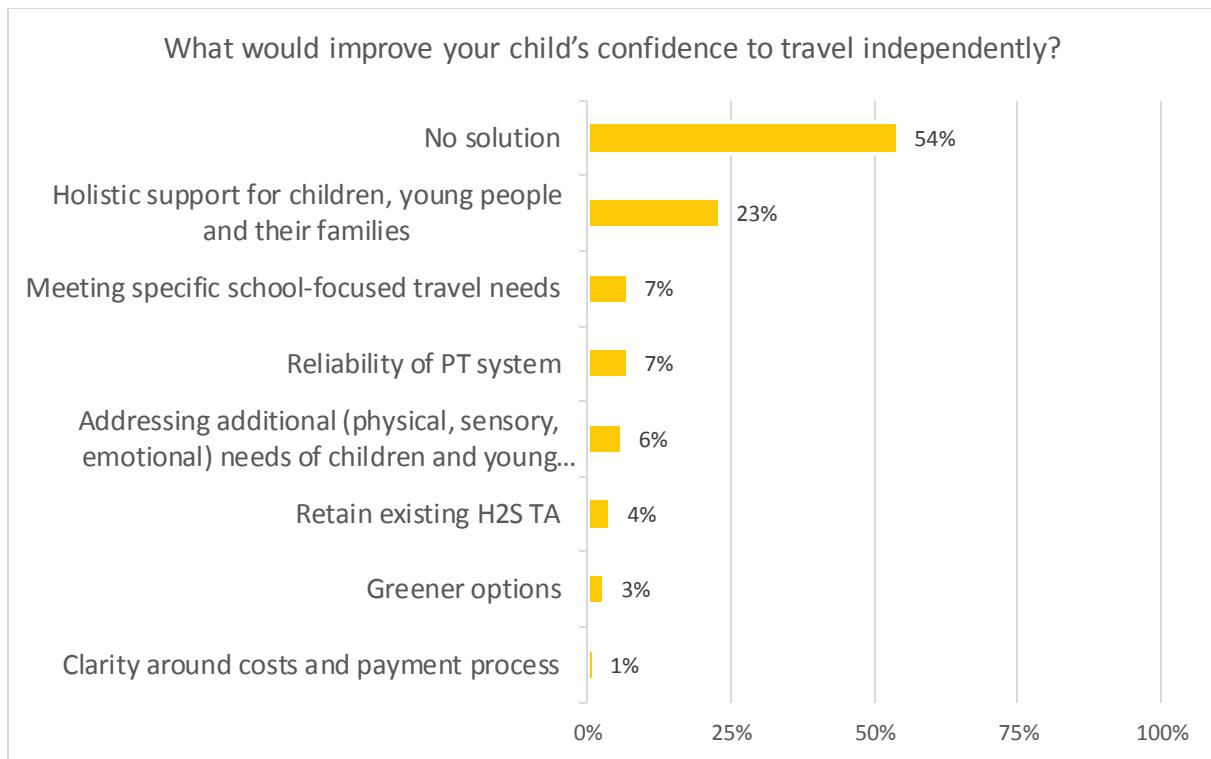


Figure 6: What would improve your child's confidence to travel independently? (n=463)

The barriers around independent travel that were raised above were clearly reflected in those who said that increasing confidence was not possible due to the fact that their concerns were around safety and not confidence.

"It's not a case of confidence, it's safety and my child will never have the ability to live independently let alone travel independently. There is far more to it than just improving a child's confidence!! If they have a severe learning difficulty, they will never be able to travel safely and independently"

There were 7% of respondents who thought that improved reliability of the PT system would increase their child's confidence to travel independently (figure 6). This was further explored when respondents were asked about how the council could support more CYP to travel to school on public transport (figure 7). Respondents raised many ideas including highlighting that beyond the direct support the council could provide, serious improvements need to be made to the public transport system across surrey as a prerequisite to an increased usage of the system (29%). The top 5 answers were related to i) the need for more regular collections to and from schools, including SEN; ii) more reliable PT; iii) more appropriate transport options, including separate PT vehicles for children with additional needs (SEND); iv) better transport links across differing methods of travel and v) more direct routes.

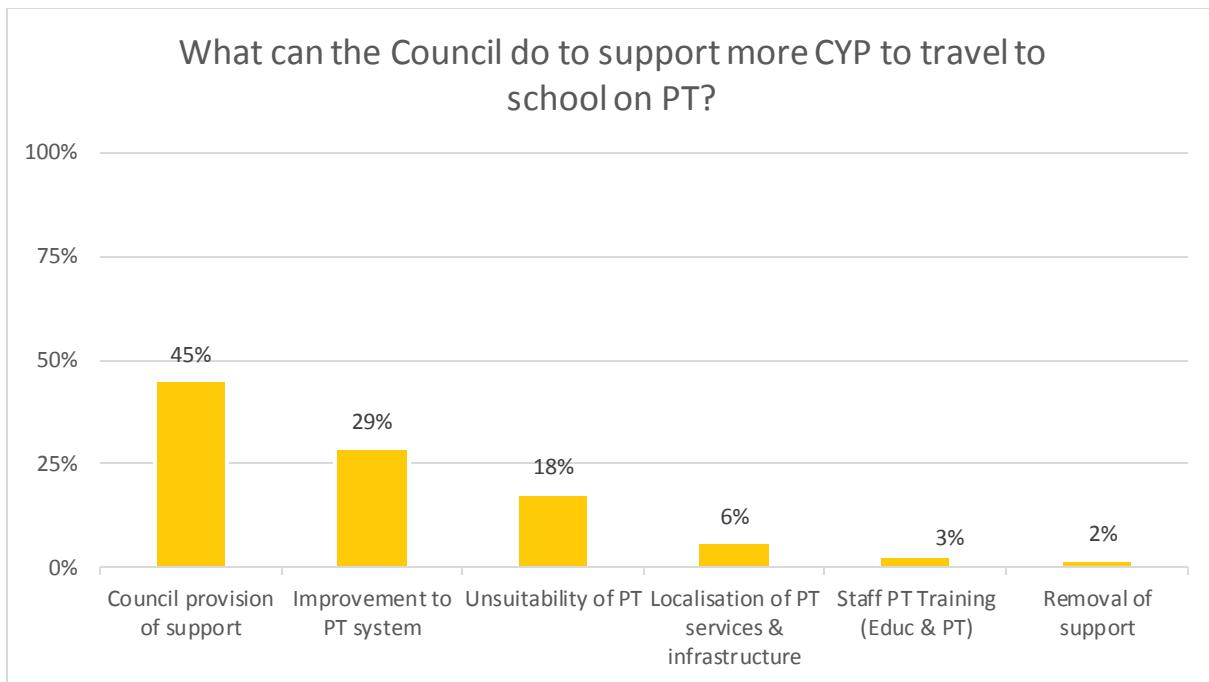


Figure 7: What can the council do to support more CYP to travel on PT? (465)

Nearly half of respondents to this question called on support from the council. The types of “council support” promoted ranged across financial, training, community, SEND-focused or parent-focused measures.

Respondents identified the need for children, primarily those with additional needs (SEND), to access Travel Assistants (TA) or chaperones was the most mentioned area of support, followed by the need for travel plans and training to be more adaptable to the circumstances of the child and the child’s family. The third most mentioned factor is the need for an Independent Travel Training (ITT) and guidance for both children and families/carers to ensure that all parties are supported during the transition from assisted to independent school travel. What most respondents in this category would like to see, however, is that any travel plans for children are designed and delivered at their own pace and appropriate to their age and level of skills, such as being able to communicate properly, being able to read maps and timetables, and being able to calculate fare costs.

In terms of financial support, fare reduction, free transport for siblings and more affordable tickets were mentioned as important factors in encouraging PT use for school travel.

Parent and carer respondents expressed their concerns regarding the risks of bullying and harassment on PT, particularly affecting vulnerable children and those with additional needs.

“For young people with ASD with limited social awareness travelling on public transport is dangerous. I would not allow my two ASD children to travel alone as they are at high risk of being targeted by others. We do not live in a safe world unfortunately these children are an easy target.”

Therefore, any effort to raise awareness within communities in terms of appropriate conduct on PT and the need to respect vulnerable groups and those with additional needs will give parents, carers, children, and families some assurance of safety.

Children with disability, autism, and additional needs (SEND) require specific support when travelling, and on PT. Anxiety and overstimulation are triggered by overcrowded vehicles, delayed services, or schedules not being followed. Related to the need for education and PT staff to develop more awareness and undergo necessary training (Theme 3 below), the respondents provided a list of practical tools that would help make PT travel to school or college more comfortable for children and young people, particularly those with SEND. These include:

- Protected spaces on vehicles
- Assigning Collection Point assistants to help give instructions or directions
- Lanyards identifying children with SEND needs so drivers and TAs are aware of them and can identify them
- Tracking apps for parents to be able to know what stage of the school PT journey their child is at

When asked about specific measure to increase independent travel suggested by the council respondents were most in favour of the introduction of driving lessons and TFL oyster cards where appropriate, with 41% and 39% either agreeing or strongly agreeing respectively (figure 8). This reflects the concerns around the interconnectedness of the PT system and the need in some cases for young people to travel within a controlled environment. Respondents were least supportive of bikability training with 48% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (figure 8). Independent travel training is the most balanced with 40% supporting and 36% expressing a negative response (figure 8).

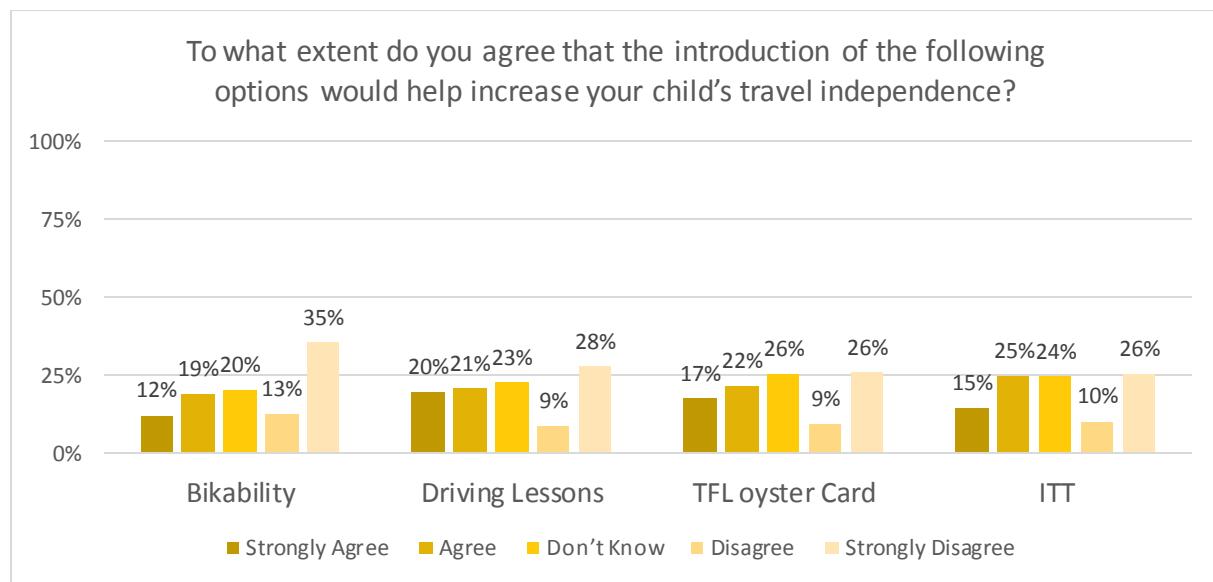


Figure 8: To what extent do you agree that the introduction of the following options would help increase your child's travel independence? (n=694)

The mixed sentiment towards ITT was again seen with around a third of respondents expressing positive (34%), negative (35%) and neutral (30%) sentiments to the statement: If a child or young person has the potential to become an independent traveller and would benefit from ITT, then they should be expected to undertake the training on offer (figure 9).

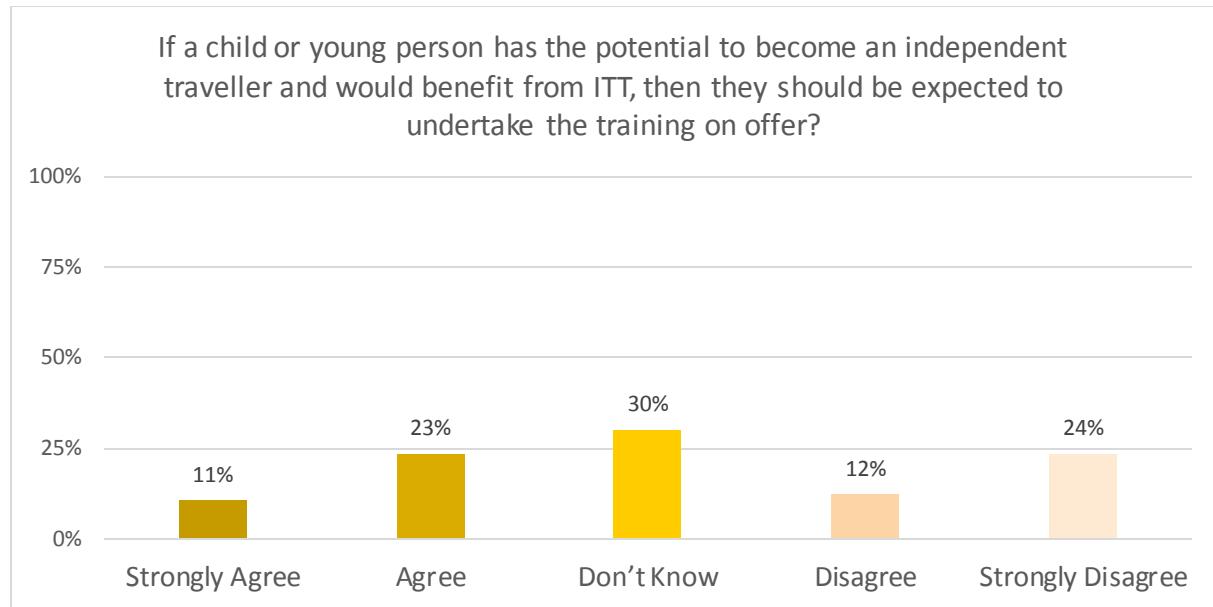


Figure 9: Do you agree with the following statement? If a child or young person has the potential to become an independent traveller and would benefit from ITT, then they should be expected to undertake the training on offer. (n=694)

COLLECTION POINTS

The use of collection points is already in the H2S TA policy, further detail was sought to ascertain the sentiment of respondents and further detail as to the logistical implementation for collection points.

In terms of logistical implementation respondents felt that, if introduced, bus stops (36%) and other suitable roadside locations (29%) were most appropriate locations for collection points (figure 10). Collection points were also discussed at all of the public meetings, in which attendees raised the concern that if used collection points would be in a safe location and relatively close to either the child's home or school. This proximity was reflected in the survey results with 37% of respondents noting that the distance travelled to any collection points should be based on the capabilities of the individual. Furthermore, 33% wanted it to be under 15 minutes from the young person's home/school. Moreover, no respondents felt that a 45-minute travel time would be appropriate, especially if this time would be in addition to the travel time in the SCC vehicle.

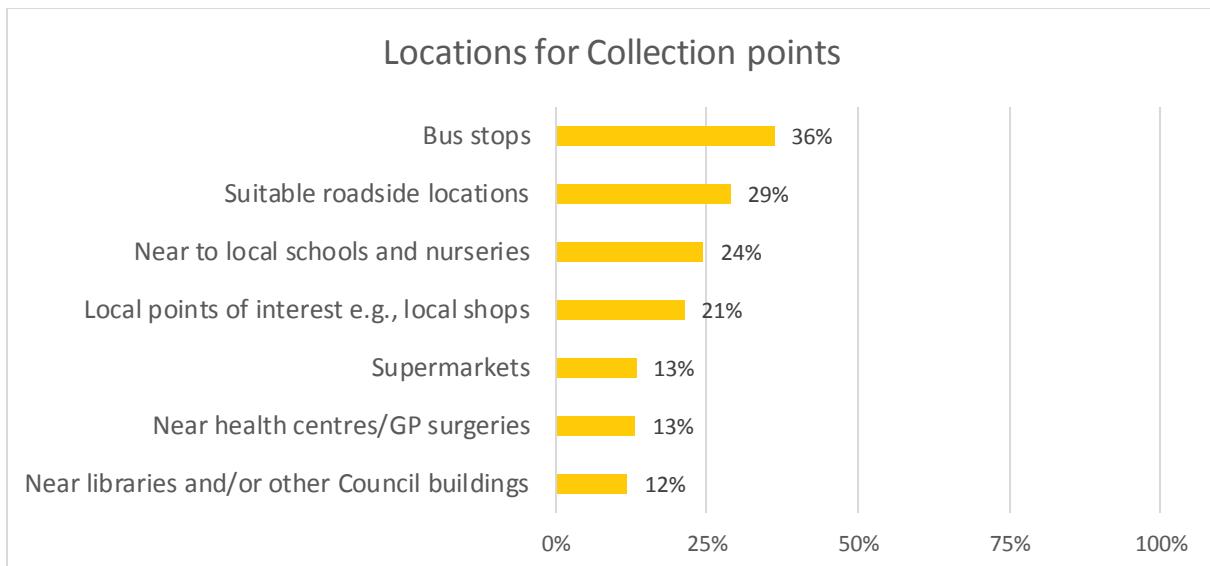


Figure 10: Which types of location do you think would be most suitable for a collection point? (n=694)

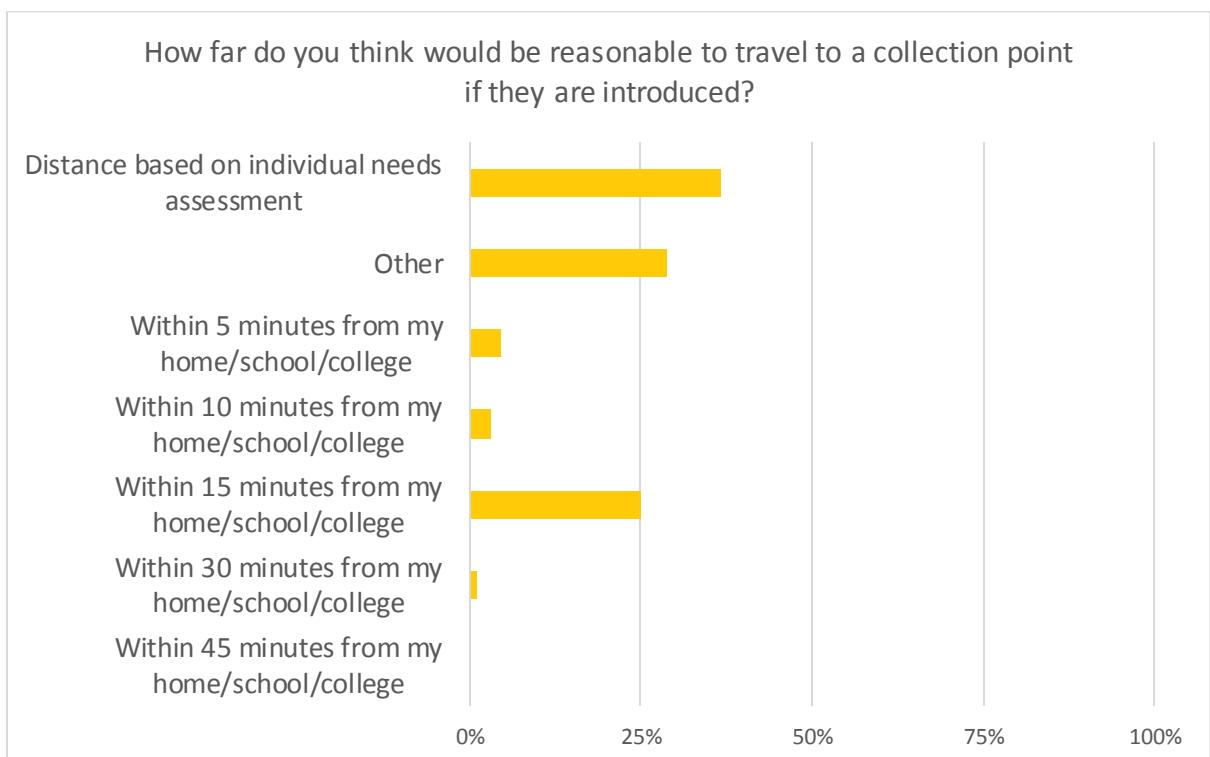


Figure 11: How far do you think would be reasonable to travel to a collection point if they are introduced? (n=694)

Although overall the data suggests that respondents were against the encouragement of the use of collection points, with 54% saying they were against or strongly against, this was not consistent between identity groups. In contrast to parents of young people with additional needs (SEND), 68% of whom disagreed, those whose young people do not have additional needs were much more in support of the use of collection points with 67% agreeing.

