



Draft All Age Travel Assistance Policy

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All Age Travel Assistance Policy

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All Age Travel Assistance Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the travel assistance offer provided by the Council; eligibility criteria to apply for travel assistance and how travel assistance will be made available.

The City of Wolverhampton Council (the “Council”) is committed to ensuring the people of our city lead independent healthy lives, feel safe and secure and achieve their full potential. Being able to travel independently without having to rely on Council transport, gives people greater freedom to get around, is good for an individual’s self-esteem and confidence, and will improve their long-term employment opportunities.

This policy aims to support the achievement of these outcomes through a new way of supporting individuals to access educational establishments and social care venues based upon the needs of the individual and their family. The aim of this policy is to wherever possible work with the individual and their family to develop a travel solution to meet their needs.

This policy applies to the following:

- Pre-school age children 2 to 4
- Children under compulsory school age starting reception
- Children of compulsory school age (aged between 5 and 16)
- Children and young people in care
- Individuals of sixth form age
- Adult Learners (19-25)
- Children and young people in Care
- Children and Adults with care and support needs

2. Principles

2.1 Promotion of independence

The Council is committed to promoting greater independence for people of our city and recognises the importance of ensuring assistance provided to individuals is the most suitable for their individual needs.

2.2 Safeguarding

When providing travel assistance to people of our city, the Council will ensure that all decisions made regarding travel assistance reflect their safeguarding duties and promote the welfare of all.

2.3 Sustainable Travel

The Council is committed to the use of sustainable modes of travel when providing travel assistance. Sustainable transport is defined as those the Council considers may improve the physical well-being of those that use them, environmental well-being or a combination of the two.

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3. Types of Travel Assistance

The Education Act 1996 and this policy uses the phrase 'travel assistance' because the form this takes will vary and often does not involve the Council providing transport. Applicants who are eligible will be offered appropriate travel assistance, taking account of the Council's legal obligations, the individual needs of the applicant, safety considerations, the best use of the Council's resources, any expressed preference and any other relevant matter.

The Council strives to promote the independence and well-being of all children, young people and adults through a range of travel options. Travel assistance offered, following a personalised assessment, will be the most appropriate arrangements to facilitate attendance at an educational establishment or social care venue from the following range of options:

A travel pass for the individual (and escort, if deemed necessary)

A scholar travel pass will be provided for use on public transport. Where it is possible for the individual to travel on public transport only if accompanied by a responsible adult, then a travel pass will also be provided for the responsible adult to accommodate this.

Individuals that are eligible for a disabled person's travel permit provided by the West Midlands Combined authority can receive assistance from the Council with their application.

Independent travel training

Applicants eligible for travel assistance, who have difficulty travelling on their own due to their physical or sensory disability, learning disability, or mental health needs, will in the first instance be assessed for Independent Travel Training (ITT) and will be expected to undertake suitable ITT to help develop their confidence to travel independently, unless they are unlikely to benefit from such training.

ITT can have many significant benefits, including increased independence, improved confidence better access to leisure facilities, more opportunities for education and employment, enhanced health, more social networking opportunities and reduced reliance on parents and carers.

Training is tailored to the needs of the individual and forms a bespoke programme designed to meet their specific needs. When an individual is identified as able to benefit from Independent Travel Training they will be supported by a travel trainer for as long as is needed to ensure they feel safe and confident travelling independently.

Following the assessment of being a safe and fully competent independent traveller, the travel trainer will complete a comprehensive risk assessment demonstrating the individual is able to travel independently. The Council will not provide a seat on a transport vehicle or pay an individual travel budget. A bus pass will be provided if the individual is eligible.

Individual Travel Allowance (ITA)

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The Council encourages the use of individual travel allowances where appropriate to help individuals and families have flexibility and control over their travel arrangement or other supporting arrangements i.e. provision of breakfast and/or after school clubs for siblings. For reimbursement of mileage costs for transportation, the route will usually be calculated based on the shortest driving mileage of two return journeys from home to destination. To ensure consistency and fairness the measurement is calculated using the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS). An assessment of the route will be made to determine any risks with accessibility and whether any potential risks might be mitigated.

For direct mileage payments there will be a payment of £0.45 per mile.

Payment of ITA's will be dependent on the regular attendance of the individual at their place of education or care. ITA's may be reduced or withdrawn at the discretion of the Council if attendance falls below 90% of that which would normally be expected, given the circumstances of the individual.

Provision of a place in a vehicle which will transport the individual to educational establishment or social care venues.

Following a personalised individual assessment by the relevant professional within the Council, where all other modes of travel assistance are assessed as unlikely to benefit the individual then the provision of a vehicle (usually a shared coach, minibus or taxi) will be made for eligible individuals.

This will usually be from a designated pick up point, near the individual's home; unless a home pick up and drop off is essential due to the individual's significant needs.

4. How to apply for travel assistance and the individual assessment process

An application can be made using the City of Wolverhampton Travel Assistance application process for assessment by a relevant professional within Education or Social Care, to determine what travel assistance an individual is eligible for.

Each application will be processed as quickly as possible by a professional advisor. Please note that during the application process, if the individual is of compulsory school age, parents remain under their legal duty to ensure that they attend school regularly. If the individual is not of compulsory school age they will remain responsible for their own travel to their educational establishment or social care venue during this period.

The aim of the assessment process is to establish eligibility for travel assistance and to determine the type of travel assistance most beneficial to the individual to promote their independence and enablement.

As part of the above assessment process, the following will be considered:

- All relevant information provided within the Travel Assistance Application
- All evidence submitted in support of the Travel Assistance Application

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- All matters that the Council is required by law to consider regarding provision of travel assistance.

In determining whether it is appropriate for the Council to provide travel assistance, the Council will also consider on an individual basis why the Council and not the individual or their family is responsible for making travel arrangements.

Individuals or their families will be notified of the outcome of the assessment in writing. If the assessment finds the individual is not eligible for travel assistance or the individual disagrees with the type of travel assistance offered, there is a right of appeal as set out below. During the appeal stages, travel assistance will not normally be provided and changes to existing travel assistance provision will not be made.

