

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER

POST 16 STUDENT TRANSPORT POLICY 2013/14

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval regarding the post 16 student transport policies for the academic year 2013/14.
- 1.2 The report outlines proposals for implementing a wider use travel pass for certain bus routes.
- 1.3 The report sets out the options for changing the post 16 student transport policy to take account of part – time courses.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 There are two post 16 student transport policies. One is for students who have special or medical needs and need extra support to get to their post 16 courses. The other is for students who do not need additional support and can use public transport. The policies are reviewed and published every year. Both policies are currently restricted to students on full-time courses.
- 2.2 During the academic year 2012/13 we provided transport support for 53 students with special or medical needs and for 1,289 other students.
- 2.3 The council has a statutory duty to facilitate the attendance of people of 6th form age to education or training, but students can be expected to pay all or part of the cost of transport.
- 2.4 The Government's policy on Raising the Participation Age, requires that, from September 2013 all school leavers should continue to study or train in one of several ways which includes the provision for part-time education.
- 2.5 The current policy provides a transport pass for full-time students who live more than 3 miles from their institution to travel solely between home and their college or sixth form during term time. For the academic year 2012/13 students made a contribution of £30 to their travel pass with a replacement pass levy of £20.

- 2.6 In order to improve the services offered for young people, the council has recently liaised with transport operator(s) to identify ways to enhance the service offer. One operator has agreed that passes purchased by the council for use on their services will give unlimited travel during term-time, including evenings and weekends. The current percentage of post 16 students allocated to this operator's service is 35%.
- 2.7 The number of post 16 students is estimated to reduce over the following 5 years by 208 pupils (average of 42 pupils per year), which provides the opportunity to re-consider the policy options.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** To alter the post 16 transport policies to encompass those students studying part-time and/or on courses of less than one academic year and to consider the extension of travel times on certain routes being offered by the provider at no additional cost per pass

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.2 Option 1:

- 4.2.1 The Government's policy on Raising the Participation Age, requires that, from September 2013 all young people should continue to study or train in one of several ways which includes the provision for part-time education.
- 4.2.2 The proposed change to the Post 16 Transport policy will promote the ability for students to access more flexible learning options when they leave school.
- 4.2.3 It is anticipated that approximately 3.5% of the cohort leaving North Lincolnshire schools will undertake part-time study options in September. This equates to approximately 70 new students who may apply for a travel pass. Depending on where students live the additional cost is estimated to be £10,000.
- 4.2.4 This 'enhanced service offer' would be of benefit to eligible students who are allocated a travel pass for use on one of the operator's routes. It would enable them to access employment and leisure activities using their council pass for no additional expenditure to the council or the student.
- 4.2.5 At present, this option is only being supported by one bus operator and therefore not available on all post 16 provided routes which creates a disparity between learners who are

eligible to use the participating operator's routes opposed to those who are not.

4.2.6 By adopting the extended travel times the demand for travel passes may increase.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 Costings are dependent upon demand. It is estimated that the additional costs associated with option 1 would be about £10,000.

5.1.2 The overall home to school transport provision budget for 2013-14 is £3,510,711. Based on current levels of expenditure and projected demand the existing budget is sufficient to cover the additional costs outlined above. The home to school transport budgets are demand led and as such any increase in demand can lead to increased costs.

5.1.3 In order to ensure that the total cost of provision is affordable within the approved budgets this policy along with the Home to School Transport Policies will be reviewed annually.

5.1.3 The budget for 2013-14 assumes a student contribution of £30 for a travel pass under the Post 16 Transport Policy.

5.2 Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

6. OUTCOMES FROM INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been undertaken for this policy. The two key features to note from the assessment provided below:

6.1 **Environmental** -The scheme encourages students to travel by bus rather than in their own cars. It also supports the public transport network.

6.2 **Statutory** - The council has a duty to help post 16 students access further education, but not to provide free transport.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED

7.1 An informal meeting has taken place with John Leggott College and North Lindsey College who support the proposed changes.

7.2 The Council's Transport Review identified that young people wanted better access to transport during their leisure time. Whilst young people recognised the cost implications of improving transport accessibility, they confirmed they were willing to make a financial contribution. However, they felt that having to pay adult fares was unfair. In summary, they wanted better access to bus travel.

7.3 There have been no conflicts of interest either identified or declared.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That Cabinet Member approves:

- The updated policies in Appendix 1 which includes those students studying part-time and/or on courses of less than one academic year.
- The extension of travel times on certain routes which is being offered at the same charge per pass.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

DfE: Factsheet: "Raising the Participation Age – Important information for local authorities".

If you are applying to a college or school sixth form to continue your education post 16 you may be eligible for help with your transport.