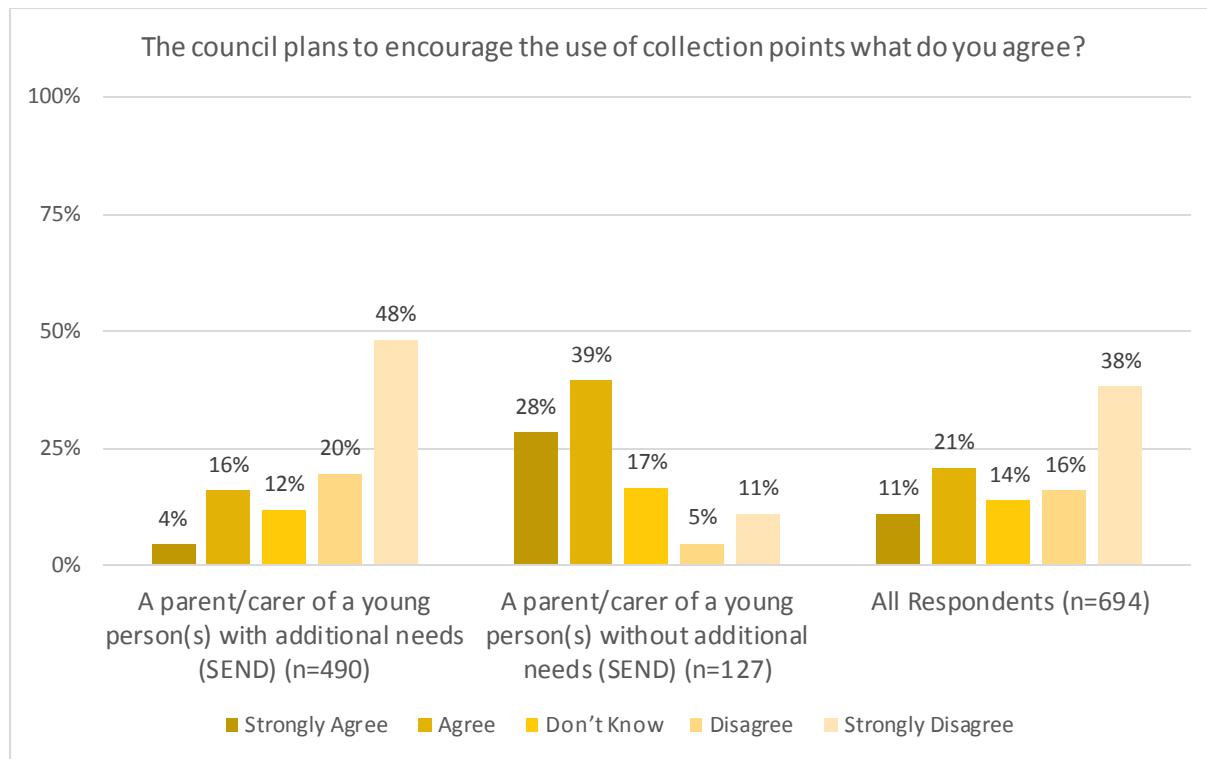


Figure 12: The council plans to encourage the use of collection points what do you agree? (n=694)

This difference between demographics is seen again in the willingness of parents to consider their children using collection points. With 68% of Parents of CYP with additional needs saying no (figure 13) and 74% of parents of CYP without additional needs without saying yes (figure 14).

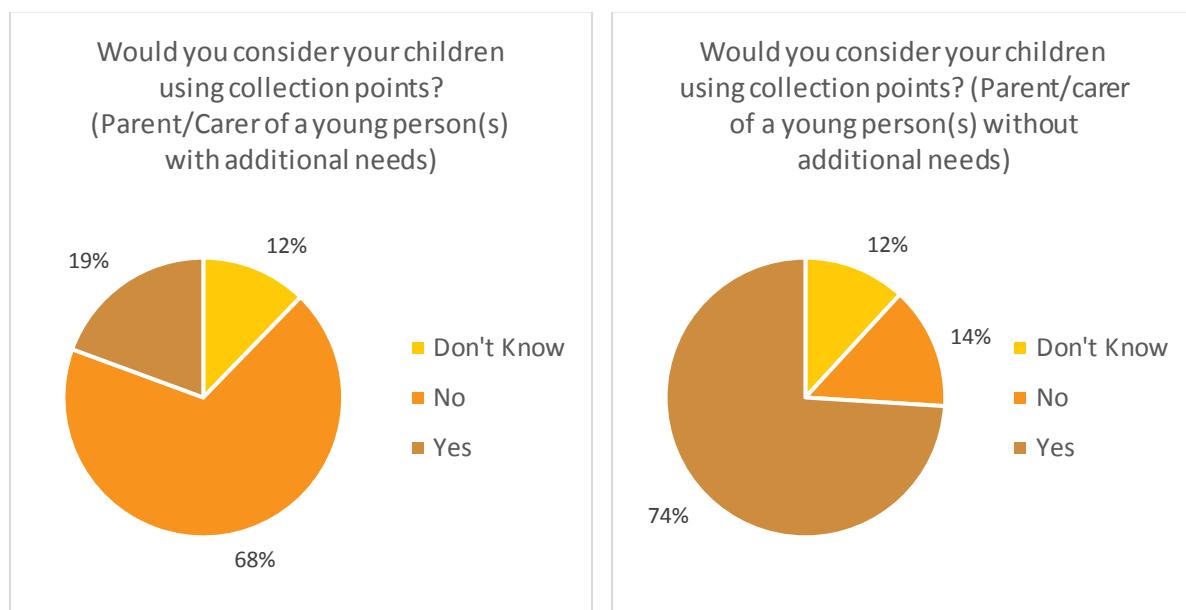


Figure 13: Would you consider your children using collection points? (Parent/Carer of a young person(s) with additional needs) (n=490)

Figure 14: Would you consider your children using collection points? (Parent/carer of a young person(s) without additional needs) (n=127)

Respondents noted the three key barriers to using collection points as being; the young person being unable to manage situations that aren't planned/out of routine, such as late running of transport; Limited awareness of danger/unable to keep safe, even when accompanied by an adult and the specific health needs of children and young people which make waiting at a collection point unsuitable. These barriers were further expanded in the open-ended questions in which the key themes that were raised, including the skills needed to use collection points.

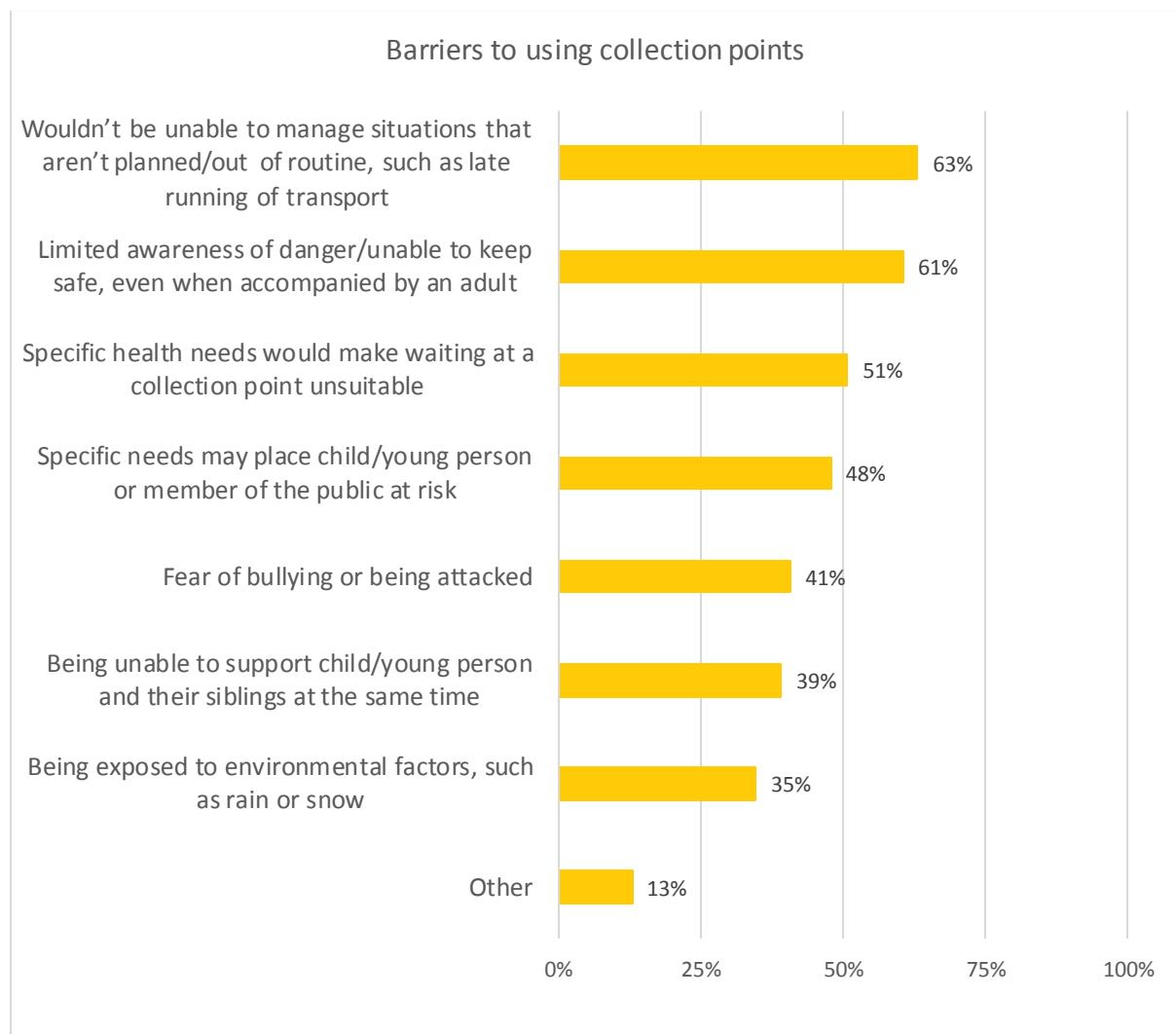


Figure 13: Barriers to using collection points (n=694)

Overall, there is a clear division between respondents who supported the use of CPs and those who opposed. However, respondents identified the need for modification to the transport system and infrastructure, the need for CPs to be visible and in a safe location, and the skills and additional support that would enable children and young people to use CPs as a travel option to school or in general. Therefore, improvements need to be made to existing structures and service users need to develop certain skills before the viability of CPs can be determined.

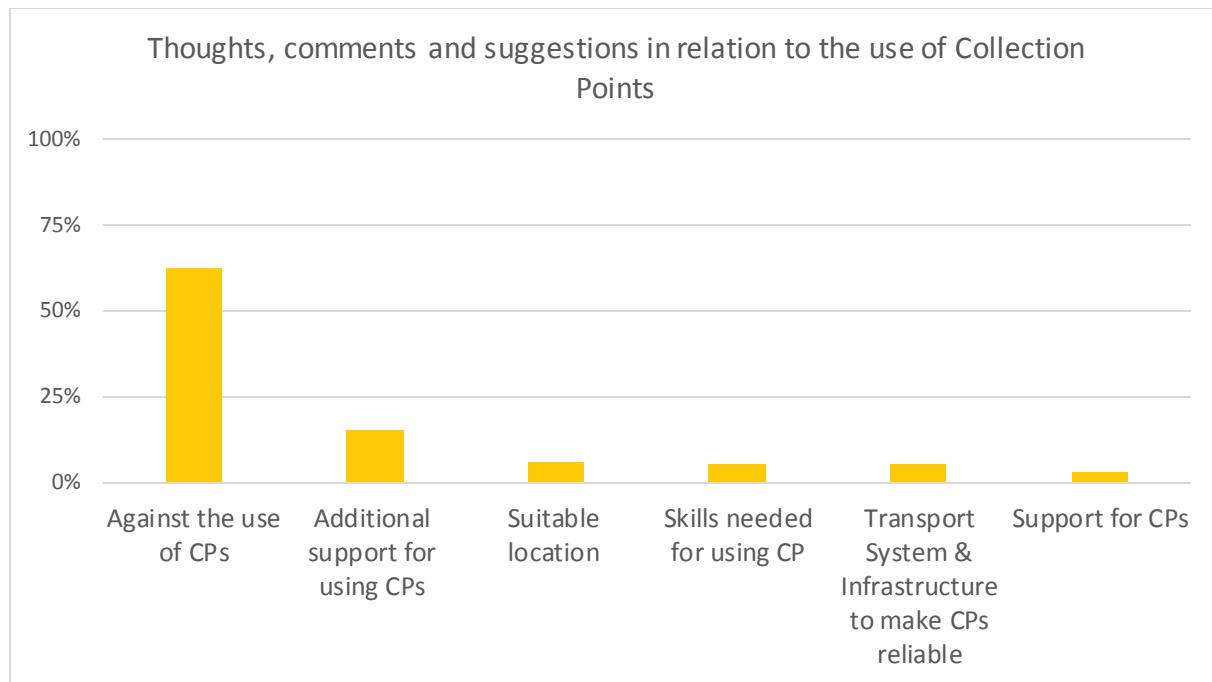


Figure 14: Thoughts, comments, and suggestions in relation to the use of Collection Points (n=351)

Respondents pointed out the varying levels of skills that children and young people have based on their age, physical and cognitive needs, and sensory and learning background. Children who are vulnerable and are unable to communicate verbally are at more risk of suffering logistical challenges.

“Age of child has bearing on suitability of collection point.”

“This sounds much more appropriate for some secondary aged children rather than primary children. For primary children, they would need to be collected by an adult, who may not be able to get to the collection point or who are picking up other siblings from different schools.”

Some respondents recognise that ITT may assist in providing the skills that children need to be able to use CPs for school travel, while others argue that children with SEND should altogether be exempt from using CPs.

“Many of these children are very vulnerable and unaware of the dangers imposed around them. Could put them in harm’s way. I wouldn’t leave my 12-year-old with special needs to wait at bus stop. He could step out into the road without looking. Much safer to be collected from home.”

“I don’t agree with them. Having too many special needs children meeting/dropping off in one place is a serious concern. Each child has different needs i.e., violent and aggressive”.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

The Council is proposing changing the measuring system for determining Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) from Straight Line to Road Route. Overall, respondents were in support of transitioning to a road route mileage measurement for Travel allowance, with 70% of respondents indicating they either agree or strongly agree with this proposal (figure 15).

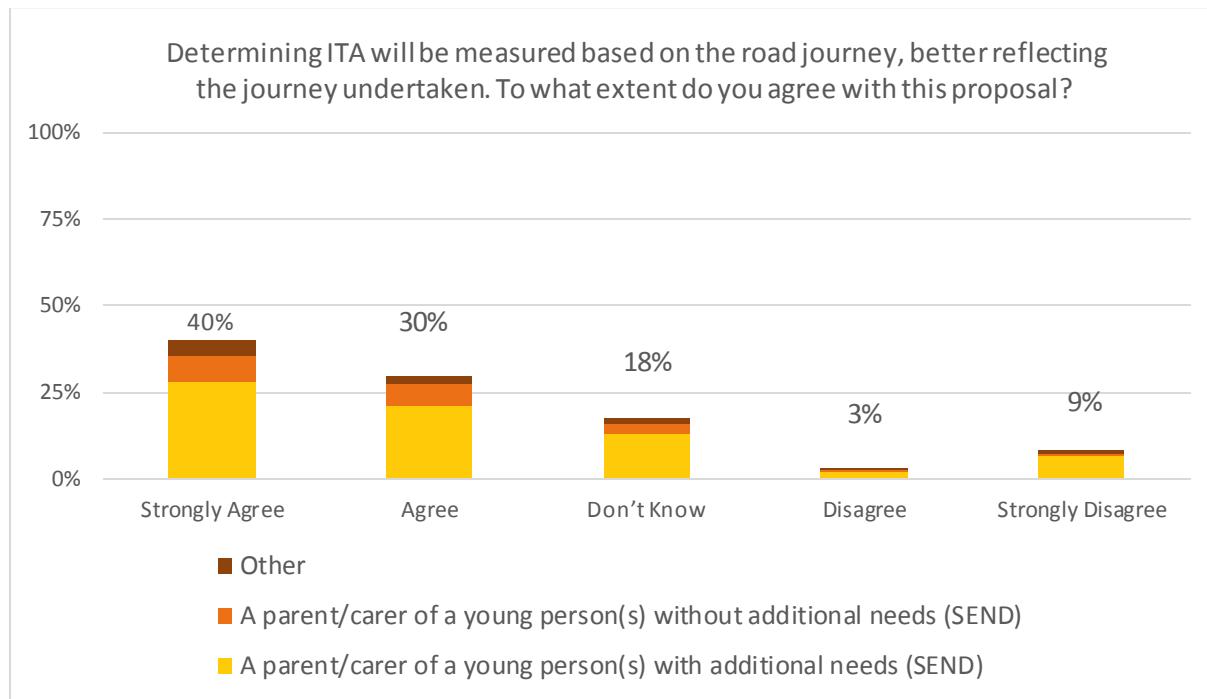


Figure 15: Determining mileage reimbursement will be measured based on the road journey, better reflecting the journey undertaken. To what extent do you agree with this proposal? (n=694)

Figure 16 shows that the perceived barriers to the uptake of the travel allowance centres on the unsuitability of transport links (60%) and distance to school (52%) rather than the value of the allowance being too small (34%).

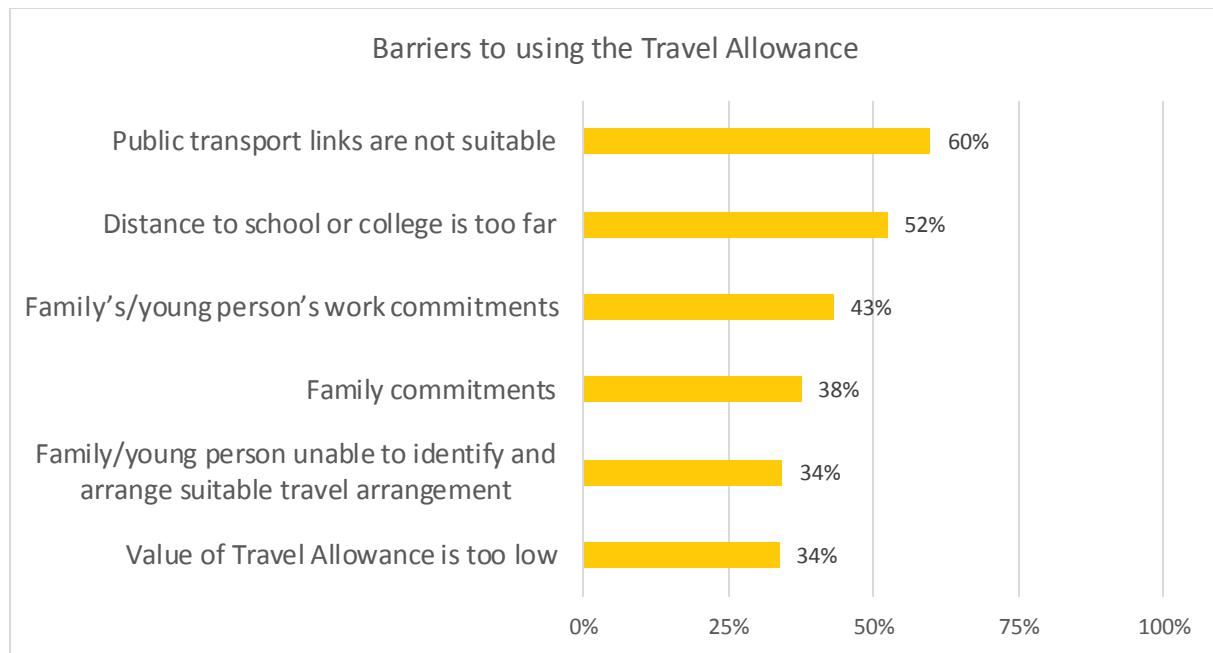


Figure 16: What do you think are the barriers stopping a young person or their family using a Travel Allowance? (n=364)

Figure 17 again shows that in order to motivate the use of travel allowance on greener methods of travel there is the need for better access to public transport (57%) and better bus routes (42%).