In considering the type of travel assistance required and the level of care needed during the journey, the following will apply:

- The individual must be a resident of Wolverhampton
- The individual must meet the criteria set out in Section 4b: Children of compulsory school age with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability
- The safety, security and dignity of the individual as affected by his/her physical, emotional, social, behavioural, or learning disability;
- The efficient use of resources for travel assistance suitable to the individual's needs.

Reviews of travel assistance

All grants of travel assistance will be reviewed at least once per year and in all cases where there is or may be a significant change in circumstances affecting eligibility for travel assistance (e.g. change in destination or home address, change in individual or family circumstances, change in recipient's needs).

If the recipient of travel assistance has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) this review will be undertaken at or following the annual review of the plan.

5. Home to educational establishment travel assistance

This section is in response to duties of the Local Authority (LA), under section 508B of the Education Act 1996, (amended by Education and Inspections Act 2006) which deals with the duty of Local Authorities in England to ensure that suitable travel.

5a. Children of compulsory school age

The primary responsibility for ensuring individuals and students attend school or college is that of the parent or carer. However, section 444(3B) provides a parent with a defence if they prove that the Local Authority has a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the child under section 508B and has failed to discharge that duty.

The Authority is required to determine whether the provision of travel assistance for individuals of statutory school age is necessary to facilitate the attendance at a designated school. Such travel assistance deemed necessary must be provided free of charge.

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Legal Considerations

Schedule 35B of the 1996 Act (amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) defines “eligible children” as those categories of children in an authority’s area for whom travel arrangements will always be required. A condition of each category is that they are of compulsory school age. Under section 508B, travel assistance arrangements must be provided free of charge.

Part A: Walking distance and assessment of route

Distance of routes will be determined using the Council’s Geographical Information System (GIS).

A1 **Primary, distance**

Where the child is under eight years of age and resides over two miles from the nearest qualifying school;

A2 **Primary, extended rights**

Where the child is an eligible child (see **C3**) of at least eight years but under eleven years and where the family reside over two miles from their nearest qualifying school;

A3 **Secondary, distance**

Where the child is of statutory school age, over eight years of age and resides over three miles from the nearest qualifying school;

A4 **Secondary, extended rights**

Where the child is an eligible child (see **C3**) of at least eleven and of compulsory school age, there is a further entitlement since September 2008 in two ways:

- to one of their three nearest qualifying schools where they live more than two miles, but not more than six miles from that school; or
- to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief (or lack of belief), or on the grounds of single sex education, where they live more than two miles but not more than by fifteen miles from that school.

In order to ensure consistency and fairness the measurement is calculated through the use of the Council’s GIS system. The route may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways as well as recognised roads. An assessment of the route will be made by the Council to determine the risks and whether any potential risks might be mitigated.

For definitions of qualifying school and eligible children, please see Part C.

Part B: Eligibility for other reasons

The Authority will provide free travel assistance for individuals of statutory school age in the following circumstances:

B1 **Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities**

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Where travel assistance to an identified school is assessed as being necessary to fulfil the individual's EHCP. This would normally be on medical and/or educational grounds, to a nearest suitable placement in a special school, or resource base, or to a college-based provision. The way in which the decision on eligibility is made for special needs reasons is detailed in *Section 5a: Children of compulsory school age with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability*.

In providing travel assistance for individuals with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability, a variety of travel assistance options will be assessed (including ambulance, coach minibus or taxi vehicles, or where appropriate, independent travel training or assistance with additional costs incurred for the use of public transport).

The general expectation is that an individual will be accompanied by a Parent, carer or guardian or another responsible person organised by the parent, carer or guardian.¹ (2014, DfE) However, if this is not reasonable further supporting evidence would be considered during the assessment for eligibility.

B2 Examination and Distance

Where children in the year 10 or 11 age group (who are undertaking public examination courses) move to a new house but choose to remain at their current school, and therefore must travel more than the distances set out in A3 above.

B3 Hazardous Journey and Distance

Where the shorter route to school is considered to be hazardous by the Council and a safe route is therefore over the walking distance limits set out in Part A above.

In assessing the safety of a route, the Council will always assume that an individual is being accompanied as necessary and may seek advice from the Council's Road Safety Officers concerning aspects of the journey, including footpaths, road widths, surface covers, visibility, lighting, etc. It is expected that an individual will be accompanied by a parent, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect this to be the case.

The Council will also take into account disability factors in relation to both parent and the relevant child.

B4 Medical

Where an individual requires travel assistance on medical grounds, demonstrated by evidence, and no suitable public or other travel assistance exists for the child's use. Such a request for travel assistance must be supported by an appropriate medical practitioner. Individual cases may be referred to the School Medical Service or Area Health Authority for clarification.

¹ [Dfe Home to School Guidance 2014](#)

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If a parent is unable to accompany a child due to medical grounds, evidence will need to be demonstrated from an appropriate medical practitioner.

B5 School Closure

Where the closure of a school results in an individual being transferred to another school, children on the register of the closing school will be entitled to free of charge travel assistance to the receiving school, if the distance is over the limit set out in Part A above.

B6 Attendance at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Where an individual attends one of the Pupil Referral Units provided by the Council to address the individual's special needs, whether or not an EHCP is currently being maintained for the individual, **and** B7 below applies.

If the placement is commissioned by the individual's school, responsibility for transportation to the PRU rests with the school commissioning the placement.

B7 Exceptional Circumstances

There is no 'fixed' set of exceptional circumstances which will lead the Council to grant travel assistance to non-eligible children or young people. In cases of individuals whose education may be severely disrupted, for example, because of the effect of being taken into the care of the Council, or if their home life has been very severely disrupted or if the non-provision of travel assistance will place the continuity of education in jeopardy. The Council will consider each case individually, taking into account the special circumstances involved.

In accordance with its statutory duties as set out by the Education Act 1996, the Council will weigh the decision to offer free home-to-school travel support to non-eligible children against the specific needs of the individual child and the sustainability of providing such travel support arrangements.