1. Courses covered

Your chosen course of study must be a further education course at a publicly funded institution. Students attending work based learning programmes must apply to their employer for transport support.

2. School/College Attended

The course will normally be at a college or sixth form within North Lincolnshire. In some circumstances we may consider providing support for a course outside North Lincolnshire, for example:

- where it would be unreasonable to travel to a local provider and the journey to the out-of-county college is much easier,
- if the course is unavailable in North Lincolnshire and it is essential to your intended career progression.
 - **NB:** Even though the course in North Lincolnshire may not be exactly the same as the student's preferred course elsewhere, if it provides the student with the same opportunity to follow a higher education course or meets the entry criteria for their chosen career, transport support will not be provided to the course outside North Lincolnshire.
- if it is nearer than one in North Lincolnshire and the transport costs no more
- the distance from home to the out-of-county college should be no more than 25 miles. If the distance exceeds 25 miles, but the student meets the other eligibility criteria, transport support may be provided for part of the journey, e.g. from a convenient bus stop en route

If the college you are proposing to attend provides its own free transport that it is reasonable for students living in North Lincolnshire to use, you will not be eligible to receive a pass to use on public transport from North Lincolnshire Council.

3. Personal Eligibility

a) Residence

You must be living in North Lincolnshire when you are enrolled on the course, and either:

- have 'settled' status and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least 3 years before the start of the course, or
- be a national of any EU country and have been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area for at least 3 years before the course starts,

Anyone who moves to North Lincolnshire for the purpose of receiving full-time education **may not** be eligible for support from North Lincolnshire Council.

b) Three Year Limit

Unless you have special education needs and are eligible for support under that transport policy, we will only give support for a maximum of three years.

c) Age

You must be under 19 on 31st August before the start of your course.

d) Distance

You must live more than 3 miles from the school sixth form or college.

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

POST 16 STUDENT TRANSPORT POLICY 2013/14

Frequently asked questions

Q. How do I apply for transport support to college or school sixth form?

A. You can apply on line at: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/education/students/post16/> or complete the blue application form (P16/01) available at North Lincolnshire colleges and school sixth forms, or as a download on the website, and return it with a passport-sized photograph and the appropriate payment to the School Transport Office, Hewson House, Station Road, Brigg, DN20 8XJ.

Q. Am I entitled to transport support?

A. You should be eligible for support if:

- you are under 19 on 31 August before the start of your course, and
- you are studying a course of further education, and
- you have received less than three years transport support to attend a post 16 course, and
- you live in North Lincolnshire and you have not moved into the North Lincolnshire area specifically to attend the course, and
- you are to attend a school or college in North Lincolnshire (subject to some limited exceptions).
- You live more than three miles (walking route) from the school or college

Q. What support will I receive?

A. You will receive a bus pass to travel from the stop nearest to your home to your school sixth form or college in North Lincolnshire. Depending on the operator and route the pass is issued for, you may be able to use it for other journeys. You will receive information with your pass about when and where it can be used.

If there is no bus service to the school/college we will consider paying a mileage allowance. If your course is outside North Lincolnshire and we cannot issue a pass that is accepted by the public transport operator we may refund all or part of your bus/rail fare. The method and rate of reimbursement must be agreed with us in advance. We will not normally provide taxis for students to connect with the public transport network. We expect them to make their own way to the nearest bus stop as they would if they were going to work or other types of training.

Q. Will the travel pass cost me anything?

A. Yes. The amount you must contribute is £30 for the full year. If you lose your pass and need a new one, the cost of a replacement pass is £20. If you have a disability you may be eligible for a free bus pass under the national scheme. Further information is available on the council's website:

<http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/public-transport/concessionary-travel/>

Q. How can I pay for my pass?

A. You can pay or by credit/debit card on line at

<http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/education/students/post16/>

You may also pay by postal order, cheque (made payable to North Lincolnshire Council) or cash. Cash payments must be paid at one of the Local Link Offices. Cash must not be sent via the post.

Q. Will I receive a pass for the second year of my course automatically?

A. No – you need to apply for a new pass each year.

Q. How will I find out about my transport once I have sent off my application form?

A. Your pass will be sent to the North Lincolnshire college for you to collect, or posted to your home if your course is outside our area or you attend Brigg or Baysgarth sixth form. We will return your form, photograph and payment if you are not eligible to receive transport support.

Q. Will any fares I have paid before receiving my pass be refunded?

A. No – you should make sure that your application is received in good time. If we receive your application by 31 July we will guarantee that you will have your pass for the beginning of the term.