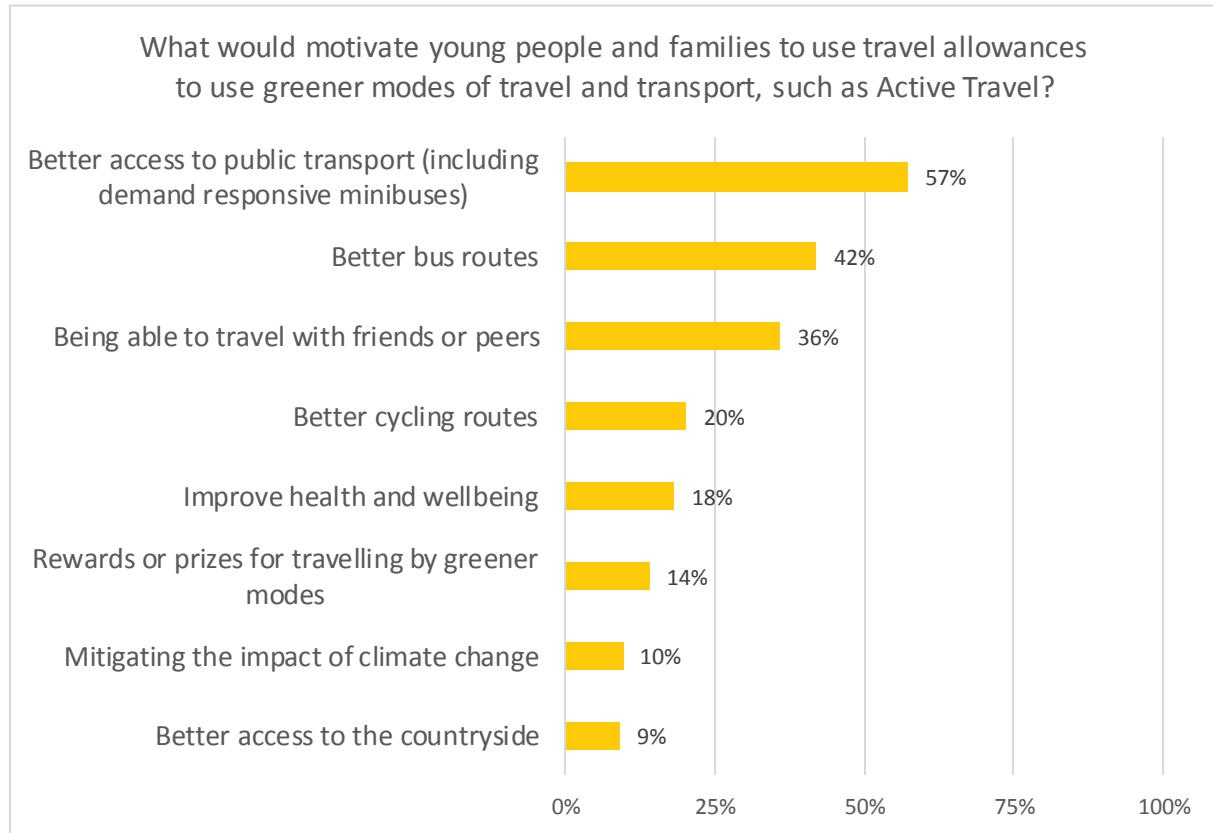


Figure 17: What would motivate young people and families to use travel allowances to use greener modes of travel and transport, such as Active Travel? (n=694)

SPECIFIC TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY CHANGES

11

CLARITY ON TRANSPORT JOURNEY TIMES

When asked about the Council's proposal that the recommended journey times (45 minutes for a primary aged child and 75 minutes for a secondary aged child) not apply to pupils travelling to out of county schools, where distances and the frequency of journeys may vary as well as changing the maximum journey times for primary aged children to 75 minutes respondents were strongly against this policy change. Figure 18 shows that 62% of all respondents were either against or strongly against the proposal.

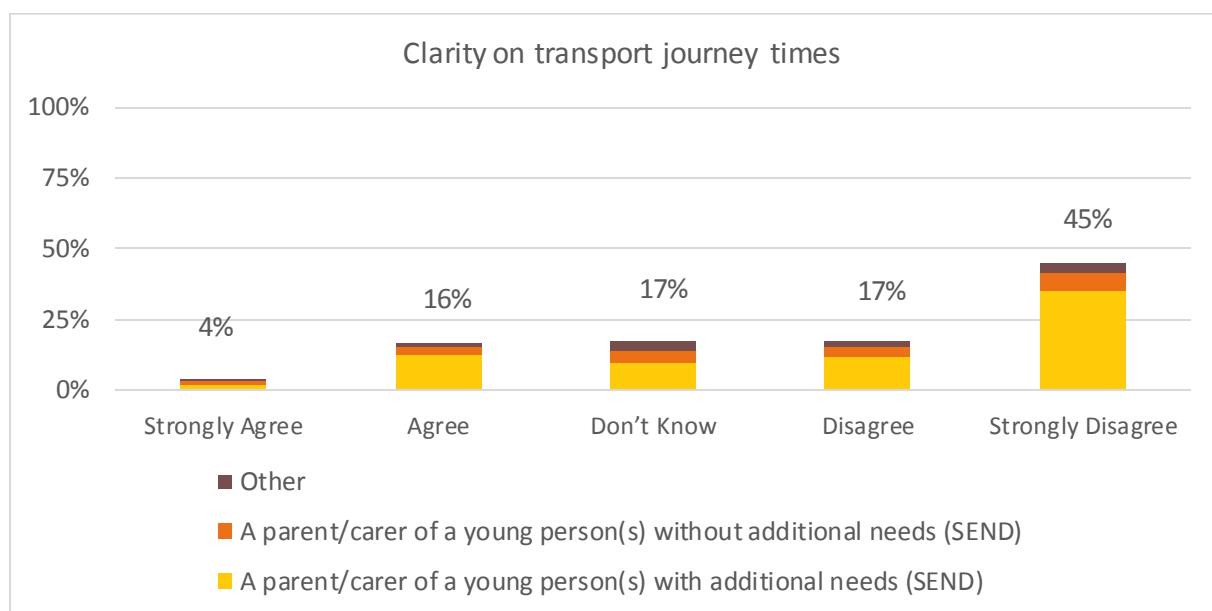


Figure 18: clarity on transport journey times (n=694)

When looking at the respondents rational for this response it is clear to see that this disagreement primarily focused on the increase in journey times for younger key stage 1 children, particularly those with additional needs. For this cohort respondents felt that an increase in journey time would have a detrimental impact on their health and wellbeing.

"Primary school children travel time is already too long for children of their age, extending that limit is ridiculous."

"Our primary school opens at 08.30 and this is not unusual. Therefore - therefore introducing a 75minute rule for primary school children means that the council considers it reasonable for them to leave the house at 07.15. This is not reasonable for a primary aged child. A 75minute journey is not reasonable for a KS1 aged child."

MILEAGE REIMBURSMENT

Figure 19 shows that just under half of respondents (47%) were in support of the proposal to introduce a simpler scheme to enable a more unified reimbursement process for parents and

carers (including how and when they are reimbursed) with mileage rates to remain based on Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), which will include provision for any inflationary uplifts (figure 19).

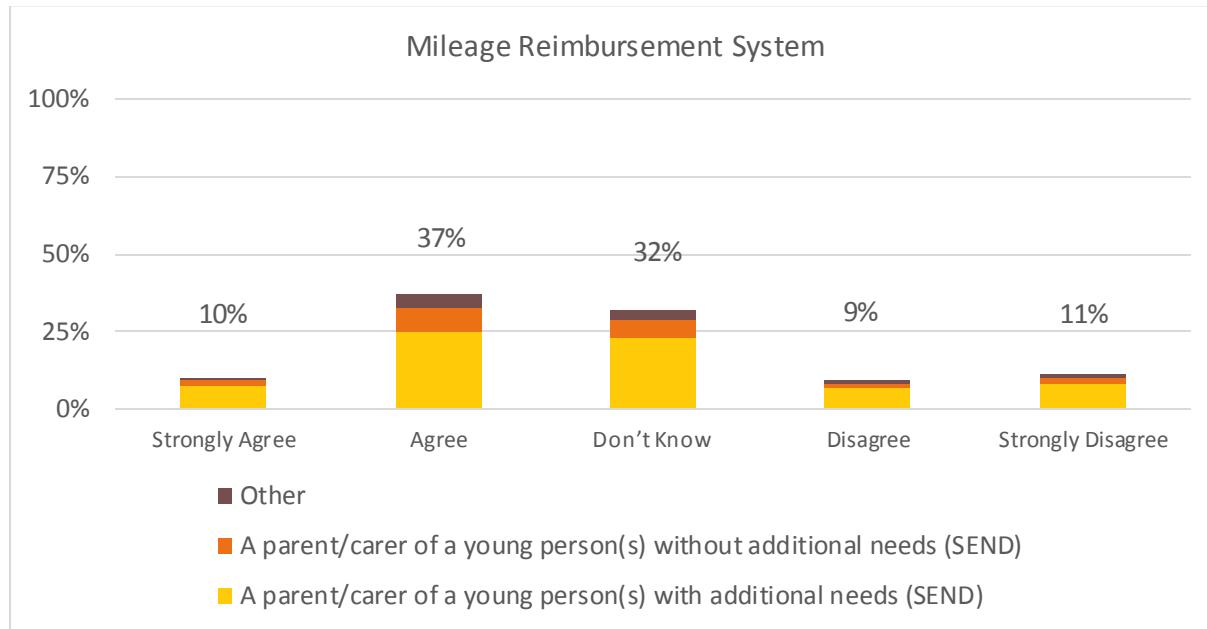


Figure 19: Mileage Reimbursement System (n=694)

No additional comments were made in regard to this proposed policy.

NOTICE PERIOD(S) FOR THE REMOVAL OF TRAVEL ASSISTANCE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

Respondents were not in support of the proposal to adjust the notice period to 4 weeks when a walking route becomes safe and to 8 weeks when (and if) a family's low-income status has ended with 47% of respondents responding negatively (figure 20).

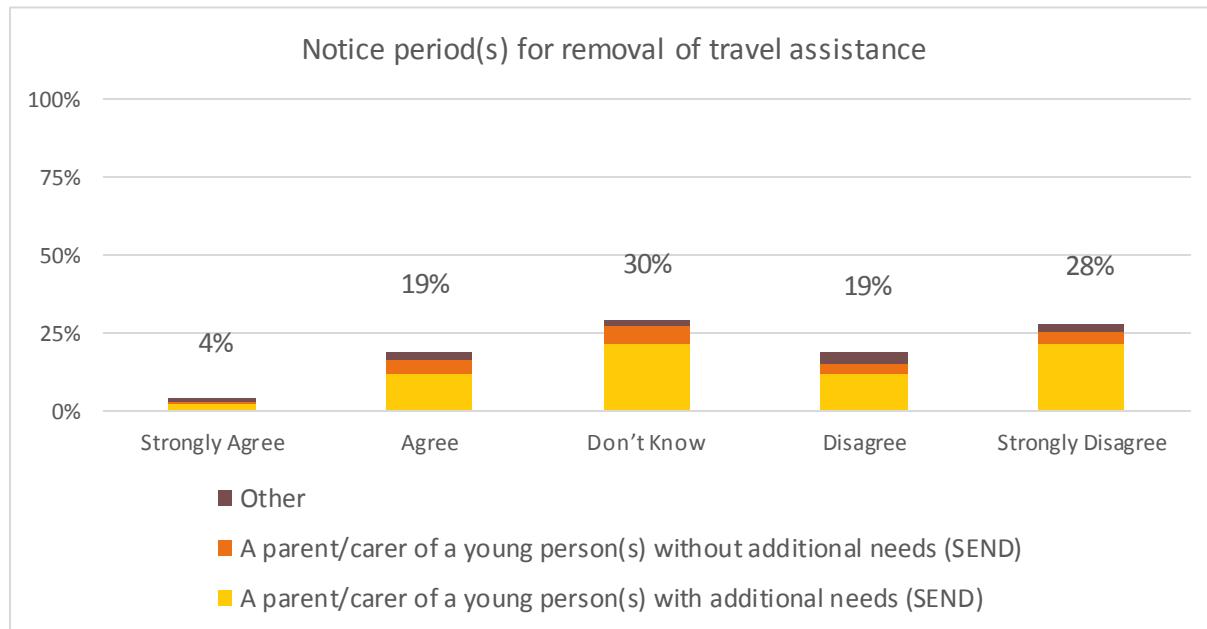


Figure 20: Notice period(s) for the removal of travel assistance in certain circumstances (n=694)

There was concern about who and how a route would be classified as safe as well as the impact that any change may have on children with additional needs who require consistency and do not cope well with change.

"With regard to the potential withdrawal of travel services when a walking route becomes 'safe', any changes should include a thorough assessment of the safety of any walking route including whether pavements are provided, the nature of those walking journeys (e.g., along major trunk routes and 'A' Roads) and whether walking routes include private roads."

"We are concerned re the impact on these changes on our son, who struggles with changes to his routine due to autism."

CLARIFY REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF TRANSPORT

When asked about clarifying the reasons for the removal of Transport, to include the withdrawal of assistance, if there are errors with the initial assessment 39% of respondents were in support of this policy change in comparison with 27% of respondents who were against (figure 21).

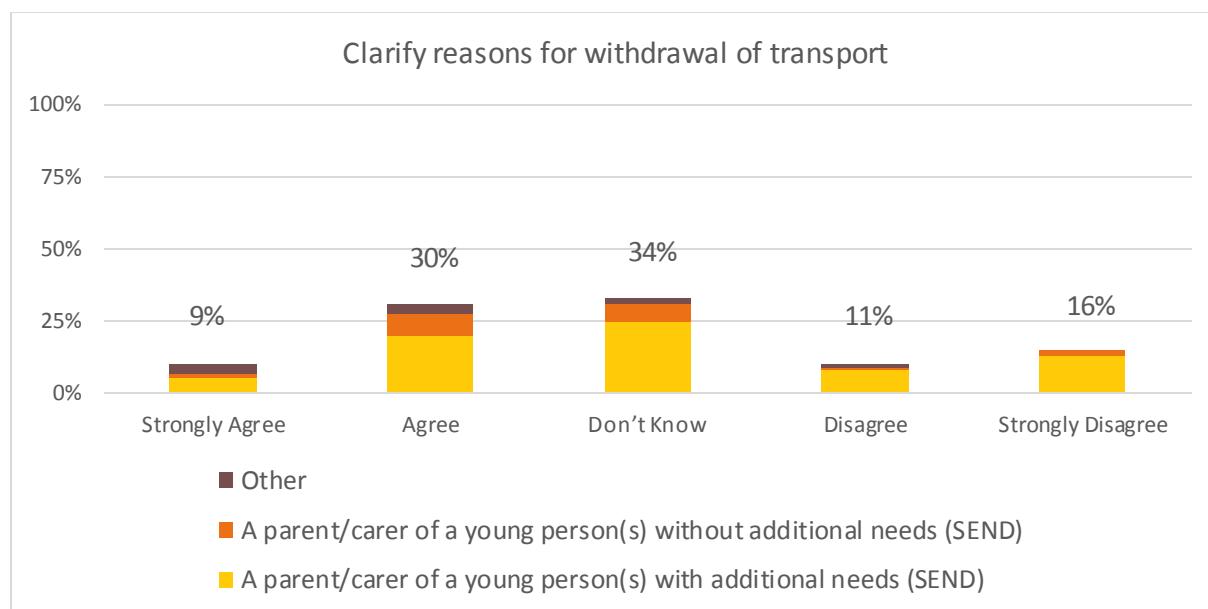


Figure 21: clarify reasons for withdrawal of transport (n=694)

No additional comments were made in regard to this proposed policy.

PROVISION OF TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FOR UNDER 5S.

When asked about the proposal that The Council may provide assistance to children who are aged four and entering the reception year at primary school if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated the majority (63%) of respondents were in support if this policy change (figure 22).

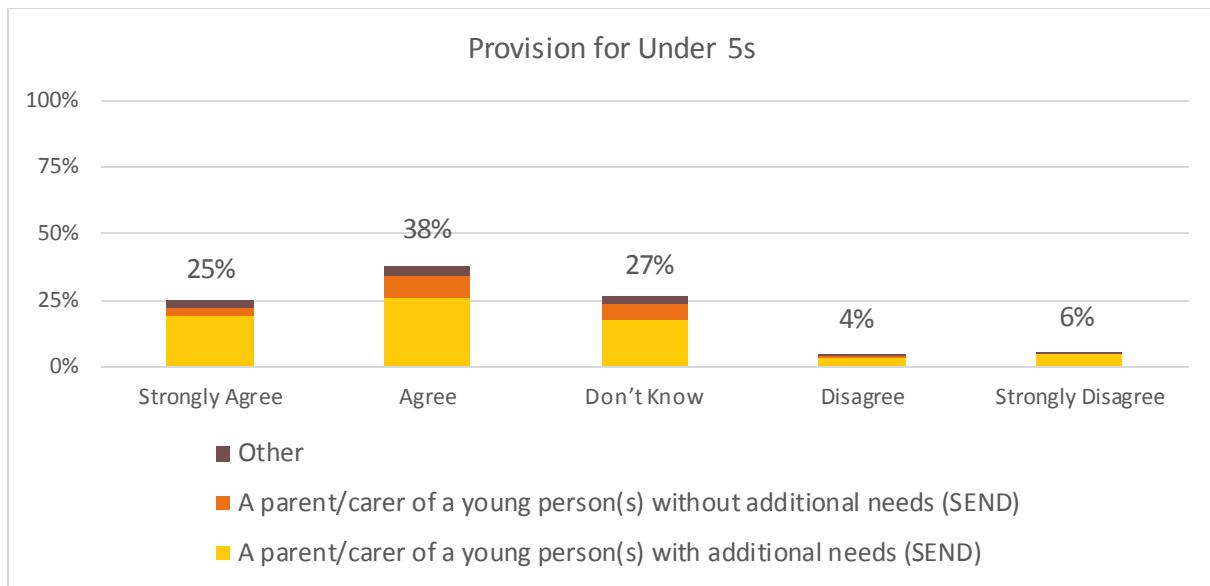


Figure 22: Provision of travel assistance for under 5s (n=694)

When looking at respondents rational they were pleased to see the council offering TA to those under 5, however, in some cases felt that the council could go further and not require the use of extenuating circumstances.

"It is positive that you offer transport to 4-year-olds entering primary school in extenuating or exceptional circumstances, but I do believe this should be more widespread rather than having to go through the extenuating circumstances route."

MEDICAL AND HEALTH INTERVENTIONS IN THE TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Overwhelmingly, respondents supported (74%) the inclusion of guidance on the operational standards and processes which the Council follows if there is a requirement for a medically trained Passenger Assistant to support children during their journey to school (figure 23).

