



Media release
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Consultation opens on KCC's Updated Post-16 Transport Policy

Kent County Council (KCC) is launching a public consultation today on its proposed updated Post-16 School Transport Policy.

For many years, most families in Kent have needed to make their own arrangements, at their own cost, to get their Post-16 children to their place of education, apprenticeship, or work. The consultation sets out two proposals which will give those students eligible for additional help with travel costs greater flexibility in the way they get to and from their school, college or training provider. This includes those students who have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

The first proposal is for a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) to be provided to most learners of sixth-form age who qualify for funded travel support from the council.

PTBs have grown in popularity with families in recent years, because they give them the flexibility and control to make their own travel arrangements. The Budgets may help towards covering the costs of running a family car or be used to make other arrangements to enable students to get to their place of learning.

Eligible families would receive between £1,400 and £4,700 to help with the cost of travel, depending on how far away home is from school, college or training

Parents would no longer have to pay the £600 direct cash contribution as at present (equivalent to the full cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass) because this would have already been accounted for in the total amount they would be eligible to receive.

The second proposal is that adult learners (those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) would initially be required to apply for a discretionary bursary from their school, college, or training provider for help with travel costs. These providers receive direct funding for these bursaries, whereas KCC does not receive dedicated monies for any travel support they provide adult learners.

Consideration may be given to providing additional mileage payments to students whose bursary is not sufficient to enable them to get to or from school, college or training.

The proposed policy retains and enhances the support previously available to students with special educational needs. Being able to travel independently is known to create long-term positive effects on young people's social interaction skills, time management, road safety awareness, and coping strategies, all of which can support them through their transition into adulthood and independence. We are proposing to offer independent travel training, to those who would benefit from it, earlier than before, in the lead up to their transition to Post-16 education.

The proposals, if agreed, would come into effect from September 2026. This is to ensure prospective students can make choices about their future education providers in the full knowledge of the transport support available to them. There will be no change to the current transport arrangements or for those starting in September 2025-26.

Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, said: "Our proposals would ensure that Kent can continue to support Post-16 learners' travel arrangements.

The Council has no statutory responsibility to provide any free or subsidised transport for students of sixth-form age or older. But with these proposals, Kent County Council has made a choice to continue to support families with the cost of getting their child to and from their school, college, or training.

As demand has increased significantly over recent years, we are keen to hear the views of families on our proposals that are designed to be flexible to accommodate families' needs and lifestyles, and sustainable, so no one misses out now or in the future."

Feedback on the proposals can be provided via the consultation questionnaire which is available at www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation.

Anyone who needs help taking part in the consultation, have a question or need paper copies of the consultation material, can email schooltransportconsultation@kent.gov.uk or phone [03000 418 796](tel:03000418796).

Anyone requiring the consultation material in another format or language should email: alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: [03000 421 553](tel:03000421553).

Both phone numbers go to answer machines, which are monitored during office hours.