Parental work or care commitments would not normally be considered exceptional circumstances. Families who are able to drop their child off and pick them up at the end of the school day would normally be expected to do so.

Part C: Definition and Notes

C1 Home

Transport will normally be from pick-up points, near the individual's home; unless a home pick up and drop off is essential due to the individual's significant needs. If a pick-up from the home is assessed as appropriate, the address from which travel assistance is given is the home address at which the child normally resides unless there are exceptional circumstances under B7 above which have been agreed in relation to a different address.

In any case, an accepted second address should be within the best practice maximum each way length of journey, which for an individual of primary school age is 45 minutes and for secondary school age is 75 minutes.

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C2 Eligible Children

The new extended rights eligibility is for children in families from low income groups. Low income groups are defined as those families with children who are entitled to free school meals (in accordance with income-based criteria rather than any other arrangements in relation to the provision of free school meals) or children in families in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

C3 'Qualifying School'

For children who are resident in Wolverhampton, of compulsory school age and attending a "qualifying school", home to school travel assistance is provided according to this policy. "Qualifying Schools" are:

- Community, foundation, academy or voluntary schools
- Community, academy or foundation special schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Individual referral units
- Maintained nursery schools, or
- City Technology Colleges (CTC), City Colleges for the Technology of the Arts (CCTA), an academy school including free schools and University Technical College.

A qualifying school is the nearest school at which the Council can make arrangements for a place which provides education for the age and ability of an individual, taking account of any Special Educational Needs they may have. In the following instances the Council is not responsible for the cost of travel assistance:

- Where an educational placement that has been agreed on the grounds of parental preference and this school is not the nearest qualifying school, the individual will not be entitled to receive travel assistance. The parents will be wholly responsible for securing the individual's attendance. Where this happens the EHCP will be worded accordingly and make the position clear
- To a school maintained by another Council where the admission to that school is as a result of parental preference, other than in cases where the Council could not secure a place at an alternative school within the criteria set out in Parts A and B above, regardless of whether this alternative school falls inside the City boundary
- Of an individual who resides outside the City, but who receives education in one of the City's schools. In these cases, it is for the home Council to make appropriate arrangements and bear the costs
- Where the destination is a work-experience placement or other off-site activity arranged by the school, unless the child would normally receive travel assistance under B1, and if the individual would be unable to take up the placement unless travel assistance was provided.

C4 Distance

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The distance for qualifying purposes is measured by the “nearest available route”. The route is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. It is measured by the shortest route along which an individual, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety, as determined by the Council. As such the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways and other pathways as well as recognised roads. The Council will consider any relevant disabilities related issues as they are related to the journey for this measurement.

C5 Collection and Return Arrangements

Travel arrangements will normally be from pick-up points, near the individual's home; unless a home pick up and drop off is essential due to the individual's significant needs. No individual under eight years of age would be expected to make their own way, unaccompanied, to the nearest pick-up point. The parents, carers or guardians or other responsible person organised by the parent, carer or guardian are responsible for making suitable arrangements in this respect.

Children and young people who are eligible to be transported on a contract route are only eligible for travel provision covering the normal daily timetable of that contract route and not for movement to non-school/extra-curricular activities as this would involve an additional charge. Travel assistance at different times for extended school activities should be factored in by the providers of the facilities concerned and is not part of the Council's travel assistance offer. In exceptional cases where an additional activity is considered central to meeting the needs as stated in the individual's EHCP, the Council may consider the practicality of extending travel provision to facilitate this.

For contractual travel arrangements, parents will be notified of an approximate pick-up/drop-off time for the child. It is important that the parent or another adult known to the individual is always available during pick up and to take responsibility for the child after the homeward journey.

C6 Care during the Journey

Individuals receiving travel assistance under B1 above will be considered for the provision of a Travel Assistant to care for them during the journey using the criteria in Section 5b: Children of compulsory school age with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability. The individual needs/behaviour of the individuals or group/mix of individuals, the nature of the transport available, and the roadside conditions experienced on the journey to/from school will all be taken into account. The Travel Assistant will receive regular training related to the carriage of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability.

C7 Misbehaviour on School Transport

If an individual misbehaves persistently on transport or acts in such a way that it is no longer safe to transport them, as determined by the Council, the Council reserves the right to withdraw the provision and the responsibility for the journey, then falls to the parent.

Parents may appeal against an exclusion from travel assistance using the procedure in Part E. Where behaviour that may be deemed misbehaviour arises directly from disability the authority will take this in to account when coming to its decision

5b. Children of compulsory school age with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Introduction

This section sets out the approach for determining eligibility of home to school travel assistance for an individual with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities living under statutory walking distance from their nearest qualifying school.

A Initial Decision to provide or not to provide

Travel assistance will be provided to an individual who meets one or more of the following conditions:

- 4.1 Is non-ambulant
- 4.2 Has a physical or sensory condition that severely restricts mobility
- 4.3 Has a medical condition that severely restricts mobility and/or requires care and supervision during the journey
- 4.4 Has limited cognitive ability which is recognised via an EHCP for Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) or Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).

B Level of Provision

Once an eligibility decision is confirmed, the Council will decide between the following options:

- Independent Travel Training/ Public Travel Pass
- Individual Transport Budget
- Shared vehicle
- Individual taxi
- Wheelchair accessible vehicle.

The Council will also decide whether the individual needs:

- Extra space for equipment and/or luggage.
- A Travel Assistant to supervise the journey

C Keeping Up to Date

For each individual receiving travel assistance, this process will be reviewed annually with a view to:

- Adapting to changed circumstances.
- Helping the individual towards independent travelling in adult life.
- Ensuring the best use of Council resources.

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5c. Children and young people with a temporary medical and/or mobility need

Children and young people of compulsory school age who have temporary mobility problems caused by medical conditions that prevent them from walking may be eligible for travel support for a fixed period. An assessment will be made by the Council to determine the most appropriate method of travel assistance in each case as well as the length of time the arrangement is available.