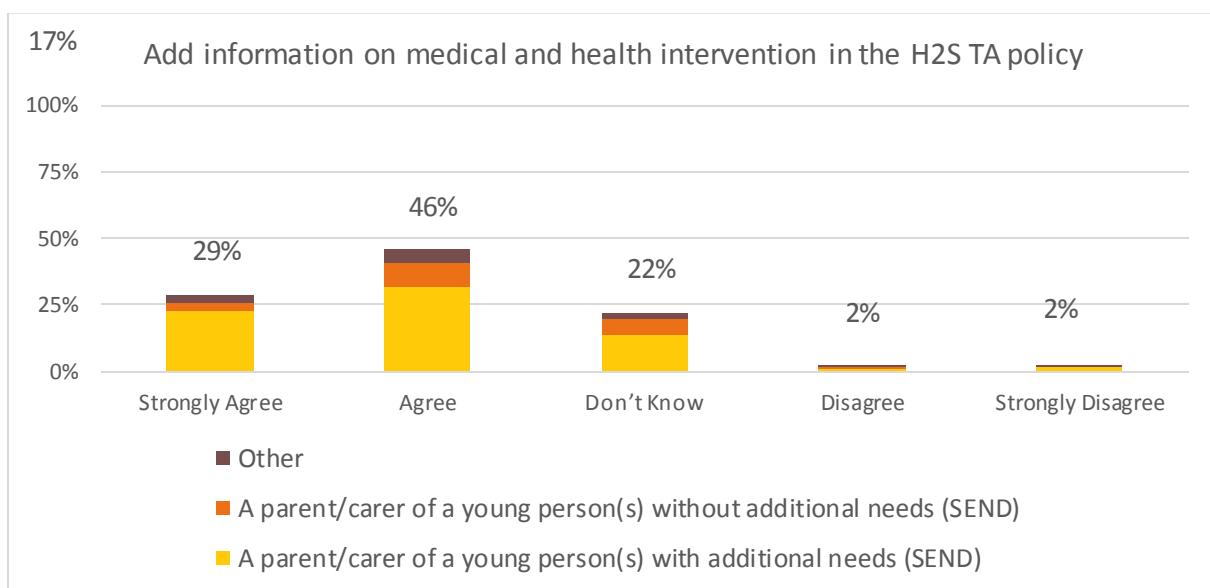


Figure 23: Medical and health interventions in the travel assistance policy (n=694)

No additional comments were made in regard to this proposed policy.

REDUCED RELIANCE ONE CHILD PER VEHICLE TRANSPORT

The policy to reduce reliance on one child per vehicle transport was met with support from respondents. Figure 24 shows that 59% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

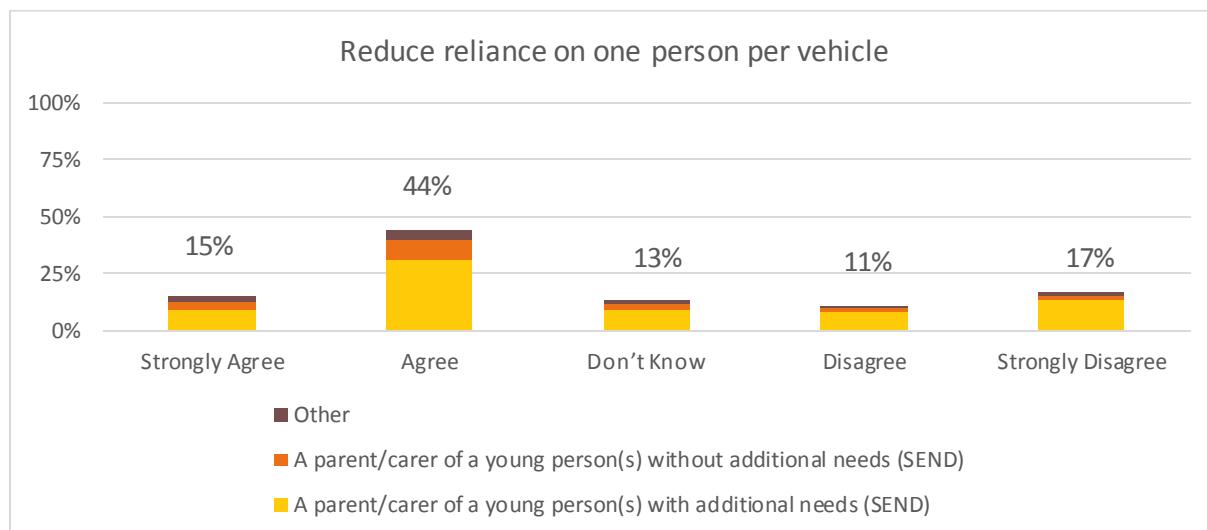


Figure 24: Reduced reliance one child per vehicle transport (n=694)

When looking at the open-ended responses, respondents accepted that solo travel should be reduced however some felt that it *"Should not only be in extenuating circumstances but on individual needs assessment"*.

SAFEGUARDING USERS OF H2S TRANSPORT

Over half (54%) of respondents were supportive of the proposal to clarify the conditions of transport withdrawal in the case of dangerous behaviour and/or potentially risks harm to themselves and others in a vehicle (including the driver) (figure 25).

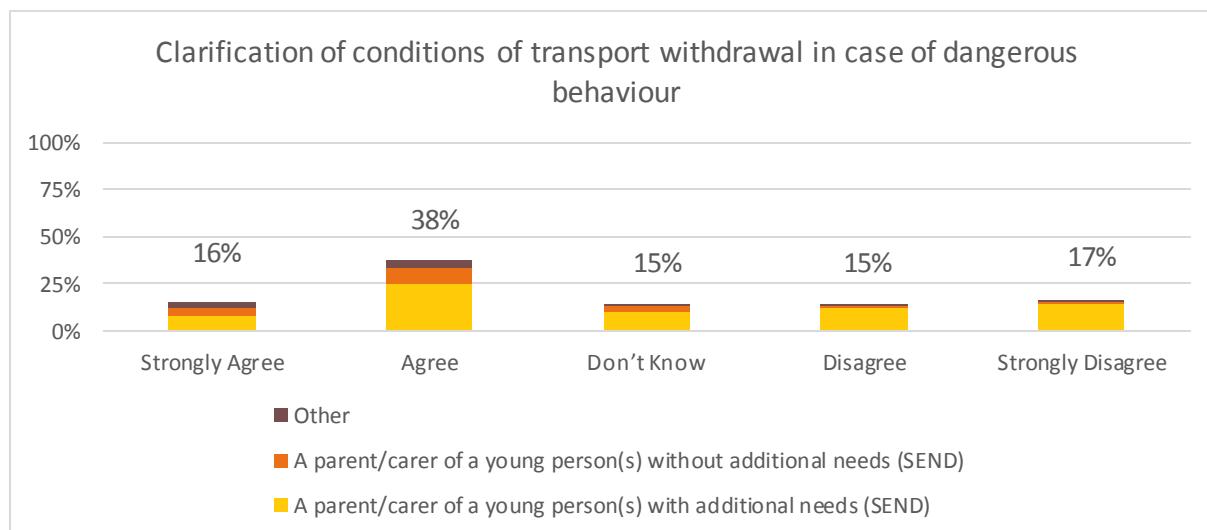


Figure 25: Clarification of conditions of transport withdrawal in case of dangerous behaviour (n=694)

Respondents wanted to be clear that this policy should be child focused and that a child should not lose all transport assistance if dangerous behaviour is displayed.

"If a child with SEND is displaying dangerous behaviour, then the first step should be to consider unmet needs and try to meet those needs better, rather than the removal of transport assistance."

INTRODUCE A POST 16 STATEMENT

The introduction of a separate post 16 statement was met with equal positive and negative sentiment (39% each way, Figure 26). A parent/carer of a young person(s) without additional needs (SEND) (n=127). 74% of Parents/carers of children without additional needs support the post 16 statement compared to 46% of the parents/carers of children with additional needs (figures 27 and 28).

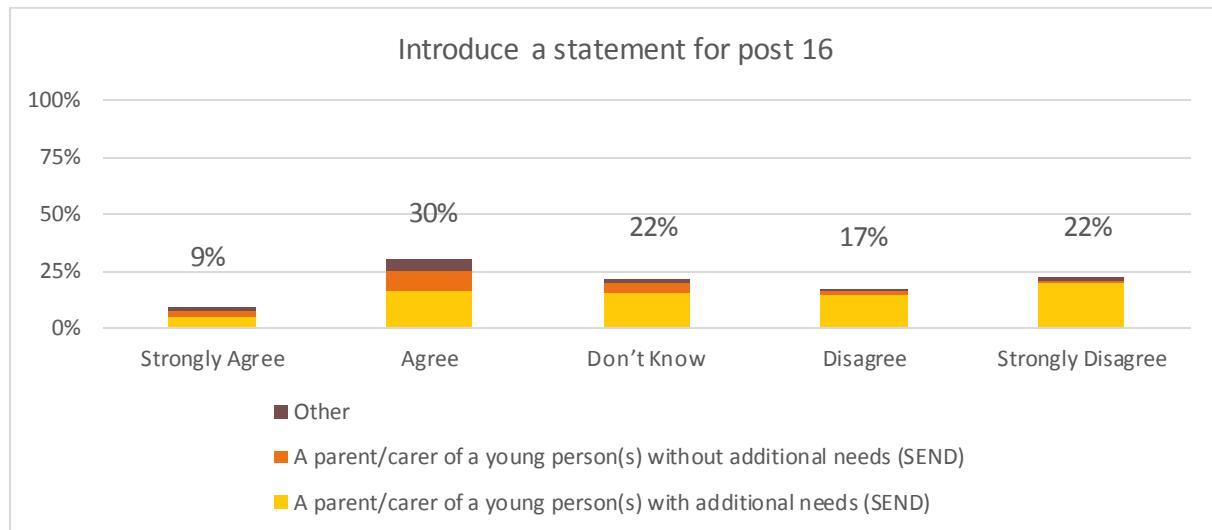


Figure 26: introduction of a separate post 16 statement- all respondents (n=694)

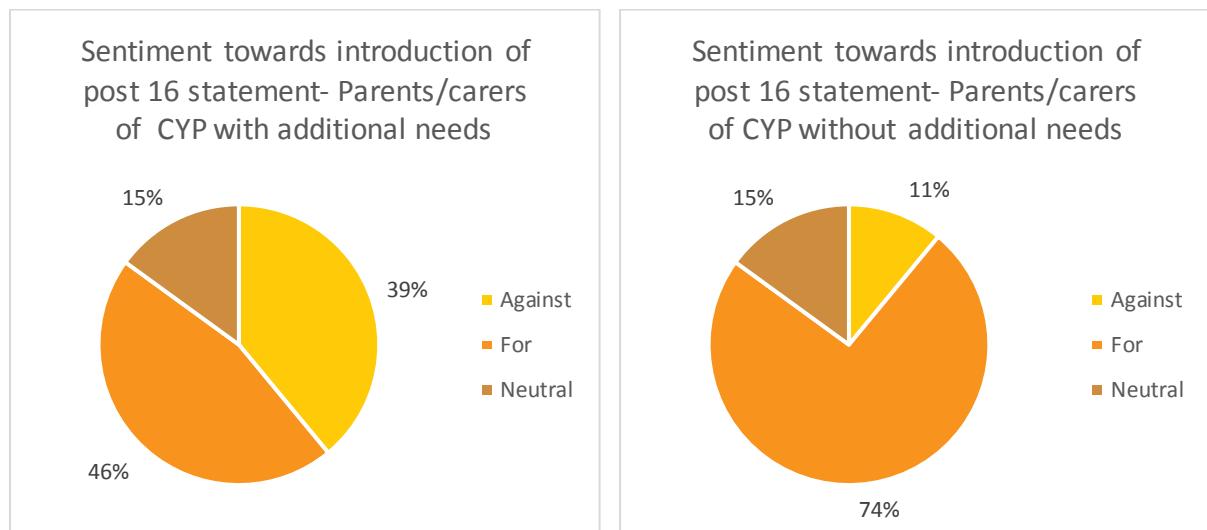


Figure 27: Sentiment towards introduction of post 16 statement- Parents/carers of CYP with additional needs (n=490)

Figure 28: Sentiment towards introduction of post 16 statement- Parents/carers of CYP without additional needs (n=127)

Respondents highlighted the importance that post-16 travel has in enabling continued education and therefore the council should ensure that they are providing the right support for this cohort:

"Students aged 16-19 still need support with travel to enable them to access their educational setting safely."

"My child is looking to go to university in September and this would not have been possible if she didn't have transport provided to get her to the college that could meet her needs."

Respondents also want to ensure that any post-16 statement is developed to support the needs of the individual and that it does not become a one size fits all policy.

"The transport support offered to post 16s should first and foremost be appropriate to the child's needs. For some that absolutely will be a focus on independent travel and should be encouraged, but the starting point should be the child's needs, not what the council would prefer their needs to be or find most convenient."

INTRODUCE POST 16 BURSARIES

When asked about the introduction of post-16 transport bursary to support families and young people to make their own transport arrangements to develop independence and prepare for adulthood 44% of respondents were in favour if this policy change (figure 29).

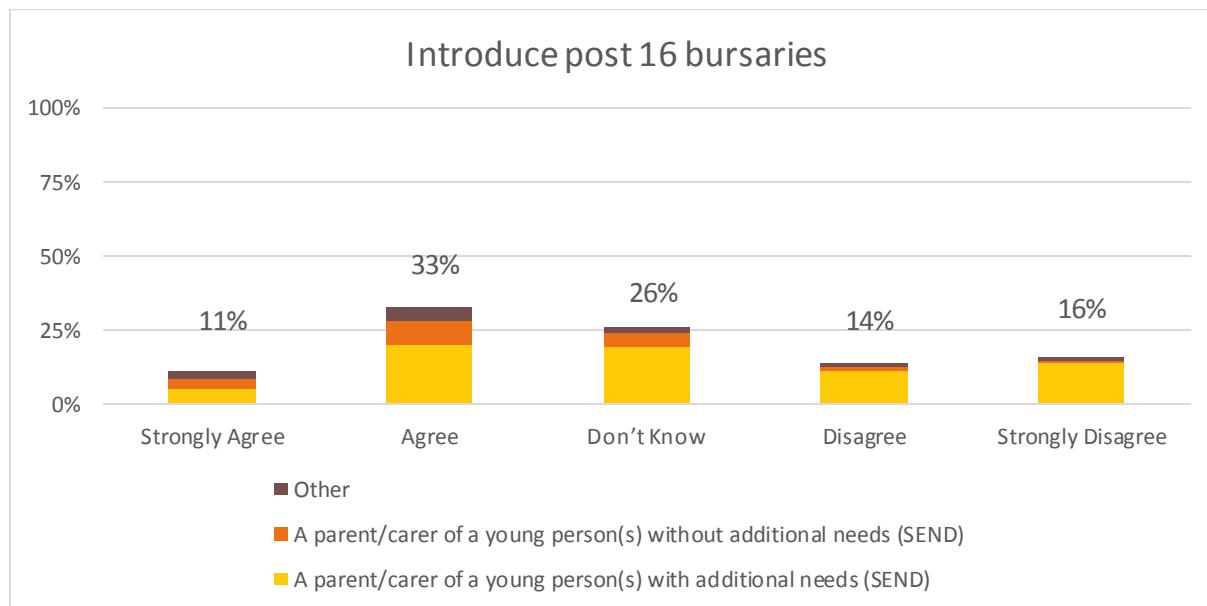
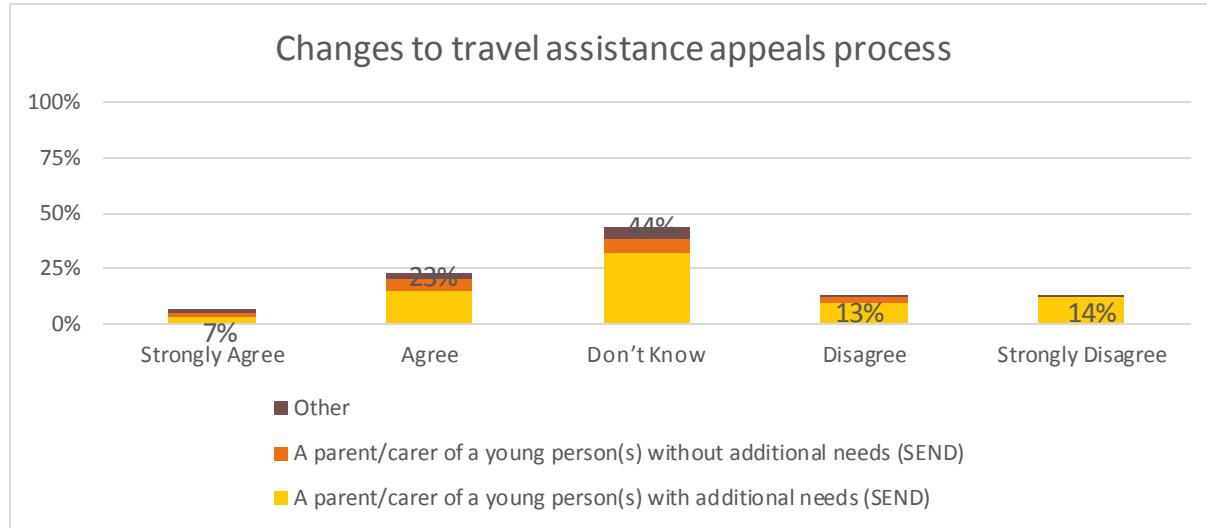


Figure 29: Introduce post 16 bursaries (n=694)

Very little further comments were made about the introduction of bursaries except to further illustrate respondents' support: *"I would love to have a bursary to pay for the bus tickets we have to buy."*

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE APPEALS PROCESS

The council proposed to continue with a two-stage process and that the stage two panel will be independent of the first but that the membership will include Council Officers in the future. Figure 30 shows 30% of respondents were in favour of the proposal on the changes to the travel appeals process; 27% of respondents responded negatively to the proposal; 43% were neutral regarding the proposal.



There was some concern about the impartiality of a second stage panel with council officers on.

"Council officers in the appeals process at any stage will not be impartial!"

"It stops being independent with council officers."

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, it is clear to see that the support that children and young people receive for H2S TA is of great importance to both them and their families. For many families across surrey this support is what not only allows their child to access education in a safe and secure way but can also provide the necessary structure and consistency that children and young people with additional needs require.

Below specific recommendations have been listed out in regard to each proposed policy change.

COLLECTION POINTS: Parents of children with additional needs were not in support of this proposal. Therefore, if the council implements the use of collection points consideration should be given to which children and young people utilise this service. Additional consultation should be undertaken with any family along any proposed route to ensure that the use of collection points meets the needs of the individuals, and the introduction of mixed

routes should also be considered. Furthermore, if collection points were used the journey time to the collection point should be factored into the total length of journey time.

MEASURING ROUTES: There was good support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT: There was good support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward.

CHANGE TO MAXIMUM JOURNEY TIMES: overall, respondents were not in support of this policy. This was of particular concern for key stage 1 students, specifically those with additional needs. This was less of a concern for older children and young people therefore further consideration should be given to any proposed changes in regard to adjusting journey times.

NOTICE PERIOD(S) FOR WITHDRAWAL OF TA: Respondents did not support this proposal and therefore further consideration needs to be given to the change. The council needs to ensure that the changes made are in line with wider best practice and that any withdrawal of TA is carried out in a way that disrupts the lives of the children as minimally as possible.

CLARIFY REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL: There was support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH INTERVENTION: There was good support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward.

REDUCE RELIANCE ON ONE CHILD PER VEHICLE: There was good support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward.

TRANSPORT WITHDRAWAL IN CASE OF DANGEROUS BEHAVIOUR: There was good support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward.

POST-16 STATEMENT: Responses were balanced in their sentiment and therefore it is advised that officer discretion is used.

POST 16 BURSARIES: There was good support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward. The implementation for the bursary should be given further exploration to ensure that everyone has the best possible chance of taking up this offer.

CHANGE TO TRAVEL APPEALS PROCESS: Respondents were marginally more in favour and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward. However, it is important that any new process is not only simplified and made clear to parents/carers, but that the council ensures that any changes made do not prevent the second stage from being independent.

