

London Borough of Ealing
Discretionary Independent Travel Policy for POST-16
Young People Accessing Further Education
May 2025

Introduction

Overview

This document explains the policy for the provision of travel assistance by the Council to young people living in Ealing and describes how it applies to learners of sixth form age (16-18) and continuing learners aged 19 to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

This policy is Ealing Council's Independent Travel Policy Statement, which is based on the Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training statutory guidance for local authorities published by the Department for Education in January 2019: [Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2019](#).

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support but do have a duty to review, prepare and publish an annual transport policy by the 31st of May each year. This policy statement gives information about the schemes and support available within Ealing for the provision of travel assistance to school or college for learners aged 16 to 19 and 19 to 25. It outlines the transport schemes and assistance available for post-16 learners who live in Ealing. The policy is reviewed annually.

In determining the Ealing policy, we have considered all relevant matters including the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and, where appropriate, employment.

16 to 19 travel assistance

All students aged 16-18 are entitled to free bus and tram transport in London. The Council considers that there is sufficient transport provision to meet the transport needs of most young people under the age of 18.

Post 16 travel assistance is therefore discretionary and subject to assessment, as detailed within this policy. Each application will be assessed on its own merit, reviewing the specific individual needs of the young person against this policy. It is therefore important that all the information and evidence requested is provided during the application process as this will support decision making.

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.

If the Council agrees that a student aged 16-19 is eligible for assistance, the Council will determine what provision of travel assistance to award based on the individual needs of the young person. Information on the provisions of travel assistance which may be awarded are detailed later in this policy.

Assessment of Eligibility

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

- Whether the student is currently in receipt of any funding from the 16-19 Bursary Fund and to what value.
- Whether the young person has received travel training, is able to travel independently and the 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 to a pickup point, as well as sensory/behavioural needs.
- 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.
- Whether the establishment is named in the young person's EHCP and whether there are alternative suitable schools or colleges that the student could attend closer to home.
- Supporting evidence from professionals involved with the young person and their family.

This is not an exhaustive list, and requests will be considered on individual circumstances.

Post-16 travel assistance policy

When travel assistance is provided in the form of arranged transport, it will only be provided at the start and end of the school/college day. Individual timetables will not be catered for.

Where a particular course timetable does not correspond with the drop off and pick up times of transport, parents/carers will be expected to make arrangements to drop off or collect the young person. Alternatively, parents or carers should make arrangements with the education or training provider to ensure the young person is adequately supervised if required.

Travel assistance will only be provided to and from the young person's main residence. Main residence will be considered as being the address at which the young person is registered while attending college/further education, is registered with their GP, and, if applicable, the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or Child Tax Credits for your child.

Only in exceptional circumstances connected to an individual's medical needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities and where no alternative mode of travel is available, will taxi travel be considered. Individual transport provision will only be considered for those that present with complex medical, health and/or behavioural needs.

Where travel assistance has been demonstrated as necessary, the Council will offer support to young people to travel to their educational placement. Provisions of support will be either:

Personal Independence Budget (PIB)

The benefits of this travel option are as follows:

- The young person and the families are able to make their own arrangements to best suit the needs of their individual.
- Travel arrangements organised by the young person and/or family can be tailored to fit around other commitments.
- The type of travel arrangements made by the young person or family can take any form that they deem appropriate.
- Provides greater flexibility for collection/drop off at alternative locations or support the attendance at after school clubs/activities in the community.

Options include:

- Using the family car.
- Paying a carer to support the young person to and from their place of education.
- Paying for a bus or train pass so parent or friend can accompany the young person on their journey.

This option allows for greater flexibility in the provision of travel assistance. Families are able to make changes at any time rather than other more restrictive travel options.

Independent travel training

The benefits of this travel option for the family and young person are as follows:

- Increased independence, confidence, and personal mobility. Increased access to education opportunities at colleges and universities, local services, and leisure activities.
- Reduced reliance on family members to provide travel to current and future activities.
- Improvement in life skills, such as handling money, personal and road safety skills.
- Increased opportunity to gain employment and further education.

A trainer will travel and work with your young person on a 1:1 basis to ensure the following aspects of the training are understood and put in to practice independently:

- Timetables (including time management).
- Orientation.
- Road Safety.
- Accessibility (access to transport, exits and purchasing tickets).
- Communication.
- Personal Safety (including what-if scenarios).
- Travel Preparation.

Travelling independently is a key life skill, and we would like to offer the opportunity to participate to as many young people as possible.

Provision of an arranged vehicle

Arranged transport is planned and scheduled transport. Arranged vehicles collect many passengers from agreed collection points, for example a home address or identified collection point in the community, and travel to a set education establishment.

Where it is agreed that travel assistance via the provision of arranged transport is required, we will ask students aged 16-19 or their parents/carers to contribute towards the transport costs.