Supporting medical evidence from an appropriate medical practitioner confirming the nature of the temporary medical condition and an estimate of the period for which the provision will be required.

Any assistance provided in accordance with this section is time limited in accordance with the needs of any individual case and will be provided at the discretion of the Council.

5d. pre-compulsory school age children (0-4)

On the basis that pre-school children do not fall within eligibility criteria as set out in the statutory guidance, the Council will not normally provide travel assistance for children prior to the Reception year. Where children have or are undergoing an assessment of Special Educational Needs and/or Disability, provision may be considered but this would only be agreed in exceptional cases and at the discretion of the Council.

The Council will consider whatever is said in any application but will have particular regard to the following:

- Distance and journey time from the pre-schooler's home to their place of education and the cost of providing travel assistance to there
- What alternative means of facilitating attendance there may be
- What alternative placements or options there may be
- The contents of any EHC plan (including anything about transport)

6. Post 16 travel assistance

Although legislation [The Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) legislation] now requires young people to participate in education or up to their 18th birthday, no further entitlement to transport has been applied for post-16 learners.

In Wolverhampton, the Council will support young people to access Post- 16 education according to the policy set out below. The main priorities are to support the vulnerable, to encourage independent travel and to promote sustainable travel. Students who wish to apply for assistance may obtain concessions through the Council or via the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), National Express West Midlands or The City of Wolverhampton College. The Post- 16 Transport Forum works together to ensure that the concessions available from these various sources are not in conflict and those students are clear about the criteria. Students who are not full-time may not be eligible for concessions as proof of full- time study is required. This policy applies to further education and does not

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apply to higher education course such as degrees, work placements or work place apprenticeships.

6a. Students of sixth form age in mainstream provision

Introduction

This section sets out the approach to young individuals of sixth form age (16-18-year olds). Sixth form age refers to individuals over compulsory school age but under the age of 19, but this also includes an individual that began a particular course of education or training at a school or college before turning 19 and continues to attend that course.

Students must in the first instance apply to their school or college for bursary funding to assist with their travel costs. For many students this is discretionary, and schools/colleges may assist in different ways. Please see the City of Wolverhampton Council's annual 'Transport Policy Statement for students 16-19' for full details of the range of transport support available to young people. (Appendix A)

6b. Students of Sixth Form age with an Education, Health and Care Plan attending sixth form or other further education provider

Introduction

This section sets out the approach in determining eligibility for travel assistance for students of sixth form age with an EHCP.

Assessment process

Students considered are those for whom an EHCP was maintained prior to age 16 and for attendance at an approved sixth form or other further education provider.

The decision to provide travel assistance is made jointly with the Council and educational establishment in line with the assessment process outlined in this policy.

Travel assistance for Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Travel assistance is provided by the Council for SEND/EHCP students or students with disabilities attending a maintained school or college up to the age of 19 (Wolverhampton residents) as follows:

- It may, in some cases, be appropriate for older individuals to begin to travel independently as part of their learning programme.
- The Council may provide travel assistance for students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities if they attend the nearest appropriate sixth form school or further education college and, in the Council's view, the student cannot use public transport or a college-organised coach because of the length of the journey or because of some other exceptional circumstance, such as physical disability. In such cases, parents and the staff of the college will together complete a travel

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assistance assessment which may then recommend the use of travel assistance and describe the reasons why it is necessary.

- Where the travel assistance consists of a taxi or specialist vehicle, the young individual and/or their parents or carers will be required to contribute towards the cost of this. Charges will be £780 per academic year, or £390 where families can demonstrate financial hardship as outlined in section 5a C1 'Eligible Children'.

Students with learning difficulties or disabilities will be eligible for travel assistance until their course finishes or up to the age of 19 maximum as long as they are continuing on a particular course started before the age of 19.

Applications for travel assistance for young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities should be applied for by the June prior to the beginning of the academic year in the September.

Please see the City of Wolverhampton Council's annual 'Transport Policy Statement for students 16-19' for full details of the range of transport support available to young people. (Appendix A)

6c. Adult Learners aged 19-25

Introduction

This section sets out the approach in determining eligibility for travel assistance eligibility for adult learners, individuals that are not of compulsory school age or of sixth form age.

Legal context

Section 508G of the Education Act 1996 requires the Council to specify

1. any transport or other arrangements, and any payment of travelling expenses, made or to be made in relation to the academic year under section 508F in relation to adults (Post-19) with an EHCP; and
2. any travel concessions which are to be provided to adults (Post-19) with an EHCP receiving education or training at certain institutions.

Principles

Whilst the Council actively encourages young adults to participate in education and training, to progress their pathways to employment and maximise their independence, it is expected that the vast majority of adult learners will make their own travel arrangements and meet the cost of these arrangements.

However, in exceptional circumstances the Council may conclude that it is 'necessary' to make arrangements for the provision of transport pursuant to section 508F Education Act 1996. If the Council concludes that such travel assistance is 'necessary' it will be provided free of charge.

In considering whether it is necessary for the Council to make arrangements for the provision of travel assistance, the Council will make a decision based on the matters set out in section 508F(6), which includes:

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- The age of the applicant;
- The nature of the route or alternative routes the applicant could reasonably be expected to take;

In relation to adults with an EHCP, the authority will also have consider to 'what the Council is required to do under Section 15ZA(1).