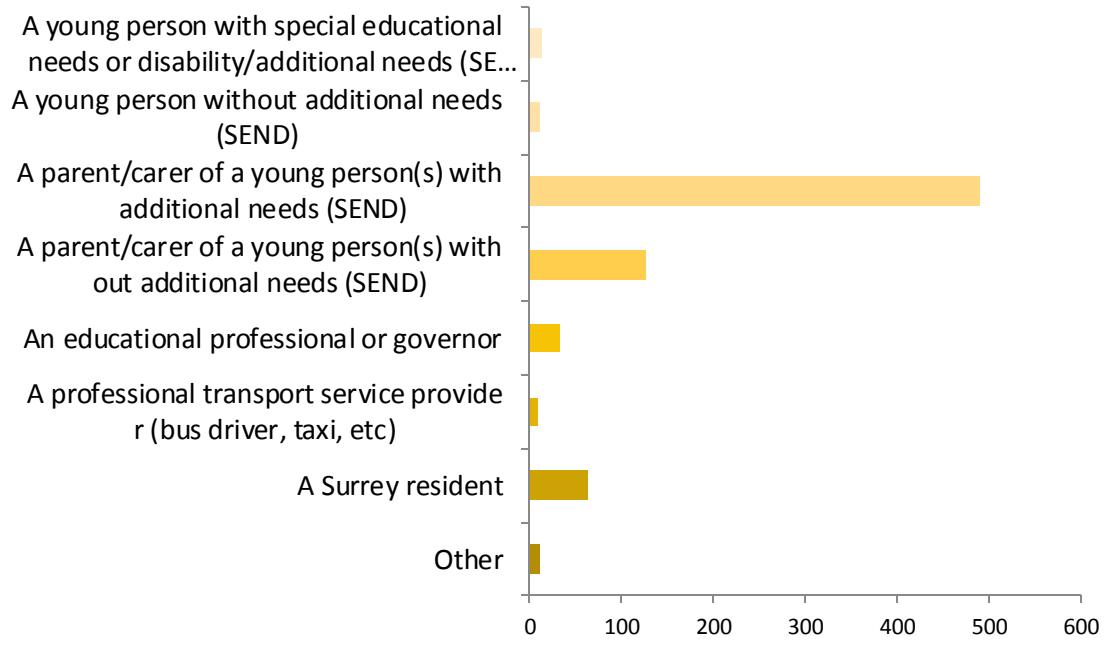
PROVISION FOR UNDER 5S: There was good support for this and therefore recommend that this policy is taken forward.

ANNEX

ANNEX 1: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS INCLUDING EQUALITIES MONITORING INFORMATION

There were 694 responses to all the following questions.

ARE YOU...? PLEASE SELECT THE ANSWER WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOURSELF WHEN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY



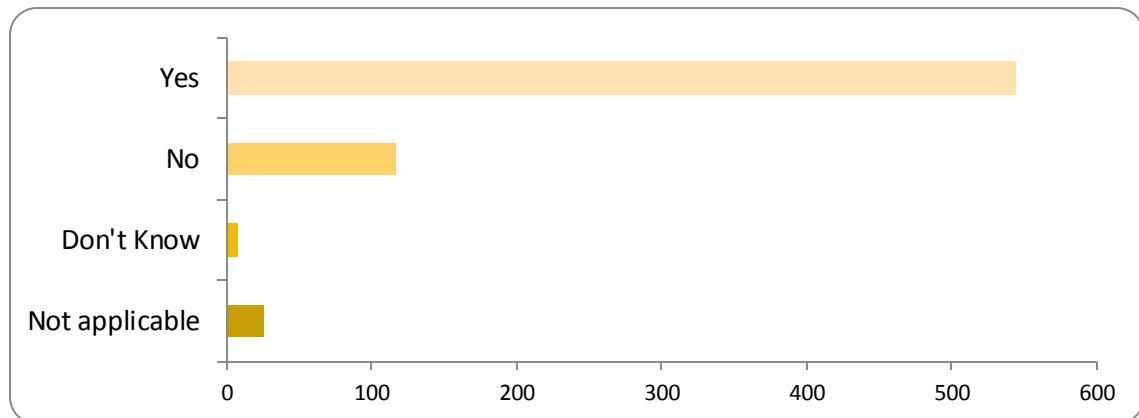
Option	Total	Percent
A young person with special educational needs or disability/additional needs (SEND)	14	2.02%
A young person without additional needs (SEND)	12	1.73%
A parent/carer of a young person(s) with additional needs (SEND)	490	70.61%
A parent/carer of a young person(s) without additional needs (SEND)	127	18.30%
An educational professional or governor	34	4.90%
A professional transport service provider (bus driver, taxi, etc.)	9	1.30%
A Surrey resident	64	9.22%
Other	12	1.73%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

If other, please specify in the comment box below:

- Parent with medical needs
- Grandparent of young person with additional needs
- Other education, health, and care professionals
- Army Officer

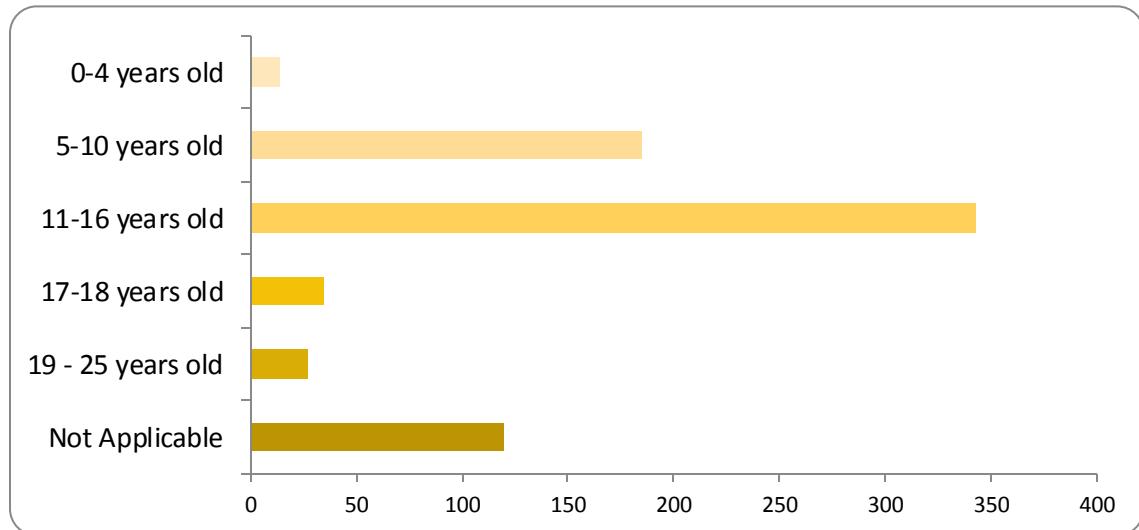
- PhD researcher

DO YOU OR YOUR CHILD(REN) CURRENTLY RECEIVE HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FROM SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	545	78.53%
No	117	16.86%
Don't Know	7	1.01%
Not applicable	25	3.60%

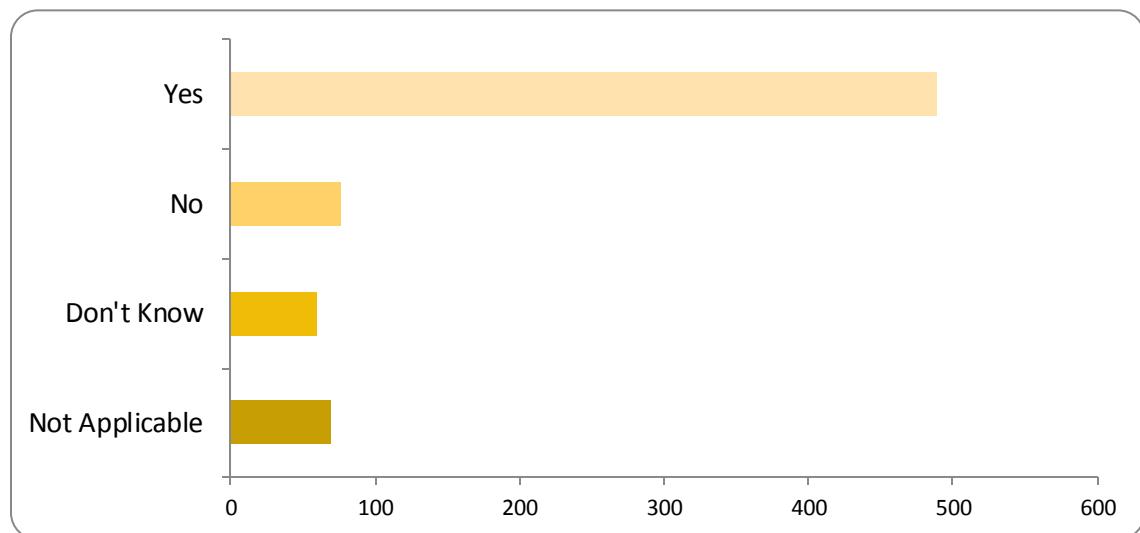
IF YES TO THE QUESTION ABOVE, HOW OLD ARE YOU OR YOUR CHILD(REN) WHO CURRENTLY RECEIVES HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE?



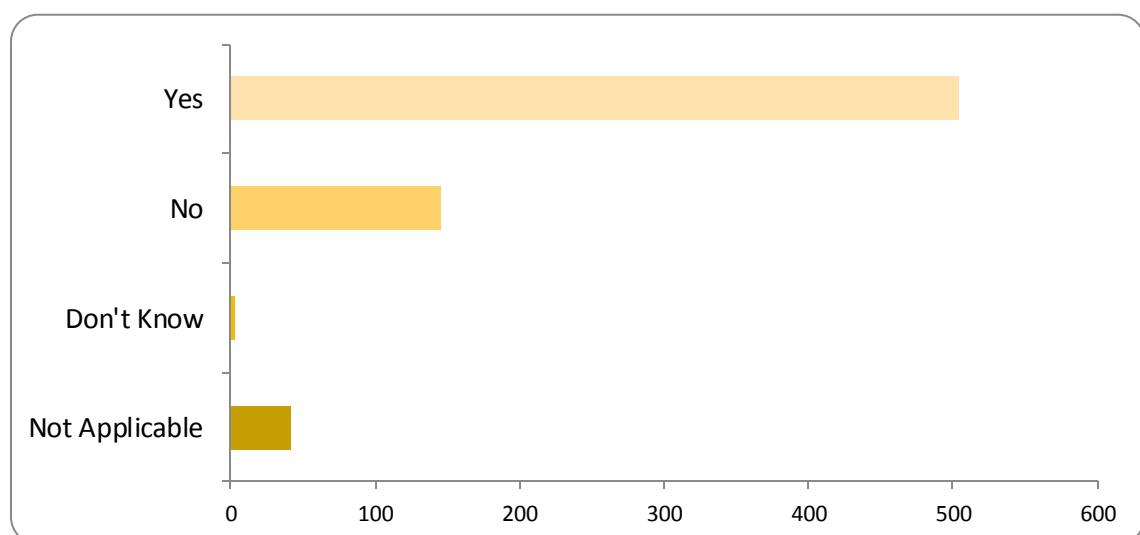
Option	Total	Percent
0-4 years old	14	2.02%
5-10 years old	185	26.66%
11-16 years old	343	49.42%
17-18 years old	35	5.04%
19 - 25 years old	27	3.89%
Not Applicable	120	17.29%

ARE YOU APPLYING FOR HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE IN THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR?

11

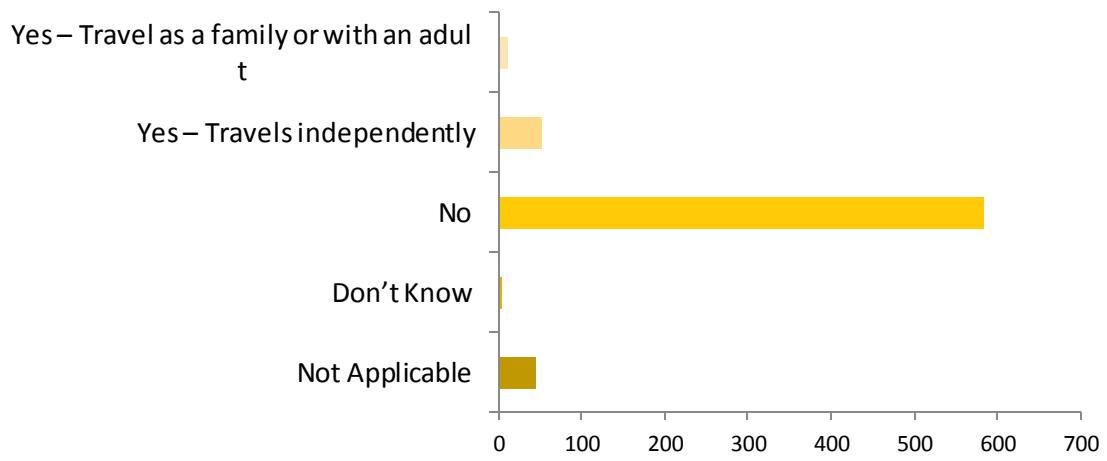


DO YOU OR YOUR CHILD(REN) HAVE AN ACTIVE EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP) OR ARE CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH AN EHCP ASSESSMENT?

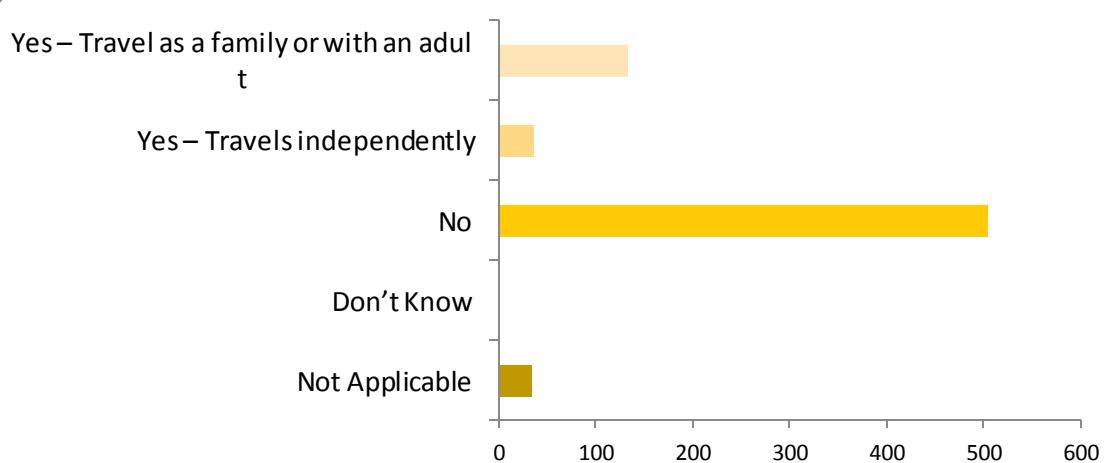


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	504	72.62%
No	145	20.89%
Don't Know	3	0.43%
Not Applicable	42	6.05%

DO YOU OR YOUR CHILD(REN) USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO TRAVEL TO AND FROM SCHOOL/EDUCATION CENTRES?

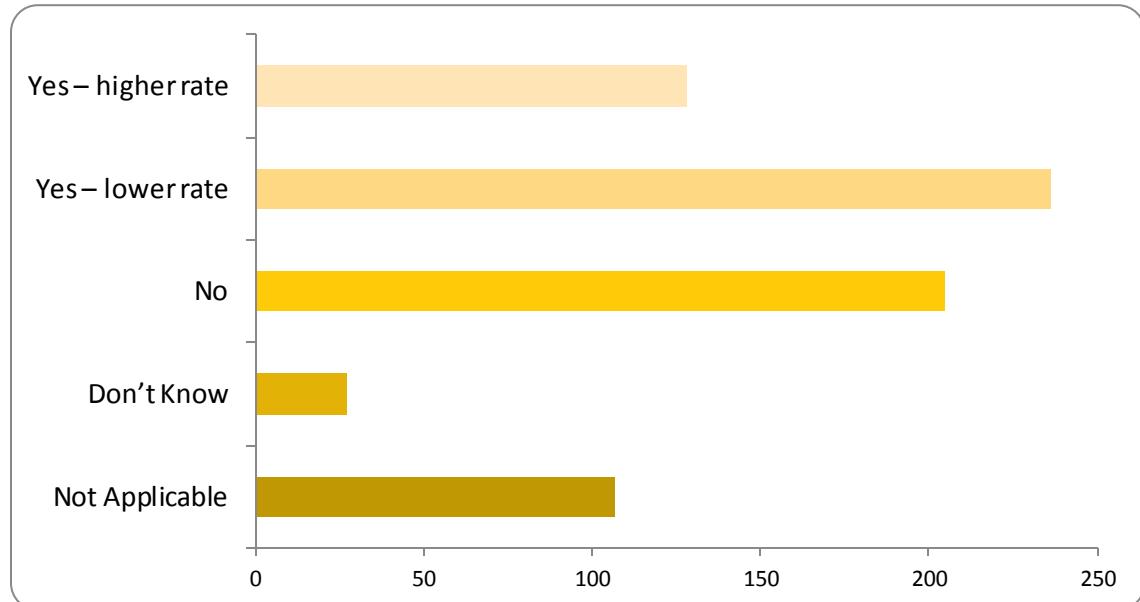


DO YOU OR YOUR CHILD(REN) USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AT THE WEEKEND, EVENINGS OR ON HOLIDAYS TO ACCESS SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, VISIT FRIENDS OR FAMILY?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes – Travel as a family or with an adult	134	19.31%
Yes – Travels independently	36	5.19%
No	505	72.77%
Don't Know	1	0.14%
Not Applicable	35	5.04%

IF YOU/YOUR CHILD(REN) IS CURRENTLY RECEIVING HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FROM THE COUNCIL, DO YOU/THEY ALSO RECEIVE THE MOBILITY COMPONENT OF EITHER DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE (DLA) OR PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT (PIP)?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes – higher rate	128	18.44%
Yes – lower rate	236	34.01%
No	205	29.54%
Don't Know	27	3.89%
Not Applicable	107	15.42%

ANNEX 2: THE CODE INDICES

Improve Confidence to Travel Independently (n=463)				
Theme	Code Number	Detail	Count	Percent age
Reliability of PT System	1	Accessibility of PT in villages	7	8%
	21	More frequent and reliable PT	10	
	5	Better PT links	9	
	31	Shorter journey times	1	
	32	PT route consistency	2	
	49	Stops to be safe and well-lit	1	
	50	Availability of other travel options	2	
	54	Minibus /taxi servicing 2-3 children	4	
Addressing the additional (physical, sensory, emotional) needs of children and young people	3	Enforcement of rules against threats, bad behaviour	9	7%
	22	Driver staff training in autism/disability	9	
	35	Wheelchair accessibility	4	
	41	Reduced sensory sensitivities	2	
	43	Assistance from local youth engagement officers	1	
	47	Visibility of staff of PT	1	
	51	No deviations to route or timings	2	
	52	Increased community awareness	3	
Clarity around costs and payment processes	30	Transport support (gen)	3	2%
	38	Free/passes	2	
	4	Affordable transport	1	
	33	Clarity around PT fare and payment process	1	
Greener Options	13	Availability of cycle routes	3	3%
	14	Safer cycle routes and roads	4	
	39	Footpath to the village/paved roads	5	
	42	Bikeability training	4	
Meeting specific school-focused travel needs	2	More reliable and direct school bus routes	6	11%
	18	Less crowding in school buses	4	
	19	Shorter/simple school to home routes	4	
	20	Transition time between journeys	1	
	23	Quiet areas for waiting	1	
	27	Buses exclusively for school children/with disabilities	4	
	28	Stops near the schools	4	