Q. Can I specify the bus route I want to travel on?

A. No, we will decide the route students travel on, according to where they live. This helps us to manage bus loading. Details of the routes serving your community are on our website: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/education/students/post16/>

Q. If my circumstances change and/or I no longer need my pass what should I do?

A. You should inform the school transport office (Tel 01724 297218) It is important that, even though the pass covers the full year, if you have decided not to use it and are travelling to college by other means, or if you have withdrawn from your course, you inform us, and return your pass. Otherwise we may be paying the bus company for you to travel even though you are not doing so. If you need to use your pass later in the year, provided you still meet the eligibility criteria, we will return it to you at no additional cost.

Q. When can I use my travel pass?

A. This depends on the operator and route the pass is issued for. You will receive information with your pass about when and where it can be used. You will have to pay the appropriate fare if you travel outside normal term dates, e.g. at half term, unless attendance at college during these times is compulsory and essential to your course and you give us a letter of authorisation from the college in good time to enable us to inform the bus operator.

Q. Does my pass guarantee me a seat on a bus?

A. No, as most of the bus routes are public registered services we cannot guarantee you a place on a bus at a specific time. It is permissible for passengers to stand in public transport. If you have significant problems please contact us.

Q. I wish to attend a college outside of North Lincolnshire. Can I still apply for transport?

A. We will consider providing support to schools and colleges outside North Lincolnshire in certain circumstances, for example if the journey is much easier and it would be unreasonable to travel to a local provider or if the course is unavailable locally and it is essential for career progression. You should send a covering letter with your application giving details of the reasons for your decision.

Q. I have my own transport. Can I claim for travel expenses?

A. This option is normally available only where there is no other transport available. You should send a covering letter with your application if you wish to apply for travel expenses. The same financial contribution will apply.

Q. I live a long way from the bus route. Can I be picked up nearer home?

A. We expect students to make their own way to the nearest bus stop, up to a walking distance of 3 miles. If the walking distance is more than 3 miles, we may consider providing link transport to the public transport network or reimbursing mileage expenses. Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council may be able to offer you some help, e.g. through their scooter hire scheme.

Q. How is the 3-mile walking route measured?

A. We measure the walking distance for students living within 3 miles of school or college using a digital mapping system on our transport database. The distance is from the point at which your property entrance meets the public highway to the nearest entrance of the college which students are permitted to use. The distance from your home to a bus stop is measured on Google maps.

Q. I have lost my bus pass. How can I get a new one?

A. Bus passes are valuable items. You should take good care of them. You can apply to the contact points listed overleaf for a replacement. A £20 charge will be made.

Q. My parents live at separate addresses and I spend time with both parents during the week. Can I have two travel passes to both homes?

A. We may consider providing two passes if the cost of a pass costs us no more. Some of the bus companies charge us as and when students travel, whereas others charge us a fixed rate regardless of the days travelled. Such an arrangement would be a concession and not a right under the Post 16 Transport Policy.

Q. Is any additional support available for students who have learning difficulties or disabilities?

A. Yes. Details of the students who are eligible, and support available to them, are set out in a separate document. Please call 01724 297218 if you want a copy of it. The policy is also available on-line: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/education/students/post16/post16disabilities/>

Q. Are there any circumstances when my pass could be withdrawn?

A. If your behaviour on the transport is unacceptable the bus companies have the right to refuse transport and your pass will be withdrawn. You will then be responsible for making your own way to school or college.

Q. Is any other help available?

A. Learner support awards may be available to students suffering from hardship. You should ask the college or the school sixth form you are attending about these.

Q. If I am unhappy with any decision made about my transport can I appeal?

A. Yes, you have the right to appeal against the decision. Please call us on 01724 297218 to ask for details and an appeal form.

North Lincolnshire Council
TRANSPORT FOR STUDENTS AGED 16 AND OVER
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND WHO NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
Academic Year 2013/14



If you are applying to a college or school sixth form to continue your education post 16 you may be eligible for help with your transport.

If your child:

- Was statemented at school, or
- Has learning difficulties or disabilities, or
- Has medical needs

and is unable to travel to school/college independently, or needs extra time to complete their course because of their medical need or disability, they may be entitled for additional help with their transport.

Students who are able to use public transport, should refer to the blue Post 16 Transport Policy leaflet. They may also be entitled to free travel on public transport under the national scheme, details of which are given below.