When may it be necessary for the Council to provide transport

In determining whether it is appropriate for the Council to provide travel assistance, the Council will also consider on an individual basis why the Council and not the individual or their family is responsible for making travel arrangements. To assess this, the Council would need to know and consider:

1. Whether the institution attended is the nearest appropriate educational establishment offering a suitable course, on a full-time basis (i.e. a minimum of 16 hours of guided learning across at least 3 day a week).
2. What other arrangements have been considered or tried and why they are not suitable.
3. What funding for travel assistance is available from the education establishment that the individual is attending, there would be an expectation that the individual has actively applied for that funding.
4. What other funds can the individual access; there would be an expectation that the student has actively applied for that funding.
5. Is there a family member/carer that is able to transport the individual and why it would not be a reasonable arrangement to make.
6. If the individual is in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Individual Independence Payments, this would be taken into account as a means of securing independent travel assistance. If there are any exceptional factors limiting its' use applicants will need to provide details of them.
7. If there is a 'Motability' vehicle it is expected under the terms of use that the individual will directly benefit from its use. If a decision has been made not to use the 'Motability' vehicle to enable the individual to attend their Post-19 educational placement, the individual or their family will normally be expected to make their own appropriate alternative arrangements. In very exceptional circumstances where all of the above-named benefits and family arrangements are unavailable to the young adult but there is agreement in relation to the young person's disability, the council may provide support in a way seen to be appropriate.

Travel assistance for eligible children will be provided following authorisation from the relevant social care panel.

There is an expectation that placement providers / carers would provide travel assistance where possible.

A range of travel solutions will be considered that best supports children and young people's attendance at school.

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7. Adults and children with care and support needs

This section outlines the approach for the provision of travel assistance for adults and children with care and support needs.

8a. Adults with care and support needs

This section sets out Adult Services' approach to ensuring access to travel assistance for Individuals who have assessed, eligible social care needs as set out in the Care Act 2014.

Adult Services provides travel assistance through a variety of options to people with learning and/or physical disabilities, people with mental health support needs and older people across Wolverhampton. This section sets out how vulnerable adults will be supported in a consistent and equitable way to access travel assistance.

Legal framework

Adult Services has a legal duty to meet eligible needs for care and support as set out in the Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance. Travel assistance may be considered as an eligible need as part of the individual's care and support plan.

Note: The Council does not have a separate legal duty to provide travel assistance. The legal duty for travel assistance only arises if it is to meet eligible need for care and support.

The Care Act 2014 eligibility regulations set out a range of outcomes and Local Authorities are required to consider whether the adult is unable to achieve two or more of these outcomes when determining the adult's eligibility for care and support.

One of these outcomes refers to making use of necessary facilities or services in the local community including public transport and recreational facilities or services. Local authorities should consider the adult's ability to get around in the community safely and consider their ability to use such facilities as public transport, shops or recreational facilities when considering the impact on their wellbeing. Local authorities should also consider needs for support when the adult is attending healthcare appointments. The Act also sets out the responsibilities of local authorities in relation to carers.

Principles

In the first instance, the expectation of the Council is that individuals should, where possible, manage their own travel requirements. Individuals who can travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from family, friends or support providers are encouraged to do so. Adult Services will facilitate the signposting towards appropriate travel assistance options.

Travel assistance is only available for people who have been assessed as having eligible social care needs as set out in the Care Act 2014. Travel assistance will thus be the service to meet that eligible need.

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Prior to providing travel assistance, a principle of reasonableness will be adopted i.e. an exploration will be undertaken in any given situation as to whether:

- it is reasonable to expect individuals to make their own arrangements
- all travel assistance options have been examined
- outcomes have been identified and evidenced.

If an individual has no other means to access services in order to achieve the identified outcomes, then the Council will need to make arrangements for travel assistance provision.

Mobility Component / Motability

The Council has a duty to provide support for adults assessed as needing travel assistance for social care activities. This does not change even if the individual is receiving the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or the Individual Independence Payment. This is because, for example, the individual may be spending their entire mobility component on the maintenance of their wheelchair or distinct taxi expenses. The Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment mobility components are not paid to cover Council responsibilities.

Where a need for travel assistance is identified as an eligible need, Local Authorities are under a duty to ensure it is provided: it is not a discretionary service. The provision of travel assistance will allow for access to the care and support which the individual requires.

In 2012 the Department of Health issued guidance, which remains applicable under the Care Act 2014, that:

“local Councils have a duty to assess the needs of any individual for whom the authority may provide or arrange the provision of community care services and who may be in need of such services. They have a further duty to decide, having regards to the needs of the assessment, what, if any, services they should provide to meet the individual’s needs. This duty does not change because a particular individual is receiving the mobility component of DLA [or PIP]”

If an individual with eligible care and support needs has a Motability vehicle it may be reasonable and appropriate for them to use this vehicle to travel to the service/community activity they have been assessed as needing. If there is a designated driver of a Motability vehicle who also has vehicle tax exemption on the grounds that the vehicle is used specifically for the individual needs of the disabled individual it may also be reasonable and appropriate for them to use this vehicle to support the individual to access the service/community activity they have been assessed as needing.

Determining the need for travel assistance

If the individual with eligible care and support needs has been assessed as needing a service, e.g. a specific day activity provided at a specific community centre, the Council must then consider travel assistance i.e. how is the individual going to get to the centre?

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Alternative ways to the direct provision of travel assistance may be considered, e.g. community services, taxi schemes, car sharing, use of bus pass, supported travel scheme, walking etc.

The social care practitioner will take a decision to provide assistance with travel following consideration of the travel assistance options that are available to the individual. An assessment of the risks associated with using travel assistance and an individual's mobility will be part of the assessment and support planning process. The purpose of travel assistance should be clearly stated on an individual's care and support plan.

Consideration will be given to:

- The ability of an individual to travel independently with regard to their physical mobility and other factors that may introduce risk, including conditions that will lead to the deterioration of an individual's ability to travel without assistance.
- The availability of existing travel assistance options.

When conducting a needs assessment for care and support, there can be no assumption that the individual will travel independently. The assessment will consider 'what will happen if the Council does not provide travel assistance' i.e. could the individual reasonably be expected to make his/her own travel arrangements, with or without support, to achieve the outcomes set out in the care and support plan.

Where an individual is able to walk or use mobility aids (motorised scooter, wheelchair, walking frame or stick etc) either independently or with support from family, carers, friends, support providers or volunteers etc. to get to a local community activity or service, and it is reasonable for them to do so, support with travel assistance will not be provided.