	29	Locally based schools	2	
	40	1-1 supervision	5	
	48	More than 1-1 supervision	1	
6.Holistic support for children, young people, and their families	6	Schools (specialist incl) to be placed locally	4	23%
	7	Awareness of level of need and disability	16	
	8	Chaperones/adults supervising	16	
	9	Independent Travel Training (ITT)	28	
	10	Other training/review (CAHMS, ECHP)	3	
	11	Support for parents and families	1	
	16	ITT delivered locally	1	
	17	Parent awareness/education/training	4	
	24	Feeling safe	30	
	25	ITT delivered at variable length	1	
	34	Option of 1-1 or Group ITT/Buddy System	3	
	37	Travelling with friends/shared transport	4	
	36	Individualised travel plan/appropriate support	7	
	44	Being able to drive independently	3	
	46	Self-defence training	1	
	45	Parents to pay for use of school bus	1	
	53	Child's ability to trust	2	
Nothing can be done	12	NA/Irrelevant/ Disability cannot be removed	279	60%
Retain existing H2S arrangements	15	Don't change the current system in place as working well.	17	4%

Public Transport Code Index (n=465)			Analysis	
Theme	Code Number	Detail	Count	%
Provision of necessary support	1	Provides support to those who need it (general)	11	46%
	6	Provide chaperones/travel assistants (TAs)	50	
	8	Protected spaces to sit	6	
	9	Financial support (incl. fare reduction)	21	

	10	ITT and guidance for children and families	23	
	13	Safer PT	15	
	15	Reduce mileage restrictions	1	
	24	Increase community awareness about SEN/reduce ableism	6	
	25	Assign assistants at Collection Points to give directions	5	
	30	Safeguarding considerations	2	
	34	Parent involvement in decision-making	2	
	36	Tracking app or device for families	4	
	40	Consistency with transport and driver	2	
	41	SEN identification to wear on PT	9	
	42	Hybrid/individualised training at pace of child	45	
	45	Provision of travel transition and adaptation aids i.e. tablets, etc	2	
	46	DBS-checked drivers/PT staff	2	
	43	Free H2S should also be free to siblings	2	
	45	Travel transition and adaptation aids	2	
	46	DBS-checked drivers	2	
	50	Joined up approach with CAHMS, NHS, SCC in decision making	1	
Improvement to PT System	2	More PT collections in remote locations	9	30%
	4	Reliable PT service	29	
	5	More regular collections around schools incl SEN	29	
	7	Better connections/transport links	12	
	12	More affordable costs	7	
	16	More independent travel companies operating	2	
	18	Availability of taxis/private transport	2	
	19	More direct PT routes	10	

	20	More Collection Points (CPs) and closer to home	3	
	21	More appropriate transport options incl. school buses separate from PT	21	
	22	More prompt/punctual PT service	3	
	26	More routes/stops	8	
	31	Accessible PT routes through villages	2	
	33	Fund bike maintenance contracts and create more bike paths	2	
PT and School Staff Training	11	Better training for PT staff around understanding, communicating with people with additional needs	12	3%
	23	Education providers to train in ITT	2	
	44	PT first aid training and training in behavioural issues	2	
Removal of Support	3	Remove assistance in some cases	2	2%
	27	Introduce no-parking zones	1	
	32	Charge users for service	3	
	35	Restrict parking near school gates	2	
5. Localisation of PT services and infrastructure	17	More SEND schools within Surrey	21	6%
	28	Reduce speed limits	3	
	29	Clear footpaths, better street lighting for walking	6	
6. Unsuitability of PT for school and college travel	14	Retention of status quo	20	18%
	39	Against or refused despite willingness	62	
	47	Do something about postcode barriers preventing use of PT for school travel	1	
	48	Covid causing instability at schools	1	
	49	SCC Transport Team services need improvement	1	
Collection Points Code index				Analysis
Theme	Detail	Code Number	Count	%

Transport System and Infrastructure	Unsuitability of country lanes/roads for walking/cycling/PT/crossing	1	10	6%
	Better transport links	28	3	
	Improved transport route	36	3	
	Operate like school bus	9	1	
	Reliability of transport at CPs	8	6	
Suitable Location	Won't work from remote locations	5	6	6%
	Need to be local (CPs and schools with SEN)	6	2	
	Need to be away from bus stops - confusion	7	1	
	Need to be at bus stops	21	2	
	CPs close to home	26	10	
Skills needed for using CP	Having physical ability to get to site of CP	3	4	5%
	Having ability to get to CP site on time	10	5	
	Collection points may work for older children (16+) provided there is help on the bus	12	4	
	Age of child relevant to ability to use CP	2	6	
Additional Support	Chaperones	11	5	15%
	Younger children: need TA assistant to bring them to a collection point.	13	7	
	ITT - esp what to do when things change	15	1	
	Training in conjunction with SEND	16	1	
	Identifiable signs of CP for SEN children	17	2	
	Seat/ shelter for bad weather	18	3	
	Cost effectiveness of CP vs taxis	25	4	
	Pooled family pick ups	27	2	
	Tracker apps for parents	29	2	
	Need to take whole family's circumstances	31	19	
	Option to pay for collection if not CP	37	2	
	CP staff to work closely with parents	38	2	
	Collective fit of CP arrangements	24	4	

Support for CPs	If parents can't take the children themselves	14	2	15%
	Less traffic at school gate	32	3	
	Lower carbon emissions	33	3	
	Agree/Already using CP and it works	39	9	
Against CPs	Wheelchairs	19	2	63%
	SCC and lack of trust	20	11	
	CPs are effectively bus stops - if children can't use buses, then they can't also use CPs	22	1	
	Preference for free or funded travel assistance (status quo)	35	7	
	Sensory triggers and impact on children and family	34	40	
	Safety and safeguarding concerns	30	43	
	For personal reasons/circumstances unspecified	4	65	
	Suitability of transport	23	9	
	Questions how it will work	40	7	
	CPs add more complexity	41	26	
Not for SEND		42	20	

Code index Travel Allowance (n= 205)			Analysis	
Theme	Detail	Code Number	Count	Percentage
Approve / Disapprove comment only	Approve of the idea	1	2	12%
	Disapprove of the idea	2	20	
	Still unsure	3	2	
Proposal is broadly but not universally applicable to all circumstances	This method cannot suit some circumstances (unspecified)	6	26	13%
Eligibility concerns remain a fundamental barrier to the proposal	What about those who are not eligible for ITA but should be (in respondent's opinion)	8	12	6%
Safety concerns remain a fundamental barrier to the proposal	SEND children would be at risk using other methods	9	40	20%

Distance remains a fundamental barrier to the proposal	Impractical distances make other methods impossible	10	14	7%
Time remains a fundamental barrier to the proposal	Lack of parent time means other methods are impossible	11	26	13%
Proposal is too dependent on amount of compensation	How much will it be? Will it be real cost?	12	12	20%
	It will not be enough	13	26	
	Pay in advance	14	2	
	Predictability	15	2	
Practicality of implementation is a barrier	There are accessibility issues at the school site precluding other options	16	4	12%
	Concerns over poor administration would disincentivise	17	4	
	Disability (precluding parental involvement)	18	2	
	other children in the household preclude other options	19	14	
Other issues should be prioritised to benefit SEN needs in this area	Focus on more schools being closer	20	16	12%
	Lockers at schools	21	1	
	Single households over multi-adult households	22	5	
	Getting traffic lower	23	2	
This suggestion is not the greenest option	There should be more incentives for able children to cycle safely	24	8	12%
	My current method is the greenest choice	25	6	
	TA doesn't achieve the greener outcome	26	4	
	Greener choices should be a priority	27	6	
Public transport remains a concern which is a barrier	Lack of public transport options preclude changing setup	28	6	3%

Annex D - Revised Home to School Travel Assistance policy

- **Home to School Travel Assistance Policy – 5 – 16yrs**
- **Post-16 (16-25yrs) Policy Statement**

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HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

5 - 16yrs

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Surrey County Council's Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policy and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as required by the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation and guidance.

The policy explains the criteria for eligibility for travel assistance for pupils to their school or college for children of statutory school age (5- 16 years old). It describes how parents and carers can apply for travel assistance and how decisions are made. It sets out how parents and carers may appeal against decisions that they believe do not comply with this policy.

For updates relating to operational decisions and information regarding application timescales, please visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport

POLICY STATEMENT

Surrey County Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils have a great start to life, are safe and healthy and have access to high quality education 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 and resilience of children and their families to be independent.

The Council is also committed to meeting the educational needs of as many children and young people as possible within local schools. In many cases, this will mean that pupils can walk or cycle to school with their parents or carers. This policy sets out how we will help the small number of pupils who find it difficult to travel to school or college without some assistance.

As a Council we want to make sure we continue to deliver our statutory responsibilities for home to school travel assistance to meet the travel needs of children and young people, enabling them to access their place of education. The Council acknowledges that without this service some of the County's children and young people would be unable to access their school or college, especially those who have significant additional needs, are isolated within the community, or deemed extremely vulnerable.

Engagement with young people with special educational needs in Surrey confirmed that young people value independence highly, and that they want their parents, schools and the services that support them to help them prepare for adulthood, including continued access to education, employment opportunities and access to essential services and activities in the community. The ability to travel independently is important to them now to attend school, participate in community life and socialise with friends; it is also fundamental to their future ambitions.

We want to support parents and carers to fulfil their responsibility to ensure their school-aged children attend school regularly and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend school. Those children and young people not in receipt of travel assistance from the Council can use a wide range of forms of travel in Surrey, accompanied as necessary, including bus, train, concessionary fares, walking and cycling. We also want to support schools to promote safe routes to school and safe travel skills through their regular curriculum.

Surrey is also committed to reducing emissions and improving Air Quality, to improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. This links to our Climate Change Strategy, please see link below.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/climate-change-strategy>

This home to school travel assistance policy sets out travel assistance options which may be employed to assist eligible children and young people, please note that references to transport within this document are related to travel assistance.

Travel assistance may take one of the following forms

- Provision of a bus or train pass
- Training to travel independently (walking and using public transport)
- Training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment) subject to the agreement of parent/carer
- Reimbursing of mileage costs for parents or carers
- Provision of a private bus, coach or minibus
- Provision of taxis or licensed private car hire (in extenuating circumstances)

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Eligibility

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their statutory school-aged children (age 5-16) attend school regularly and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend school.

A child becomes of compulsory school age at the start of term after their fifth birthday and ceases to be compulsory school age on the last day of the academic year in which they are in year 11. This applies to both children with and without an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

There are four core categories of eligible children set out in law:

- Children living beyond the statutory walking distance from school
- Children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school due to unsafe walking routes
- Children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school due to special educational needs, disability and mobility problems.
- Children from low-income families who have extended rights to travel assistance to a choice of schools.

Ordinarily and in accordance with the Council's statutory duty, children under the age of 5 will not be entitled to travel assistance between their home and school. Where circumstances exist where the Council determines that travel assistance is necessary it may exceptionally apply its discretionary powers on a case -by-case basis.

For pupils in year 12 and above (post-16 year olds), there is no statutory requirement on the Council to provide free transport to their school or college in any particular case. The Council must decide and set out in a policy statement the arrangements that the Council considers necessary to facilitate attendance. It is expected that young people in Post 16 education will use existing travel schemes to support access to their education placement. More information about existing schemes and discretionary support provided by the Council can be found in Surrey's post-16 policy statement which is updated each year. The current version can be found here:

Link to be updated with new policy statement

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Statutory walking distances

Surrey County Council, in accordance with its statutory duty, will provide free home to school transport for children of compulsory school age to the nearest suitable school from their home address who meet the 'qualifying distance' criteria which are:

- 2 miles or more for children below the age of eight, measured by the shortest walking distance between the home and the school
- 3 miles or more for children aged eight and above, measured by the shortest walking distance between the home and the school.

Children who live between 2 and 3 miles from their school will cease to be entitled to travel assistance from the start of the term following their eighth birthday.

When a child cannot be offered a place at the nearest school to the home address, the Council will, subject to the criteria set within this policy and the qualifying distance being met, provide transport to the next nearest school with space to admit. For transport to be provided in this particular instance the parent must provide evidence that they have applied for and been refused a place at the school which is the nearest school for their home address and any other schools closer than the school offering admission

If the child/family qualify for free school meals or they are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit then please refer to section on extended rights.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

For children with special needs or a disability or mobility problems if it is deemed unreasonable to expect them to walk to school (accompanied by an adult as necessary), then the distance criteria does not apply and they are entitled to free school travel assistance regardless of the distance they live from school.

Unsafe walking routes

Where a child is not deemed eligible for transport to their nearest qualifying school because it is under the relevant distance threshold and the parent/carer believes the child is unable to walk the assessed route safely (accompanied by an adult as necessary) due to the nature of the route, they should complete the online contact form outlining the aspect of the route they believe to be unsafe.

Safe Walking routes are then inspected by the Council's Safer Travel Team using the 'Road Safety GB Guidelines on Assessment of Walked Routes to School'. If the route is agreed to be unsafe an alternative safe route will be measured and if the child is then beyond the statutory walking distance, he/she will be eligible for free travel assistance.

Where a new route previously considered to be unavailable becomes available (for example through the provision of a new footpath), transport will no longer be provided to any new applicants for travel assistance. Those applicants who have been entitled to transport due to an unavailable route that has become available will be written to with an explanation of the change and provided with assistance for four weeks, or the end of the half-term whichever is longer, after a route is re-assessed before travel assistance will be withdrawn. A parent and

or carer will be able to appeal against the decision to withdraw assistance in these circumstances.

Extended rights

Statutory entitlement is extended for children from low-income groups. Children from low-income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those families who are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

Children above the age of 8, but under the age of 11, from low-income families will be entitled to travel assistance to their nearest suitable school if the shortest walking distance between their home and the school is more than two miles.

Children aged 11 and over (years 7 – 11) from low-income families will be entitled to travel assistance if they attend a school which is more than two miles (measured by the shortest walking distance) and less than 6 miles (measured by the shortest road route) from their home and the school attended is one of the three nearest suitable schools to their home.

Children aged 11 and over (years 7 - 11) from low-income families who are attending their nearest designated faith school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief will also be entitled to travel assistance if their school is more than two miles (measured by the shortest walking distance) but not more than 15 miles (measured by the shortest road route) from their home.

When considering whether a faith school is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, Surrey County Council will take into account the nature of other schools that may have been named as higher preferences on the application form. For an application for travel assistance to be agreed under this section, the expectation will be that the school that is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief will be named above any non-faith schools that have been named on the application form.

Parents must provide supporting evidence regarding their genuine adherence to their religion or belief and this will normally be confirmed by asking their minister of religion to sign the application form.

Special educational needs, disability and mobility difficulties

In addition to the eligibility for children of compulsory school age with special education needs, a disability or mobility problem, whether in mainstream or special provision, an entitlement to home to school transport exists where the following criteria is satisfied:

The child attends the nearest suitable school (or the nearest school named at the appropriate placement in section I of the EHCP and having regard to the child's special educational needs, disability or mobility problems, they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school even if accompanied by a parent or carer.

If a child has an EHCP which states that the school of parental preference has been named as the appropriate placement in the EHCP but there is a nearer suitable school to the child's home, the child will not be eligible for travel assistance and the parent will be responsible for all financial and practical responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance at school.

Application process

Applying for travel assistance

Parents and carers should be aware that it can take some time to arrange travel assistance and are advised to apply as soon as they know that they require transport for their child, if they

believe the child meets the eligibility criteria. Details of timescales, deadlines and arrangements can be found on www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport.

An application form will need to be completed online at www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport if the parent believes that their child might qualify for travel assistance under this policy.

If a child changes school or moves home address, either for the start of the academic year or during the year, you should inform the Council 2 weeks prior to moving to allow new arrangements to be put in place. The change of address form is available here:

[School transport - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://School%20transport%20-%20Surrey%20County%20Council%20(surreycc.gov.uk))

Parental choice

Where a parent or carer has decided that they do not wish for their child to go to the school or college that the Council has decided can meet the student's needs and decides to seek a placement at an alternative setting further away, travel assistance will **not** be provided. The implications of transporting their son/daughter to a setting other than the school that has been assessed as the nearest school that can meet a child's needs should be considered and alternative travel arrangements should be made.

Assessing travel assistance entitlement for compulsory school age children

In all cases, a child/young person must be attending the nearest suitable school. This is defined as a school that has spaces available that provides education appropriate to the age, gender, ability and aptitude of the child, and appropriate to the child's EHCP where one exists.

In the case of entry to the junior stage of education, a qualifying school will either be a junior school or an all through primary school with a separate published admissions number at 7+.

Types of suitable schools considered under this policy are:

- Community, foundation, trust, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- Academies or alternative provision academies
- Free schools
- Community or foundation special schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Maintained nursery schools
- City technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts, university technical college.
- An independent school, if it is the only or the nearest school named in a child's EHCP.

For mainstream applications processed during the normal school admissions round, a school will be determined as having a vacancy if a place would have been offered according to the allocations made on the national offer day, assuming the parent either made or could reasonably have made an application. For applications made after the normal admissions round and those made during the school year, a school will be determined as having a vacancy if, at the point of processing the child's school application, a place could have been allocated to the child.

When determining which qualifying school is the nearest to the home address for travel assistance, distances will be measured by the shortest road route. This assessment will exclude walking routes, such as footpaths, bridleways and pathways, and will not take into account whether the road route is safe to walk along.

In some circumstances, children may not be attending their nearest suitable school from their home address when the road route is measured. If admission to the school attended is based on distance measured as the crow flies as defined in the admissions arrangements for the school and the school attended is the nearest to home on this basis, then a discretionary extension will be applied and travel assistance provided, subject to the distance thresholds appropriate to the age of the child being met.

If, due to a medical condition or disability, a mainstream child has to attend a particular school that is not the nearest qualifying school but is over the statutory walking distance, then travel assistance will be agreed to the allocated school. Medical evidence must be provided that demonstrates why the child needs to attend that school.

Where a school operates on multiple or split sites, the assessment of nearest qualifying school will take account of the sites used to prioritise admissions (as defined in each school's admission arrangements), regardless of which year groups are educated at which site or which site a child might attend.

If for any reason a school chooses to educate children on a temporary site, the assessment of nearest school will disregard the temporary site and will instead use the intended permanent site of the school or, if that has not yet been determined, the current main site of the school.

Where an out of County school is identified as a child's nearest qualifying school and the distance of the walking route to that school would mean that travel assistance would still need to be provided, free home to school travel assistance will be made available to Surrey children attending their nearest geographical Surrey school (measured by the shortest road route), subject to the distance thresholds appropriate to the age of the child being met.

How walking distance is measured

Walking distances are calculated using the shortest available walking route from the home address to school. The legal definition of an 'available walking route' is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk and walk with reasonable safety to school.

Where a school operates on a temporary site and that school's permanent/current site is deemed to be a child's nearest qualifying school, the home to school walking distance will be measured to the school's temporary site to determine if the child lives over the statutory walking distance and is eligible for travel assistance whilst in attendance on that site. Eligibility will be reassessed at the point a child ceases to be educated at the temporary site.

Distances will be measured using the Travel Assistance Team's Geographical Information System from the address point of the pupil's house, as set by Ordnance Survey, to either the nearest school gate available for pupils to use when measuring to a Surrey school, or the address point of the school property, as set by Ordnance Survey, when measuring to a school outside Surrey.

Extended Rights

Parents who believe they meet the Extended Rights criteria and are therefore eligible for assistance with travel to school must include with their application evidence of the child's entitlement to free school meals or the family's receipt of maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC) with their application form.

A child who has been assessed as eligible for travel assistance by meeting the Extended Rights criteria will have their entitlement reviewed each academic year to ensure that the child continues to meet the necessary entitlement criteria. If it established that a child is no longer

eligible for travel assistance under extended rights, assistance will remain in place for the duration of the current academic year before being withdrawn.

If a child ceases to be eligible for free school meals or a family ceases to be entitled to the maximum level of Working Tax Credit during the academic year for which transport has been awarded, travel assistance will remain in place until the end of the academic year.

If the child is applying for travel assistance to a school of faith under Extended Rights eligibility, then the parents must also provide supporting evidence regarding their genuine adherence to their religion or belief and this will normally be confirmed by asking their minister of religion to sign the application form.