Courses covered

The chosen course of study must be a course of further education at a publicly funded institution. Post 19 students must be attending courses funded by a public body such as the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

School/College Attended

The course must be at a college or school within North Lincolnshire unless:

- the out-of-county college placement is funded by a public body such as the EFA or North Lincolnshire Council
- the course is not available in North Lincolnshire and there is no suitable alternative locally
- it would be unreasonable to travel to a college in North Lincolnshire and access to the out of county college is much easier
- The course is nearer and transport costs no more

Personal Eligibility

a) Residence

The student must live in North Lincolnshire when enrolled on the course and either:

- have 'settled' status and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least 3 years before the start of the course, or
- be a national of any EU country and have been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area for at least 3 years before the start of the course

Anyone who moves to North Lincolnshire for the purpose of receiving full-time education **may not** be eligible for support from North Lincolnshire Council.

b) Disability

Students may be eligible for additional support with transport if they had a statement of special education need at school or have a medical condition that means they cannot use public transport, or they need longer to complete a course because of their medical need or disability. If a student is able to use public transport, for example having received independent travel training at school or college, but who chooses not to use this means of transport, the student may not be eligible for additional support under this policy.

c) *Age*

Students must be aged 16-20 on 31 August 2013. Transport support may be extended to students aged up to 24 if they are attending residential educational provision funded by a recognised public body such as the EFA.

d) *Educational Progression*

The College and North Lincolnshire Council or the EFA must support the student's attendance on the course and must have evidence that they will gain educational benefit from it.

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL POST 16 STUDENT TRANSPORT POLICY 2013/14

Frequently asked questions for student aged 16 and over with special needs and who need additional support

Q. How do I apply for transport support to college or school sixth form?

A. If you can travel on public transport without support you can apply on line at: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/education/students/post16/> or complete the blue application form (P16/01) available at North Lincolnshire colleges and school sixth forms, or as a download on the website, and return it with a passport-sized photograph and the appropriate payment to the School Transport Office, Hewson House, Station Road, Brigg, DN20 8XJ.

If you are unable to use public transport or need support to do so you need to complete the application form P16/S available from the School Transport Office (see above).

Q. Will the transport cost me anything?

A. Yes. The amount you must contribute is £30 for the full year. If you lose your pass and need a new one, the cost of a replacement pass is £20.

Depending on your disability, you may qualify for a pass to travel free on public transport. You can find out more about this on the council's website: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/public-transport/concessionary-travel/>

If you are a student at St Hugh's Communication and Interaction Specialist College, John Leggott College, or North Lindsey College the staff there may also be able to advise you on whether or not you are entitled to receive a free travel pass.

If you are not using public transport and/or do not meet the criteria for a free pass under the national scheme, you will need to make a contribution to the cost of transport.

Q. How can I pay for my pass?

A. You can pay or by credit/debit card on line at <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/education/students/post16/> You may also pay by postal order, cheque (made payable to North Lincolnshire Council) or cash. Cash payments must be paid at one of the Local Link Offices. Cash must not be sent via the post.

Q. How will I find out about my transport once I have sent off my application form?

A. You will receive a letter giving details of the transport that has been arranged. You should receive this **by 30 August** if we have received your application form by 31 July. Sometimes it can take a little longer to confirm transport provision for students who need special arrangements. Where a number of children share the same vehicle, we need to know the requirements of them all before we can set up the contract.

Q. Will transport be provided door to door?

A. Not necessarily, it will depend on your capabilities and special needs. We want to encourage students to be as independent as possible, and this includes using a convenient pick up point.

Q. If I move house or change my course what should I do?

A. You should tell the School Transport Officer at Hewson House (tel 01724 297218) about any change in your circumstances as soon, or preferably before, it occurs. We will then decide if you are still eligible to receive transport support or need to make alternative arrangements.

Q. I wish to attend a college outside of North Lincolnshire. Can I still apply for transport?

A. If the EFA or North Lincolnshire Council has organised an out-of-area residential placement we will normally offer a mileage allowance for parents to transport students at the beginning and end of each half term (a total of 12 return journeys per year) unless we already have transport to the placement and the student can share that. If the student is to travel daily to the school or college we need to be satisfied that the same, or a comparable, course is not available in North Lincolnshire. The council or relevant agency must approve it as a suitable course, and it must lead to educational progression.

Q. I have my own transport. Can I claim for travel expenses?

A. This option is normally available only where there is no other transport available. You should send a covering letter with your application if you wish to apply for travel expenses. If you have a mobility vehicle, and there is no existing transport we will normally expect you to use this rather than contracting other transport.

Q. Will my transport stay the same all year?

A. Not necessarily. During your course you may follow an independent travel training programme. This may lead to a change in the pick-up arrangements or the transport provided.

Q. Is any other help available?

A. Bursary payments may be available to students suffering from hardship. You should ask the college or the school sixth form you are attending about these. Subject to government funding and policy, full time students who are in care or care leavers, on income support or who receive employment support allowance and disability living allowance may be eligible to receive a guaranteed bursary.

Q. If I am unhappy with any decision made about my transport can I appeal?

A. Yes, you have the right to appeal against the decision. Please call us on 01724 297218 to ask for details and an appeal form.