Where a individual can use public transport, voluntary transport or community transport, either independently or with support from family, carer, friend, support worker, buddy or volunteer etc to get to and from community activities and services, and it is reasonable for them to do so, support with travel assistance will not be provided.

Part of an individual's assessment will identify their potential to be independently travel trained in order to travel to and from community activities and services. Where appropriate, arrangements will be made to provide support to learn to travel more independently via Community Pathways or the CWC Independent Travel Training Scheme.

Funding issues

Travel assistance to the nearest appropriate community activity will be arranged. When an individual chooses to attend a community activity outside of their identified locality and a local service is available to meet their assessed need, the additional cost of any transport considered necessary must be met by the individual.

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Where people live in settings where their care is funded by the Council e.g. residential care, supported living schemes etc. the cost of the placement must meet the full range of support needs, including travel assistance, to attend community activities.

Where people contribute towards the provision of a shared community vehicle, this should be used to transport them to community activities.

Charging for travel assistance

Where an individual is assessed as requiring Council provided transport, the service is provided free of charge. Community transport, which normally incurs a fixed charge per journey, may be funded, where it is appropriate to access services to meet assessed eligible needs.

An individual's individual budget may be used to pay for travel assistance where provision has been made for this in the care and support plan in order to access services to meet assessed, eligible need. Any arrangements for travel assistance should be clearly recorded in the support plan.

Review

The ability of the individual to travel or access appropriate travel assistance to meet their assessed, eligible social care needs, will be re-considered by the relevant social care practitioners at annual reviews or earlier through reassessment of the individual's needs.

7b. Children with care and support needs

An individual may request a review of their social care assessment if at any time they consider their needs have substantially changed. The Council will only provide travel assistance to overnight short breaks in exceptional circumstances. The general expectation is that an individual will be transported by a parent where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so.

Pupil transport may provide travel assistance to and from school if the overnight provision is within Wolverhampton. Please see section 4a(C1). Children of compulsory school age

Review

The ability of the individual to travel or access appropriate travel assistance to meet their assessed, eligible social care needs, will be re-considered by the relevant social care practitioners at annual reviews or earlier through reassessment of the individual's needs.

An individual may request a review of their social care assessment if at any time they consider their needs have substantially changed.

8. General

Seats for non-entitled riders in contract vehicles

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The Council will not normally provide or subsidise the journeys of non-entitled individuals on vehicles arranged for those who do receive free of charge travel assistance.

Vehicles contracted by the Council to provide transport for individuals to educational establishments or social care venues for individuals entitled to travel free of charge will be, as far as possible, filled to their maximum capacity to ensure the service is being provided in an efficient manner. Any vacant seats which may unusually occur will be reserved for the later inclusion of additional entitled individuals but, may, in the interim, be used to carry other individuals referred by other local authority service areas as requiring exceptional assistance at the Council's discretion.

If not required in this way, a seat may be used by another individual travelling to the same destination for the payment of a pro-rata charge if considered appropriate by the Council. Where this occurs, payment will be required weekly in advance and it will be made clear that the arrangement could be terminated at a week's notice if the seat is required by an entitled individual.

9. How to complain or appeal about a decision for travel assistance

This section outlines how to appeal or complain about a decision about travel assistance.

9a. Complaints/appeals concerning travel assistance to Educational Establishments

If an individual or family is not satisfied with the Council's decision on travel assistance entitlement based on this policy, then they may appeal in writing by following the two-stage review/appeal process. A full account of the circumstances of the case, with supporting evidence should be addressed to the Director of Education/Director of Adult Social Care, at the Civic Centre address.

A report requesting reconsideration will be prepared independently for a decision to be made by the independent appeal panel.

Please note that once an application has been through the appeals process a new application will not be considered unless there has been a significant and material change in circumstances.

Stage One

- An individual/family has 20 working days from receipt of the Council's travel assistance decision to make a written request in asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the individual/family believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any individual and/or family circumstances they believe should be considered when the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of the written request a senior officer reviews the original decision and responds with a detailed written outcome setting out:

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- the nature of 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;
- information about escalation to stage 2 (if appropriate).

Stage Two

- An individual/family has 20 working days from receipt of the Council's stage one decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage 2.
- Within 40 working days an independent appeal panel considers written and verbal representations from the parent/carer and officers and gives a detailed written outcome setting out:
 - the nature of 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

The independent appeal panel will consist of:

- a Councillor,
- a Head of Service or their representative
- a senior transport officer and
- a parent representative and
- a democratic services officer (acting as clerk)

Stage Three

If an individual/family considers that there is a failure to comply with procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal is handled, they have a right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. You can call the Local Government and Ombudsman Advice team on:

Telephone: 0845 602 1983

Or write to:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

If an individual/family considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

9b. Complaints concerning travel assistance for children or adults receiving care and support

Services users will need to pursue a complaint in accordance with the [Council's complaints](#) procedure made pursuant to Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

Appendix A

Local Authority Transport Partnership Fund Policy Statement

Transport policy statement for learners aged 16-19 in further education – 2019/2020
Name of Local Authority: Wolverhampton Department Responsible: Education, Pupil Services
1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives (this section should give an overview/statement of intent of what the LA's transport policy is and what the subsequent desired outcomes are).
<p>In the West Midlands, there is an extensive public transport system and for attendance less than daily there is the Ring and Ride facility which may be particularly suitable for students with disabilities.</p> <p>In Wolverhampton, the LA will support young people to access Post- 16 education according to the policy set out below. The main priorities are to support the vulnerable, to encourage independent travel, to reduce wastage and to promote sustainable travel. Students who wish to apply for assistance may obtain concessions through the Authority or via the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) or National Express West Midlands and Wolverhampton College. The Post- 16 Transport Forum works together to ensure that the concessions available from these various sources are not in conflict and those students are clear about the criteria. Students who are not full- time may not be eligible for concessions as proof of full- time study is required.</p>
2. Please provide details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16–18 and who provides them. Please provide details of any costs to the learner.
<p>Most schools in Wolverhampton offer sixth form courses on a “consortia” arrangement and schools may offer special travel arrangements for these students to enable them to move between schools at no charge to the student.</p> <p>Students with Special Educational Needs</p> <p>If the LA undertakes to provide transport for a student with specific learning difficulties or disabilities, there is no cost to the student.</p> <p>Public Transport Assistance</p> <p>West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)</p> <p>There is an extensive public transport network of buses trains and trams in the Wolverhampton area. Students aged 16-18 (Years 12 & 13) in full-time education (minimum 12 hours per week) and who live within the West Midlands region can purchase a '16-18 Photocard' (valid for one academic year).</p>

The Photocard costs £10 and is available through an online application process at networkwestmidlands.com/16-18, Unique Validation Codes (UVC) are only available from the student's school or college and these are required to successfully apply for a 16-18 Photocard. Information is available from the WMCA Customer Services Centre on 0345 303 6760.