Special educational needs, disability and mobility problems

Where a child with special education needs, a disability and/or mobility problems does not meet the other three eligibility criteria but has identified specific needs/circumstances that may mean it is unreasonable to expect the child to walk to school (accompanied by an adult as necessary), then an assessment based on their individual needs and circumstances will be undertaken.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk between home and school, the Council will consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the child's parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany their child. Ordinarily, the expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent or carer, work commitments and other care will not be considered.

When assessing entitlement for travel assistance for a child with SEND or mobility problems, the Council will consider the individual needs of each child. This may include taking professional advice from educational psychologists, medical officers and teachers and consulting with parents and carers before arriving at a final decision.

Consideration will also be given to the child's physical and medical requirements including any disabilities they may have. Assessments may include face to face contact with the child. The findings and decision will be recorded on a transport assessment form.

The following factors will be taken into consideration when assessing transport entitlement:

- the age of the child
- the distance of the child from school
- whether the child is physically able to walk the journey to school
- whether the walking route is appropriate for the pupil and their specific needs and allows them to arrive in a fit state to be educated
- whether a child's emotional and behavioural difficulties will create a clear health and safety hazard to themselves or others on the journey to school
- the SEND of the child
- any other individual circumstance.

This is not an exhaustive list. It is not presented in any particular order and is for guidance only. Meeting one or more of the criteria does not automatically entitle a child with SEND to transport assistance.

The fact that a child has an EHCP or attends a special school does not automatically entitle him or her to travel assistance.

Other family circumstances, such as parents and carers attending work or looking after other children, cannot be considered when determining eligibility

Children attending schools on grounds of religion or belief

Ordinarily assistance with travel to a faith school will only be provided if it is the nearest suitable school. If parental preference results in children's attendance at a faith school when there are suitable schools nearer to home, then no travel assistance will normally be provided. However, if children meet the Extended Rights eligibility category criteria then travel assistance to a faith school which is not the nearest suitable school may be considered (see section 3.4 for more details).

Under Extended Rights, when considering whether a faith school is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, Surrey County Council will take into account the nature of other schools that may have been named as higher preferences on the application form. For an application for travel assistance to be agreed under this condition, the expectation will be that the school that is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief will be named above any non-faith schools that have been named on the application form.

When applying under Extended Rights for travel to a faith school, parents must provide supporting evidence regarding their genuine adherence to their religion or belief and this will normally be confirmed by asking their minister of religion to sign the application form.

Extenuating circumstances

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 sets out parental duty, with the overriding expectation that parents should undertake their legal responsibility to get their child(ren) to and from school and as such the Council will need to be satisfied that the parent has demonstrated why they, for social, medical, financial or personal reasons cannot undertake this duty

Recognising that the Council's discretionary powers should not be unreasonably restricted by its general policy, the Council will consider and may agree requests for home to school transport where there are considered to be extenuating circumstances that prevent a child accessing their school unless travel assistance is put in place. If the parent believes extenuating circumstances exist and assistance with travel is demonstrated as necessary, then a transport application form must be completed and submitted with all relevant information and evidence for consideration.

The determination will be based on evidence received to support the case whether transport is necessary in order for the child to receive an education. Consideration will be given as to whether the circumstances could have reasonably been foreseen by the parent/carer. For example, moving to temporary accommodation owing to flood damage cannot be foreseen, whereas choosing a school other than a child's nearest school and realising following this decision that transport is not available could be foreseen.

Where it is decided that a child does not qualify for assistance with travel based on the presented needs/circumstances then it remains solely the parent/ carer's responsibility to ensure school attendance or consider transferring the child to a more local school.

In all cases the decision whether to exercise discretion will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Children below the age of 5

There is no legal requirement for the Council to make special arrangements for children under the age of 5 to travel between home and school. The Council expects that children under the age of 5 will be taken to their educational provision by a parent or guardian. However Surrey County Council may use its discretionary powers to provide Travel Assistance for children who

are aged four and entering into the reception year at primary school if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated.

Appeals

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Parents/carers of children who live in Surrey and who wish to appeal a decision that did not grant Travel Assistance in regard to one of the following, may apply for their case to be considered at a Stage 1 appeal in relation to any of the following:

- their child's eligibility
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances and
- the safety of the route.
- the travel arrangements offered

During an appeal about an application for travel assistance, travel assistance will not be provided to the child/young person unless the appeal concerns the travel arrangements offered, in which case the offered arrangements will be available pending the appeal decision. Where the appeal concerns a change to existing travel arrangements, then the previously agreed travel arrangements will continue until the review is complete

Stage one: Case review by a senior officer

Parents/carers must complete a stage one appeal form on which they must indicate whether they believe the original decision to be wrong or whether they wish their case to be considered as an exception to the policy. The form must be returned with details of the case within 20 working days from receipt of the original transport decision.

The written request should detail why the parent/carer believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/ or family circumstances they believe should be considered.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the written request a senior officer, who was not involved with making the original decision, will review the case. More complex cases may sometimes exceed the 20 working day turnaround time for review.

The senior officer will write to the parent/carer, normally within five working days of the review, setting out:

- the decision reached
- how the review was conducted
- information about other departments and/ or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- the rationale for the decision reached and
- information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate).

Where possible, applications for review at stage one of the review process should be accompanied by independent supporting evidence such as from a GP or consultant, a social worker, the police, other local authority officers and copies of relevant court orders as appropriate.

With the exception of eligibility based on extended entitlement for families on low income, qualification for travel assistance is not means- tested, and family income will not normally be given special consideration under this review process.

When considering appeals, the following will also not normally be taken into account:

- Parent/carers' work or other commitments
- Attendance by siblings at other schools
- A work experience placement
- An address other than the home address, including a childminder's address
- Ad hoc visits to other establishments or locations
- Out of hours clubs (e.g. breakfast club, after school activities).

Stage two: Case review by an independent panel

If the parent/carer remains unhappy with the decision at stage one of the appeal, they can complete a 'Stage 2 appeal form' to request that their case is escalated for consideration by an independent panel.

The independent appeal panel will be independent of the original and stage one decision-making process (but are not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced. Panel members may include officers of the local authority along with Surrey county councillors. Including officers on independent panels will strengthen the experience and knowledge of the panel and allow appeals to be heard more rapidly as there will be a larger number of panel members to draw on. County councillors will continue to be part of appeal hearings.

Requests for a stage two appeal must be made within 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision.

Stage two appeals will normally be considered within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carers request for it to be escalated. Any additional supporting documents should be supplied by the parent at least 10 working days prior to the review hearing date. A copy of the paperwork that has been submitted to the stage two appeal panel will be sent to the parent at least seven working days prior to the review.

The parent/carer will be asked to indicate on the 'Stage 2 appeal form' whether or not they wish to attend the appeal to present their case verbally. An officer for the local authority will also be invited to present the local authority's case. Parent/carers are not required to attend and if they do not indicate that they wish to attend, the review will be scheduled to be heard in their absence.

The stage appeal panel will give equal consideration to all case reviews whether conducted in the presence of all parties or heard in the absence of one/both parties. If the panel considers that further information is required, the case will be adjourned so that the information can be made available

The clerk at the stage two appeal will write to the parent/carer, normally within five working days of the review, setting out:

- the decision reached
- how the review was conducted
- information about other departments and/ or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- the rationale for the decision reached and
- information about the parent/carer's right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (see below).

Local Government Ombudsman

There is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, but only if the complainant considers that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the review has been handled. Further advice is available at www.lgo.org.uk or on the Local Government Ombudsman advice line on 0300 061 0614.

If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review

Travel assistance options

Forms of travel assistance

The Council will review the travel needs of all eligible children and decide the most appropriate form of assistance that will be provided. The form of travel offered will reflect the most appropriate use of public funds to ensure cost effective provision is in place, while also ensuring that any agreed specific requirements, such as medical/ mobility or health needs are also taken into account where necessary.

Journey times

The nature of transport congestion in Surrey and the very long distances of many journeys means that travelling times can vary greatly. It is expected that children should arrive at school safely and fit to learn. Journey times should reflect this. Government guidance is that best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age to be 45 minutes and for secondary school age 75 minutes. In some journeys, the upper limit on planned journey times may be exceeded and in planning routes, the maximum time recommendations of 45 minutes for primary school children and 75 minutes for secondary school children will not be the overriding consideration. This would allow children and young people who could potentially share transport to do so.

However, if the Council departs from the national guidelines on journey times, it will ensure the planned route is not of such duration that the pupil is unable, because of stress or strain, to learn properly (whether at school or at home). The Council will take into consideration the pupil's age and stage of development. The 45-minute maximum planned journey time for primary-aged pupils contained in national guidance will be maintained and only exceeded in certain circumstances, such as journeys which enable a child to attend the setting which best meets their needs.

Where a child is eligible for travel assistance, the following types of assistance may be offered:

- Bus pass
- Train pass
- Training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment), subject to agreement by parent/carer
- Independent travel training
- Reimbursing of mileage costs for parents or carers who are able and willing to take their child to school
- Provision of a private bus, coach or minibus
- Provision of taxis or licensed private hire car (in exceptional circumstances)
- Shared contract transport vehicle (coach, minibus, taxi) using collection point
- Shared contract transport vehicle (coach, minibus, taxi) using home collection

- Other bespoke travel options that enable travel and the development of travel skills and independence, e.g. Travel Buddy.

Where a Surrey travel pass is not appropriate, such as where a child is travelling to an out of County school, parents can claim for reimbursement of the cost for their child to travel to school by bus or train. Parents will be asked to submit a claim form at the end of each term and evidence of the cost of the tickets purchased must be submitted. The refund will be for the lowest equivalent public transport rate between the pupil's home and the school

Travel Allowance

Where reimbursement is the most cost-effective method of providing home to school travel assistance, for example where no public transport service or contracted vehicle is available, parents who take their child to school by car may claim a mileage allowance for the journeys undertaken to take and collect their child to and from school. The mileage rates to be used will be based on either Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates, or, agreed on an individual basis with parents where the alternative would be high-cost individual transport. Mileage will be calculated by the Council and will be costed based on 4 journeys per day using the shortest road route from the home address to the school. For car users taking more than one child, only a single application will be considered per family.

Taxis will only be provided if there is no alternative mode of transport which provides a suitable journey to school or if a child's medical condition and/or disability means that he/she is unable to travel using the alternative modes of assistance that are available.

No bus/train tickets will be issued for part journeys of one mile or less unless that route has been deemed to be an unsafe walking route or unless a child cannot walk the distance due to special educational needs, disability or mobility problems.

Provision will be reviewed periodically and if a more economical mode of transport becomes available then the parent will be given notice of a change to the mode of transport

A parent or carer may choose to accept the travel allowance instead of arranged travel assistance by the Council. This enables families to make their own arrangements to facilitate travel and access to education.

Any arrangements made by the parent using the travel allowance are the responsibility of the parent.

Where there are two or more children living at the same address and attending the same school and the independent travel allowance has been agreed for one child, additional travel assistance will not be provided for the other children as all children would be expected to travel together.

If the parent transports siblings to different schools the allowance due would be based on the shortest road distance between home and school A, plus the shorter road distance between school A and school B for each journey.

The travel allowance is based on the child's attendance being over 80% for the full year. Attendance records will be requested from the school at the end of each term. If the child's attendance shows poor attendance in the Autumn or Spring terms than the parent may be transferred to the standard travel reimbursement rate instead of the travel allowance. Alternatively, if the child's attendance is below 80% then the final month's payment will be reduced.

If a parent is in receipt of the travel allowance but is temporarily unable to transport their child to school due to a short-term illness or medical condition, assistance may be provided. Any request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Mileage reimbursement may be offered to parents/carers of pupils who are entitled to free home to school transport, where this offers best value for money to the county council.

Independent travel

Independent Travel Training (ITT)

Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people in education and training. This includes mainstream pupils, people with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 25. Independent travel training aims to achieve this.

Independent travel is a valuable skill for preparing for adulthood, an essential employability skill, and provides greater opportunities for young people, not least increasing confidence in their abilities and reducing their sense of reliance on family members.

In line with the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment, ITT will be expanded as an option

from April 2022. The Council will identify young people who could benefit from ITT and contact their families with a view to undertaking a travel assessment.

The Council may also contact young people and their families who will be transitioning from compulsory education into Post 16 and a travel training assessment will be carried out, with the support of the family, to confirm the suitability of the young person for the travel training programme, taking into account the following criteria:

- Existing level of independent travel skills
- The likelihood of the pupil being eligible for SEN transport under the 16 to 19 policy
- The age of the pupil
- The distance between home and school
- The SEND of the pupil
- The route which the young person would need to undertake
- Journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey
- The frequency of the journeys required.

This assessment would take place before the pupil undertakes the ITT programme, which would last for approximately four to six weeks. During the programme, the pupil will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one to one ITT trainer.

During the period when a pupil is taking part in the ITT, this will be their travel assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, the Council will review the pupil's progress with the family to decide if it is appropriate for the pupil to continue to travel independently. If it is not appropriate for the pupil to travel independently, their travel assistance offer will be reviewed. Although it is expected that the majority of young people would benefit from ITT, it is however acknowledged that for some young people, due to the nature of their SEND, ITT will not be appropriate.

Collection points

Collection points are similar to bus stops, where the Council identifies designated pick-up and drop-off locations for the pupil to meet the bus or taxi rather than offering a door-to-door service. This reduces the time needed for the route to pick up the pupils and supports children and young people to become more independent and better prepares them for adulthood.

The Council will assess individual needs to determine suitability of routes for collection points. In most cases, collection points will be considered for children attending mainstream settings. Where a route has been identified as suitable for collection points to be introduced, the Council will consult with the parents and carers of children already on those routes over a four-week period on the introduction of a collection point and to ensure that the proposed arrangements are appropriate; for example the location of the collection point, which should be no more than a maximum of one mile from the home. The Council will also ensure that it is aware of any individual circumstances which may mean that a collection point is not appropriate for a pupil or pupils on that route due for example to their additional needs.

Achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs, and in some cases parents' own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to accompany their child to a collection point. Where this is the case, the ambition for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own children's transport where this is desired and appropriate. In such circumstances, the Council will carefully consider and assess the individual child's needs as well as the mobility and or disability of their parents.

Following a decision to introduce a collection point, the Council will provide not less than 6 weeks notification to families (which includes any school holidays that fall in the 6 week period) before the collection point is established. If a collection point is implemented, parents and carers who disagree that the transport offer is suitable for their child will be able to appeal.

Where a collection point is allocated, it is the parent's or carer's responsibility to make sure that their child travels to and from the collection point and transfers to and from the vehicle safely.

For parents who are temporarily unable to take their child to a collection point, no temporary assistance will be provided in those circumstances. This is because the child's special educational need or disability has not changed and the transport service from the collection point is available.

All collection points will be assessed in advanced for their suitability.

- Wherever a bus stop can be legally used as a collection point, it will be
- Minibuses can stop to collect and drop off on yellow and double yellow lines; vehicles cannot stop on red routes, white zig zags (near a zebra crossing) or school keep-clear hatchings
- The driver always plans not to cause obstructions to other road users while making a drop off or collection and will try to stop in parking areas or bays
- Collections or drop-off are always made kerb side
- Each collection point is physically assessed before being used in service; a driver will go out and access to see if the location is safe (for example, a well-lit public location, not too close to a junction or on the brow of a hill)
- The drivers complete dynamic risk assessments at the time of collections or / drop offs in the eventuality of any changes (new road layouts, another road user in the stopping space) and will slightly adjust the collection point if it is unsafe to stop.

Concessionary seats

The Council provides transport for children who have a statutory entitlement to free home to school transport, where it is best value to use this mode of transport. If there are any spare seats available on these routes, they are available for purchase by pupils who do not meet the statutory entitlement criteria. Spare seats will be allocated on an annual basis; however, a seat may be withdrawn at any time at short notice if it is required by a pupil with a statutory entitlement to transport. Places are offered according to published criteria available on <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/concessionary-seat>.

Transport standards

This section sets out some of the operational standards that we will follow in delivering our statutory responsibilities for home to school transport. We want to make this transparent for all parents and carers in particular so that they understand how the service operates.

Provision of contracted transport vehicles (coaches, buses, minibuses and taxis)

When a child is entitled to home to school transport under the Council's policy, the Council will provide suitable transport and seek to ensure this is cost effective. The transport provided may take the form of a bus pass, train pass, seat on a contract vehicle, for instance a hired coach, a minibus or shared taxi. A travel allowance can also be provided for children where requested by parents or carers and where it is more cost effective.

Provision of transport for part-time hours

Home to school travel assistance will only be provided at the start and finish of the normal school or college day. The provision of transport for part-time hours does not fall within local authorities' statutory duties and will not be provided.

Schools and parents and carers should take this into account when bespoke hours are being set for a child. Where families wish to have more flexible travel arrangements, a travel allowance can be requested.

However, where exceptional circumstances can be evidenced to show that a child with an EHCP is receiving education on a part time basis in school then the Council may provide travel assistance until the child is reintegrated into full time school attendance if a reintegration plan can be provided outlining the child's return to full time education.

Provision of transport for after school and non-educational activities

In accordance with statutory guidance, home to school transport will only be provided at the start and finish of the normal school or college day. The provision of transport for non-statutory education or clubs does not fall within local authorities' statutory duties and will not be provided. Parents are expected to make travel arrangements for their children in these circumstances. Where families wish to have more flexible travel arrangements, a travel allowance can be requested.

Home address and house moves

In accordance with statutory guidance, home to school transport will only be provided from and to a single address at which the child or young person is habitually and normally resident. Where a child splits their time equally between addresses, transport will be assessed from the address which is registered with the school as the home address or, prior to admission, the address used on the relevant school admission application form.

For children without an EHCP

Assistance with travel will not normally be agreed to a child's existing school if a house-move results in the child living beyond the statutory walking distance from school but there are other nearer schools with an available place.

However, assistance may be agreed if the child is in years 6, 10 or 11 at the time of the move and if there are extenuating circumstances that the Council deem sufficient to provide assistance on a discretionary basis. Where parents wish their case to be considered on this basis, they should provide details along with independent evidence of their case.

Assistance with travel may also be agreed even if the school attended is not the nearest suitable with places in certain circumstances. If the move is an enforced temporary council move within Surrey that is anticipated to last less than 6 months or where a parent has moved to a refuge in Surrey, and the distance from home to school meets the agreed criteria, assistance with travel may be considered. Evidence of an enforced temporary council move/move to a refuge must be provided. Travel assistance agreed under this provision may only be agreed for a fixed period of time and will be subject to periodic review.

For children with an EHCP

If a child with an EHCP moves address, the SEND team will review the plan to consider if the school being attended is still the nearest suitable school that can meet the child's needs. If it is, and the child continues to meet the criteria to be eligible for travel assistance then assistance will be offered from the new address.

Pick up and drop off timing

Routes to and from school and pick-up and drop- off times are planned by the transport provider to be as efficient as possible for all students traveling on the vehicle. Because of this, it is not possible to accommodate the individual circumstances of each family, such as work commitments or taking other children to and from school. Where families wish to have more flexible travel arrangements, a travel allowance can be requested.

Dual and link placements, inclusion and pupil referral units

Dual placements are where a child or young person attends more than one school or where a school arranges a college link placement for a pupil. Dual placements may require additional transport assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times of the school day. Schools are responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of such transport. Where a pupil is on the roll at one school but visits another school for inclusion or link purposes, the school where the pupil is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport. These arrangements also apply to pupil referral units.

Children attending residential placements

Children who attend a residential school that has been named in their EHCP as their nearest suitable school will be entitled to travel assistance to take them to and from school as follows:

- Weekly/Fortnightly boarding placements – travel assistance will be provided to for children to travel to school on a Sunday evening/Monday morning, as directed by the school, and to travel home at the end of each week/fortnight, or earlier as directed by the school for unplanned or planned earlier closures
- Termly residential placements – travel assistance will be provided for 12 single journeys to cover travel home at the start and end of each term and half term
- Permanent (52 week) residential placements – travel assistance will be provided for 12 single journeys each academic year. These are at the discretion of the parent and

school but, where contracted transport is needed, this needs to be booked at least 10 days in advance through Surrey's Transport Coordination Centre

- Any additional trips will be the responsibility of the parent.