For the academic year 2025/2026 the contribution will be as follows:

- £380 per annum (equivalent to £127 per term or £2 a day) for households on “low income” (Low-income households are defined as families receiving the full amount of universal credit.).
- £1,520 per annum (equivalent to £507 per term or £8 a day) for all other young people.

Families are required to pay the financial contribution, either in 1 payment for the full academic year, or in 3 termly instalments in advance of each term. Each term's contribution payment must be paid before the start of each term in which travel support is required. Failure to pay will result in travel assistance being withdrawn.

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, induction days and enrolment days do not fall within local authorities' statutory duties and will not be provided.

Schools/Colleges, parents and carers should take this into account when bespoke hours are being considered. Where families wish to have more flexible travel arrangements, a Personal Independence Budget can be requested.

Dual and link placements, inclusion, and pupil referral units

Dual placements are where a young person attends more than one educational setting or where a school arranges a dual/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/college where the pupil is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport.

Collection points

Collection points are like bus stops, where the Council identifies designated pick-up and drop-off locations for the pupil to meet the vehicle rather than offering a door-to-door service. This reduces

the time needed for the route to pick up the pupils and supports 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. The Council will 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 may not be possible for some young people with the most complex SEND needs, and in some cases parent/carers' own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to accompany their young person to a collection point. Where this is the case, the ambition for the service is to improve the range of options available for young people to take responsibility of their own travel assistance where this is desired and appropriate. In such circumstances, the Council will carefully consider and assess the individual young person's needs as well as the mobility and or disability of their parents/carers.

All collection points will be assessed in advance for their suitability and a risk assessment is carried out for each. In most instances, parent/carers are expected to accompany the young person to and from the designated collection point. The handover to the passenger assistant will occur when the young person boards the vehicle.

Bursary and Travel Support

All students should discuss with their school or college student support service whether they may be eligible with transport costs from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

What is a bursary?

A bursary is money that you, or your education or training provider, can use to pay for things like

- clothing, books, and other equipment for your course,
- transport and lunch on days you study or train.
- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Overview (GOV.UK).

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 two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

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

- you are 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.

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 and could get this if you either:

- are continuing 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 at the educational establishment about their criteria and any evidence you will need. Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursaries. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

If you wish to find out about School or College Bursary Funding, please contact the Head of Sixth Form or Bursar at your education provision.

19 to 25 travel assistance

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 young people who attend a local authority maintained setting 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.

The overall intention of the adult transport duty is to ensure that those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation can undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday to help them move towards more independent living.

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 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.

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.

Appeals

Parents/carers of young people or young people themselves who live in Ealing and who wish to appeal a decision that did not grant travel assistance regarding one of the following, may apply for their case to be considered at a stage one appeal in relation to any of the following:

The young person has not been offered home to school/college travel support, but you believe your individual circumstances are so exceptional that assistance should be provided, OR

The young person has been offered travel support, but you disagree with the mode of assistance provided.

During an appeal about an application for travel assistance, travel assistance will not be provided to the 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

Where an application for school travel support has been refused, or you believe further consideration of your young person's circumstances is required, the following process will apply.

- You should submit your review in writing via email within 20 working days of the original notification of decision. Requests for reviews must be sent by email to senta@ealing.gov.uk
- Your request for review must detail all the options explored and considered by the family to make their own travel arrangements, and why these options are not suitable/available.
- New information/evidence not included in the original application must also be provided. This should support the circumstances and reasons why you feel travel assistance should be provided,

and where possible this information/evidence should be from relevant professionals and should clearly identify how specific needs/circumstances mean that travel assistance is required.

- The decision will then be reviewed by the senior officer. You will receive a decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the request for a stage 1 appeal.

Stage two: Case review by an independent panel

- You have 20 working days to challenge the review decision. The stage 2 appeal will be reviewed by a panel within 40 working days of receipt of the stage 2 appeal.
- You should submit your appeal with supporting evidence along with the stage 1 decision to senta@ealing.gov.uk. The panel will consider the appeal in line with this policy. The decision will be sent within 5 working days.
- During each stage of the appeal process the reviewing officers/panel will use the evidence available to them to review the previous decision and whether the policy has been applied correctly.
- When you submit additional information for consideration it may be helpful to consider providing any of the following:
 - Details of how your young person currently travels around outside of school.
 - Examples of incidents/concerns as a result of the council's original decision
 - Supporting medical evidence from a consultant, doctor, or other medical professional.
 - What efforts have been made by family and friends to support your young person with his/her travel assistance and attendance at school?
 - Evidence that alternative travel options have been explored, along with evidence why they are not considered suitable.

The appeal process is separate from any complaints or concerns that you wish to raise around the quality of the service that you and/or your young person receives.

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 on the LGO website or on the Local Government Ombudsman advice line on 0300 061 0614.

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

Complaints procedure

If you are unhappy with the assistance, you have received and wish to submit a complaint to the Council this can be done on the Ealing Council website:

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/516/complaints