The ID Card entitles the student to pay child fares (approximately half adult cash fares) to and from school or college within the West Midlands area.

The card allows students to purchase child rate weekly, 4 weekly and term season tickets on the bus, train and Metro.

The card allows students to join the Direct Debit scheme (the best value ticket available): please contact the WMCA Customer Services Team on 0345 303 6760 for further information or apply online at networkwestmidlands.com/directdebit.

This concession is funded by WMCA.

For full details on the types of passes that can be purchased please go to the the WMCA website www.networkwestmidlands.com (see also below for free travel for people with disabilities)

National Express West Midlands

National Express West Midlands offers a whole range of products suitable for young people between the ages of 16 -18, providing they qualify for and obtain a Centro 16 -18 Photo Card. There is also a Direct Debit option that does not require a Centro 16 -18 Photocard, but proof from the students' school/college that they are in full time education is required.

For more information call 0121 254 6363 or for Direct Debit information call 0121 254 6322.

For timetable information call Tralveline – 0870 608 2 608

For full details on the types of passes that can be purchased please go to the National Express West Midlands website www.travelwm.co.uk

WMCA Travel Concessions for eligible disabled people

WMCA organises travel concessions for eligible disabled people (including those aged 16-19) who are resident in the West Midlands Regions. A free travel permit is available for use on bus, rail and Midland Metro services valid at the following times:

Mondays to Fridays

Weekends and Bank Holidays

0930hrs to end of daytime service

Anytime

Top up's are available free to those in education and receiving the WMCA travel concession and will allow travel before 9.30am on bus, rail and metro services in the West Midlands.

For further information and an application form please telephone WMCA Customer Services Team on 0345 303 6760.

School Travel Plans

Most schools in Wolverhampton have a school travel plan. A school travel plan puts together a series of measures to improve safety and reduce car use on journeys to and from school. The travel plan should target measures that school puts in place to encourage more children and families to walk, cycle and use public transport on the school journey.

Secondary schools receive promotional material regarding campaigns for new young drivers and the use of mobile phones whilst crossing the road. There is also further advance cycle training available.

Connexions Wolverhampton

Connexions Wolverhampton has Internet access available in the Civic Centre for young people to use to search for transport links; support can be provided to access the websites.

In cases of severe financial hardship, Connexions Wolverhampton may provide young people with bus tokens to access the Civic Centre, training and education providers and employers for the purpose of attending interviews.

During a young individual's final year at school, the Connexions Service will produce a Career Pathway Plan (CPP). For those students with Special Educational Needs the CPP will identify appropriate learning needs and outline the support that a young individual will require to access provision.

Further details can be obtained on our website

<http://www.wolvesworkbox.com/learner/connexions/index.html>

Where to find us:

Wolverhampton Connexions, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH.

Telephone: 01902 554499

or on Facebook: search Connexions Wolverhampton

16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Young people who need some financial support to help them stay in education or training after 16 can apply to their school, college or training provider for the new 16 -19 Bursary Fund.

Those most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1200 a year. This includes young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support and disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. Young people eligible for income support will include some teenage parents, young people estranged from their families and those whose parents have died.

Other students facing financial difficulties may also be able to claim a bursary to help with the costs of transport, food, equipment or other course related costs.

You must apply directly to your school, college or training provider for a bursary. In most cases, they decide on the amount you could receive, when it is paid and what conditions they might attach.

For advice speak to student support services or your tutor, or go to:

www.direct.gov/16-19bursary

Care to Learn

Care to Learn provides financial support to teenage parents who want to continue their education and need help with the cost of childcare and any associated travel. It pays up to £160 a week for each child and is paid direct to the childcare provider.

For information on the scheme visit www.c2l@studentbursarysupport.co.uk or telephone 0800 121 8989.

Dance and Drama Awards

Dance and Drama Awards are scholarships offering greatly reduced tuition fees and income-assessed support with living and learning costs at some of the leading independent dance and drama schools in England.

The awards are offered to learners by the schools - and offers are made on the basis of talent demonstrated at audition, rather than on financial circumstances.

For information visit www.direct.gov.uk/danceanddrama

3. What times during the day can learners use their travel pass or obtain concessionary fares?
<p>If the pass is issued by the LA it will be a Scholar's Ticket (see below for restrictions that apply).</p> <p>Public Transport Assistance</p> <p>The 16-18 student concession is valid at the following times:</p> <p>16-18 Photocard and Cash Fare Monday to Friday term time only and journeys to/from the school or college only. From start of daytime services to the learning provider before 0930 and from 1530 until 1800 and, if in connection with the school or college curriculum, outside these times.</p> <p>16-18 Photocard and Scholar's Ticket Monday to Friday term time only and journeys to/from the school or college only. From start of daytime services to the learning provider before 0930 and from 1530 until 1800 and, if in connection with the school or college curriculum, any time up to 2215.</p> <p>16-18 Photocard and Child Rate Season Ticket Whenever the season ticket is valid (including all day, every day and evening and weekend travel).</p>
4. Please confirm that support will continue to be made available to learners who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course.
<p>Students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties will continue to receive the support offered from the Local Authority until the end of the academic year in which they reach 19, provided they were under 19 at the start of the course, depending upon an assessment of need.</p>
5. How will learners be assessed to see if they are eligible for support? e.g. means-testing or must they be on benefits?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEN/Disability transport - LA provides either taxi or bus pass, depending on the student's ability to use public transport. Students considered are those for whom a statement of SEN or Education Health Care ▪ Plan (EHCP) was maintained prior to age 16 and for attendance at an approved institution (see Q6). The decision on the student's ability to use public transport is made jointly with the local authority, college or school concerned. ▪ 16-19 Bursary Fund – Students most in need will be eligible to receive a bursary of £1200 a year. This group includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in care • Care leavers • People claiming income support • Disabled young people who receive Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance

Other students facing genuine financial difficulties may be awarded a bursary at the discretion of their school, college or training provider.