Passenger assistants

Passenger assistants (escorts) are not automatically provided. In considering whether a route needs a passenger assistant, the Council generally takes account of the following:

- A child's medical needs, particularly where rescue medication is required
- Where an individual child's needs create a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves and other passengers on the vehicle
- Where the number of children travelling together necessitates the provision of a passenger assistant to help manage a group children and their specific support needs on the journey.

Passenger assistants for SEND purposes are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Provision of a passenger assistant at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement; the requirement can be reassessed at any time in the academic year, and in the event of any change in circumstances.

Medication and health interventions

All Passenger Assistants have received accredited emergency first aid training.

Although there is no statutory duty for transport staff to administer medication, they are expected to ensure the health and safety of all pupils in their care. First aid training includes: managing the symptoms of shock, dealing with an unconscious casualty, cardiac arrest and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, choking, and seizures.

The emergency services can advise members of transport staff about the closest automated external defibrillator for use in treating a patient in cardiac arrest.

Operators will ensure that every driver and passenger assistant is able to respond to an emergency situation, however, they will not normally be expected to administer medical assistance. Every parent, as part of their application, is required to provide detailed information directly to the Travel Assistance Team about their child's SEND and/or medical needs.

This information forms the basis of the pupil's transport plan. In some cases, where a child has very specific and complex needs, an additional care plan from medical professionals may be required. A needs assessment will be undertaken to ensure the correct level of medical support can be arranged and where it is deemed to be unsafe for a pupil with complex or acute medical needs to travel with only a passenger assistant, Surrey will seek to secure a medically-trained professional from our colleagues in Health to accompany the pupil on the vehicle and meet their healthcare needs. For clarity these professionals will not be considered as a passenger assistant or transport staff, they will be considered as specialist 1:1 health support separate from travel assistance provision.

Members of transport staff are not permitted to administer medication or to replace medical accessories (for example, gastrostomy or tracheotomy tubes) on board a vehicle. The exception to these are pre-loaded EpiPens® or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices as these are loaded with the correct dosage of medication and do not require members of transport staff to accurately measure medication within a confined and possibly moving space.

This can only be done with prior agreement from Surrey and the appropriate training having been completed.

Medication can be transported along with the pupil for use whilst they are at their destination, but this must be advised to the transport staff and advice should be sought from Surrey as to whether it requires a handover document to be signed.

In the event of an emergency on board a vehicle, the procedure is for the passenger assistant or driver to seek guidance from medical professionals by calling 999 and asking for a paramedic crew to attend the scene. It is for parents or carers to decide whether they wish for their child to travel on regular transport in these circumstances.

Shared travel

Ordinarily children and young people travelling to and from school or college will be expected to share their transport with other children or young people. This promotes integration and independence, social skills as well as being more sustainable and cost effective. Conversely, travelling on their own may lead to social isolation of a young person and a delay in development of essential social behaviours and skills. It also impacts on an individual's ability to access other forms of travel and to travel with others.

In developing a travel assistance policy with a focus on enabling independence and preparing for adulthood such as employment or shared living away from home, individual transport will only be agreed in extenuating circumstances. This would normally be linked to other medical needs or where the child or young person is receiving funded one-to-one support at their educational placement.

Behaviour of children on transport

Children, parents, carers, schools, transport operators and the Council all have a role to play in ensuring the appropriate behaviour of children on school transport.

While passenger assistants have a responsibility for safeguarding children and maintaining behavioural standards on the vehicle during the course of the journey, schools will take whatever steps possible to ensure the appropriate behaviour of their students on home to school transport; and will take appropriate action should incidents of poor behaviour be reported. Appropriate action may include the use of sanctions, written warnings and exclusion from transport. Parents are also expected to take responsibility for their child's behaviour while travelling.

Where a child's behaviour is directly as a result of a known and diagnosed medical condition and it is agreed by medical advisors and teachers that the child is unable to control their behaviour, the Council will undertake a needs assessment and will consider making alternative arrangements, for example, providing the parent or carer with a mileage allowance or direct payments to make their child's own travel arrangements.

The Council recognises that general poor behaviour, not directly attributable to a child's particular special educational needs and circumstances, cannot be taken into account when determining an appropriate safe travel plan. The Council will expect clear standards of acceptable behaviour in the interests of ensuring a safe journey for all pupils and staff as well as other road users.

Reasonable adjustments will be made in cases where behaviour problems persist and it is judged that the safety of the other passengers is endangered. Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made to deal with behaviour, transport can be withdrawn in individual cases and the Council will provide resources for parents to make alternative travel arrangements.

Pupils exhibiting dangerous behaviour will be subject to two written warnings issued by the Council. If a third warning is given, the transport offer will be reviewed and may be withdrawn. This action shall only be taken as a last resort and is not considered punishment of the student but is for the safety of all concerned. In this instance the Council would provide a travel allowance instead.

In consultation with schools, the Council may instigate permanent or fixed periods of exclusion from transport. Parents or carers will be responsible for transporting their children during any period of exclusion and ensuring their child's regular attendance at school.

Travel assistance agreed in error

Travel assistance that has been agreed in error or as a result of incorrect, misleading or fraudulent information, or as a result of an assessment error, will be withdrawn. Surrey County Council will seek reimbursement of any costs that have been obtained fraudulently and reserve the right to take legal action against any person who has made fraudulent application for free home to school transport.

How we use your data

Surrey County Council respects your rights and is committed to ensuring that it manages your data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2019 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You can find out more about how we manage your data on the privacy notice section of our website at www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/your-privacy.

Post-16 Policy Statement

Travel assistance policy statement for learners aged 16 to 18 in further education and continuing learners aged 19 and over.

Contents:

- Introduction
- Concessionary fares and travel assistance schemes
- 16-18 travel assistance policy
- 19-25 travel assistance policy
- Restrictions on concessionary fares
- Independent Travel Training
- Traineeships and apprenticeships (internships)
- Assessment of eligibility
- Financial contributions
- Independent Travel Allowance
- Travel Fund and Bursary
- Bursary -contact details for Surrey colleges
- Appeals
- College and School Sixth Form Travel Assistance Provision

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the local authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving

education or training. In determining its policy the Council has taken into account all relevant matters including the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment.

This policy statement gives information about the schemes and support available within Surrey for the provision of college travel assistance aged 16-19 and 19-25. It outlines the transport schemes and assistance available for post 16 learners who live and study in Surrey or those learners who live in Surrey and attend an educational establishment outside of the county if it is the nearest provider offering the appropriate course.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support.

This document identifies the current policies of Surrey County Council, which it should be noted could be subject to change in the future. Therefore, this policy does not amount to a legitimate expectation that any service currently offered will continue to be offered.

Surrey is also committed to reducing emissions and improving Air Quality, to improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. This links to our Climate Change Strategy, please see link below.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/climate-change-strategy>

Details of concessionary fares and travel assistance schemes

16 to 17 Saver Railcard

This is a national scheme that offers 16 and 17 year olds a 50% discount on standard anytime, off peak, advance and season tickets. The 16 to 17 Saver costs £30 and is valid for one year or until your 18th birthday, whichever comes first. Full details and an online application can be found on the [16 to 17 saver website](#)

Student Fare Card Scheme

Surrey County Council offers this scheme which enables young learners aged 17 to 18 to travel on buses and trains at reduced fares for journeys to and from school/college. The student fare card costs £25 and is valid from 1 September until the end of the following August. [Apply for a Student Fare Card](#) on the Surrey County Council website.

Post-16 travel assistance policy

In extenuating circumstances, where travel assistance has been demonstrated as necessary, we may offer support to children and young people to travel to their educational placement, in the form of

- Bus pass
- Train pass
- Training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment), subject to agreement by parent/carer
- Independent travel training
- A post-16 transport bursary*
- Provision of a private bus, coach or minibus
- Provision of taxis or licensed private hire car (in exceptional circumstances)
- Shared contract transport vehicle (coach, minibus, taxi) using collection point
- Shared contract transport vehicle (coach, minibus, taxi) using home collection
- Other bespoke travel options that enable travel and the development of travel skills and independence, e.g. Travel Buddy.

- Driving lessons (age dependant)

*The Council will exercise discretion to provide travel assistance in the form of a post-16 transport bursary to support families and young people to make their own transport arrangements to develop independence and prepare for adulthood pathways.

An Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) in the form of mileage reimbursement may be offered to parents/carers of all pupils who are entitled to travel assistance where this offers best value for money to the county council. The mileage rates to be used will be set in line either with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates, or, agreed on an individual basis with parents where the alternative would be high-cost individual transport. Mileage will be calculated by the Council, payment for mileage will be paid after the contribution amount is exhausted

If assistance is agreed, an application will be required to be submitted each year.

16-18 travel assistance policy

The Council will only provide travel assistance for learners of sixth form age where it considers that travel assistance has been demonstrated as necessary to enable the young person to reasonably access their education or training provision.

When determining whether the need for travel assistance has been demonstrated, the Council will have regard to, amongst other things:

- whether the young person has received travel training, is able to travel independently and his/her ability to access public transport.
- the nature of the young person's special educational needs, disability and/or learning difficulty. This includes the physical ability of the young person to walk, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult to the learning provision or a pickup point;
- distance and journey time from the young person's home to establishments of education and training,
- the cost of assistance and alternative means of transport.
- the nature of the route or alternative routes which the young person could reasonably be expected to take;
- the reasons why a young person wishes to attend one establishment rather than another;
- Whether the establishment is named in the student's EHCP and whether there are alternative suitable schools or colleges that the student could attend
- supporting evidence from professionals involved with the young person and their family;
- if there is a nearer education provision which is suitable and can provide the same or similar qualification(s) or course;
- the best use of the council's resources
- Transport links – the ease of access to public transport
- The distance measurement between home and learning placement.

This is not an exhaustive list and requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

When travel assistance is provided, it will normally only be provided at the start and end of the school/college day, unless a shuttle bus service is used. Pupils may have to wait for either the next shuttle bus or until the end of the school/college day to access homeward travel

Only in exceptional circumstances connected to an individual's learning difficulties and/or disabilities and where no alternative mode of travel is available, will taxi travel be considered, normally on a shared taxi basis. Solo transport provision will only be considered for those pupils in receipt of Independent Personal Support Budget (IPSB) funding or those that present with complex medical and/or health needs.

The Local Authority will, where possible, adhere to best practice relating to journey times for post-16 students however, it is recognised that adhering to journey times may not always be possible particularly in rural areas. It may be deemed acceptable for a trip to exceed these journey times if it is considered that the additional time does not place undue stress, strain or difficulty on the student , which would prevent them from benefitting from the education.

Restrictions on concessionary fares

The [Bus Student Fare Card Scheme](#) allows 16 to 18 year old Surrey students in full time education to travel on Surrey buses for the under 16s fare on **single and return tickets only**. A student fare card can only be used to travel to and from school or college, however the following bus companies have agreed to charge the under 16 rate for any journey which starts or finishes in the 11 boroughs of Surrey including evenings, weekends and school/college holidays.

Arriva (service Surrey and West Sussex)

Cobham Chatterbus

Compass Bus

Falcon Buses

First

Hallmark Connections - Students (16 to 19) travelling on Hallmark buses can redeem student/child fares with just their college/university student card

London General

Metrobus

Quality Line

Safeguard

Southdown

Stagecoach

White Bus Services

Please note that London Bus services do not accept the student fare card. A [list of eligible bus journeys](#) are listed.

The [Surrey 17 to 18 Train student fare card](#) allows 17 to 18 year old Surrey students in full time education to buy a season ticket (only for travel to and from home school/college) at a reduced rate of 1/3 off the standard adult cost. Season tickets are available for seven days (minimum), one month, and between one month and one year. You can also use the card to buy single and return tickets after 6pm during the week and at weekends for leisure journeys.

The start, finish and transfer stations must all be on the [qualifying stations](#) list. In addition, the journey must start or finish at one of the stations in **bold** print on the qualifying stations list and be made via the rail lines specified on the Student Fare Card [train map](#).

This scheme is available for those students who are unable to benefit from the 16 to 17 Saver Card available nationally.

Independent Travel Training (ITT)

In line with the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment, ITT will be expanded as an option. The Council will identify young people, and those who will be transitioning from compulsory education into Post 16 and above who could benefit from ITT and contact their families with a view to undertaking an ITT assessment.

An ITT assessment will be carried out with the support of the family and/or school, to confirm the suitability of the young person for the ITT programme, taking into account the following criteria:

- The likelihood of the pupil being eligible for SEN transport under the 16 to 19 policy
- Existing level of independent travel skills
- The age of the pupil
- The distance between home and school
- The SEND of the pupil
- The route which the young person would need to undertake
- Journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey
- The frequency of the journeys required.

This assessment would take place before the pupil undertakes the ITT programme, which would last for approximately four to six weeks. During the programme, the pupil will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one to one ITT trainer.

During the period when a pupil is taking part in the ITT, this will be their travel assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, the Council will review the pupil's progress with the family to decide if it is appropriate for the pupil to continue to travel independently. If it is not appropriate for the pupil to travel independently, their travel assistance offer will be reviewed. Although it is expected that the majority of young people would benefit from ITT, it is however acknowledged that for some young people, due to the nature of their SEND, ITT will not be appropriate.

Traineeships, apprenticeships and internships

For students on traineeships, apprenticeships and internships – the learning provider is responsible for ensuring that reasonable expenses are met in full where they are needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the cost of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Please contact your learning provider for more information. Students may also be eligible for a bursary (see Bursary Fund section above).

Financial Contributions

Where it is agreed that travel assistance is required, we will ask students aged 16-19 or their parents/carers to contribute towards the transport costs. For the academic year 2022/2023 the contribution will be as follows:

- £581.40 for students whose families are in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit and/or who continue to meet the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals; students in care; care leavers; those on Income Support/Universal Credit in their own right; disabled young people who receive Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their name; or
- £801.80 for all other students.

Travel support from government

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. You could get a bursary to help with education-related costs if you're aged 16 to 19 and:

- Studying at a publicly funded school or college in England - not a university (a publicly funded school is one that does not charge you for attending it)
- On a training course, including unpaid work experience

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:

- you're in or you 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

2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment. Your education or training provider decides how much you get and what it's used for. If you're 19 and over, you'll only be eligible for a discretionary bursary so could get this if you either:

- Are continuing on a course you started aged 16 to 18 (known as being a '19+ continuer')
- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Your school or college will have their own criteria for discretionary bursaries. They'll look at your individual circumstances - this usually includes your family income.

Ask student services about their criteria and any evidence you'll need. Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary.

Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application

School Bursary Funding - Contact your Head of Sixth Form or Bursar in the first instance

For bursary support at colleges, contact Student Services at:

Brooklands College

- Email: info@brooklands.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01932 797901

East Surrey College

- Email: clientservices@esc.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01737 788444

Esher College

- Email: info@esher.ac.uk
- Telephone: 0208 398 0291

Godalming College

- Email: college@godalming.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01483 423526

Guildford College Group

- Email: info@guildford.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01483 448585

NESCOT

- Email: studentfinance@nescot.ac.uk
- Telephone: 0208 394 3033

Reigate College

- Email: enquiries@reigate.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01737 221118

Strode's College

- Email: welfare@strodes.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01784 437506

University College for the Creative Arts

- Email: advicefarn@ucreative.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01252 722441

Woking College

- Email: wokingcoll@woking.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01483 761036

19-25 travel assistance policy

Assistance with transport for students over the age of 19 with learning difficulties or disabilities

The Council's duty and powers in relation to post-19 (19 to 25) travel assistance apply to young adults and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged between 19 and 25 inclusive who have an Education Health and Care Plan

The Council is required to provide assistance where needed to students who are in attendance at a local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institutions or an institution within the further education sector. The Council must also provide assistance where necessary to students with EHCPs where the Council has secured the provision of education

or training at an institution outside the further and higher education sectors and the Council is providing boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training. In these cases, the Council will consider whether assistance with travel is necessary to enable the young adult to maintain attendance at their education placement. If it is identified that assistance is necessary, then there would be no charge/ financial contribution expected from the young adult.

The post-19 (19 to 25) Home to School Travel Policy will be focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young adult are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel support, as we move away from standard provision in favour of a policy which recognises that young people are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age

For post-19 students starting a new course, you must evidence why it is necessary for the Council and not the student to make travel arrangements. To assess this and understand the individual circumstances, we would need to know:

- The nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the student could reasonably be expected to take to college
- What other arrangements you have considered or tried and why they are not suitable
- If there is a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student and if not, why it would not be possible or reasonable for them to do so
- Whether the student is in receipt of higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance, the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outside. We would normally expect this benefit to be fully utilised and if there are any factors limiting its use you should provide details of them
- Whether there is a 'mobility' vehicle for which the student may or may not be the driver.
- Whether the student has support from the Council's social care department to assist with travel
- Any other needs or circumstances that you consider need to be taken into account and the Council consider any recent supporting evidence that you provide.

If travel assistance is provided, contribution towards the cost of travel assistance will not apply.

The council will consider whether to exercise its discretion in exceptional circumstances to pay all or part of the reasonable travelling expenses of a young adult with an EHCP attending an institution outside the further education sector or which is not a council-assisted or maintained institution based on the individual circumstances including the factors set out above.

Review/Appeals Process

Parents and /or Young People who wish to challenge the outcome of the travel assistance assessment can find details of the appeal process at the following link:

www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport

11. Contact details

Surrey Student Fare Card

Telephone: 0300 200 1004

E-mail: student.farecards@surreycc.gov.uk

Surrey Contact Centre Telephone: 03456 009 009 (8am to 6pm weekdays)

Email: contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk

For any changes to transport provided by Surrey County Council, please contact the Transport Coordination Centre 0300 200 1004 or email travel.assistance@surreycc.gov.uk

12. Complaints Procedure

Information about Surrey County Council's [complaints procedure](#)

College	Service	Details
Godalming College	Subsidised bus services (£850 for full academic year): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farnham via Frensham, Churt, Hindhead and Haslemere 2. Liss via Bordon, Headley and Grayshott 	Full details can be found on Godalming College's website or contact the Finance Office: finance@godalming.ac.uk / 01483 423526
Guildford College	Supported Learning Students can get bus tokens to aid in confidence building and independence.	For more information and to get the bus token visit the Student Services Team at the College.
Cobham to Salesian School Bus	A community minibus service transporting students from Cobham to Salesian School free of charge.	Enquiries about the scheme to be directed to the school, please email pcarr@salesian.surrey.sch.uk
Strode's College	South Western Railways – exclusive season ticket fares	Full details can be found at Travel (windsor-forest.ac.uk)

College and Sixth Form Travel Assistance Provision and Local Provider

Provider	Discounts/Concessions	Further details and how to apply
Stagecoach Unirider	Subsidised Bus Fare Cards valid on any Stagecoach bus for any travel 7 days a week. Cards can be bought on a half termly, termly or annual basis. Available for the Guildford College Group, Farnborough College of Technology and Godalming College.	See Stagecoach website for further information
Southdown Student Fare Card	Those aged between 16 & 19 can travel at the child rate on production of a Valid Student Fare Card. Surrey residents can use their Surrey Student Fare Card (see section 3.1). Those living elsewhere can apply directly to Southdowns Buses (cards cost £25 and are valid between 1 September 2020 and 31 July 2021).	For more information visit Southdown Buses website or apply for a Southdown Buses Student Fare Card
Transport for London (TfL)	16+ Zip Oyster photocard: Children aged 16 to 17 can get free and discounted travel on TfL services with a 16+ Zip Oyster photocard.	TfL 16+ Zip Oyster photocard

Abellio	Student Bus Pass: Valid for one term and enable travel on all Abellio Surrey bus services 7 days a week during term time (including half term). Passes cost £200 per term (non refundable).	To download an application form go to <u>abellio-surrey-student-bus-pass-application.pdf</u>
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