6. What help do you provide for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to 19 years or learners facing other difficulties in following their courses?

Transport for Young People with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities

A taxi or a bus pass is provided by the LA for SEN/EHCP students or students with disabilities attending a maintained school or college up to the age of 19 (Wolverhampton residents) as follows:

When a young individual remains at a special school or unit beyond the age of 16 the LA will generally continue to provide the type of assistance with transport previously provided up to the age of 16, on condition that this is still appropriate. The matter will be reviewed annually. It may, in some cases, be appropriate for older pupils to begin to travel by bus as part of their learning programme.

The LA may provide transport for students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities if they attend the nearest appropriate further education college and, in the LA's view, the student cannot use public transport or a college-organised coach because of the length of the journey, or because of some other exceptional circumstance, such as physical disability. In such cases, parents and the staff of the college will together complete a transport assessment which may then recommend the use of transport and describe the reasons why it is necessary.

Students with learning difficulties or disabilities will be eligible for travel assistance until their course finishes or up to the age of 19 maximum, as long as they are continuing on a particular course started before the age of 19.

Support for students post 19 years may be available:

For further information contact:

Adult Social Care, City of Wolverhampton Council, Priory Green,
Wolverhampton WV9 5NJ - Tel: 01902 550901

For travel concessions organised by WMCA please see Question 1.

7. Do you provide mobility/independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport?

It is in the young individual's interests for later life to be independent and schools do, wherever they can, encourage all students to travel independently. Several schools including special schools/units provide mobility/independence training as a result of which it may, in some cases, be appropriate for older pupils to begin to travel by bus as part of their learning programme. Schools are encouraged to have independent travel identified within their travel plans.

8. When should learners start to apply for transport support?

LA - Transport for Young People with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities – June

City of Wolverhampton College - Application for support should be made as the place is agreed. Application forms are available from July.

Public Transport Assistance – Applications for the WMCA 16-18 Photocard must be made online at networkwestmidlands.com/16-18. Students must request a Unique Validation Code from their school or college after enrolment. At peak times (the start of the academic year) it normally takes about ten days. Season tickets can be purchased in September and used without the 16-18 Photocard until it arrives (more details are available online and from schools and colleges. A valid photocard must be presented with the ticket from 1 October. Operators will issue fines to all those travelling without a valid 16-18 photocard after this date.

9. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is beyond your LA area?

For students with learning difficulties or disabilities transport support will be provided if it is the nearest college/school which meets their needs or subject to assessment up to the age of 19.

Public Transport Assistance - WMCA concessions apply to journeys within the West Midlands County boundary.

10. What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?

For students with learning difficulties or disabilities transport support will be provided if it is the nearest specialist college/school which meets their needs and subject to assessment up to the age of 19. Support may be available from the Local Authority if the nearest specialist college/school is not funded by the EFA (Education Funding Agency).

Residential Support Scheme (RSS)

The Residential Support Scheme provides help with the accommodation costs of learners aged 16 and over, who need to live away from home to study because their course is not available locally. It covers Education Fund Agency and Skills Funding Agency Learner Responsive funded courses lasting 10 weeks or more and involving 15 hours' attendance a week. The scheme typically benefits learners studying for their first full Level 2 or 3 qualifications.

For more information contact the national helpline on 0800 121 8989 or visit <http://www.direct.gov.uk/MoneyToLearn>

11. Please provide information about all points of contact for learners seeking transport support, e.g. LA/college, bus company contact. Please include any websites and e-mail addresses.

City of Wolverhampton Council, Education, School Places & Transport

Pupil Services Section (SEN Transport) 01902 554202

Email: hometoschooltravel@wolverhampton.gov.uk

City of Wolverhampton Council, Adult Social Care Transport

Post 19 - 01902 550901

Website:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5038&p=0>

City of Wolverhampton College - Student Services

Email: mail@wolvcoll.ac.uk

National Express West Midlands

For more information call 0121 254 6363 or for Direct Debit information call 0121 254 6322.

For timetable information call 0871 200 2233.

For full details on the types of passes that can be purchased please go to the National Express West Midlands website:

www.travelwm.co.uk

WMCA

For full details on the types of passes that can be purchased please go to the WMCA website www.networkwestmidlands.com

For details of the 16 - 18 photocard scheme call WMCA Customer Services 0345 303 6760 or email directsales@tfwm.org.uk

16 -18 Application and further information –

www.networkwestmidlands.com/16-18

WMCA Direct Debit information and application –

www.networkwestmidlands.com/directdebit

Connexions

<http://www.wolvesworkbox.com/learner/connexions/index.html>

Wolverhampton Connexions, Civic Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SH

Telephone: 01902 554499 or on Facebook: search Connexions Wolverhampton

12. Appeals and Complaints

If you wish to appeal or complain against a decision relating to travel assistance, then in the first instance you should follow your Learning Providers complaints/appeals procedure.

If your transport has been provided by the Local authority or you are dissatisfied with the way your learning provider has dealt with your complaint write to:

Pupil Services Manager
Education
City of Wolverhampton Council
St Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RR

Your appeal/complaint will be investigated by a reviewing officer and you will be notified of the outcome. If you are not satisfied with the outcome the notification will include details of how to lodge an appeal if you wish to do so.