

**TRANSPORT POLICY FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-18 IN
FURTHER EDUCATION AND CONTINUING LEARNERS
AGED 19 AND OVER**

ACADEMIC YEAR : 2010/2011

TRANSPORT POLICY FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-18 IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND CONTINUING LEARNERS AGED 19 AND OVER : 2010/2011

Name of Local Authority :	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Department Responsible :	Family Services (Home to School Transport Team)

1. SUMMARY OF POLICY STATEMENT AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a student is over 16 years. Responsibility for making appropriate transport arrangements rests with a student and/or parents/carers.

The main objective of the Wakefield Transport Partnership is to provide accessibility to learning centres as a means of promoting learning, social inclusion, choice and diversity of learning provision. The central principle is that no learner should be prevented from taking part in full-time education because of the lack of support travelling to a learning provider or institution.

The Partnership is responsible for the Policy relating to the provision of transport for learners who are above the statutory leaving age but less than 19 years (students with a learning difficulty and/or disability may be eligible up to the age of 25 years)

The Partnership consists of the following:-

- Wakefield Local Authority, Family Services (Home to School Transport, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team, Adult Services, Assessment and Care Management);
- Wakefield Local Authority. Transportation and Highways (Independent Travel Trainers);
- Wakefield College;
- NEW College;
- Wakefield Sixth Form Schools, including Special Schools – (please see Section 19 for further details);
- Pennine Camphill Community, Specialist FE College
- The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)
- West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro);
- Connexions Service;
- Representatives of the 14-19 Consortia

The partnership will aim to work collaboratively with regard to Post 16 travel to enable learners to access further education where individuals are facing difficulties accessing courses due to transport issues.

Where appropriate the Local Authority (LA) will encourage independent travel training to enable such learners to use public transport in order to attend school/college. However, not all learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability will be capable of using public transport, therefore, each case will be considered on its own merits.

2. CONCESSIONARY FARES, DISCOUNTS, SUBSIDIES, PASSES OR TRAVEL CARDS AVAILABLE FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-18 AND WHO PROVIDES THEM.

Those learners who do not meet the criteria for support within this policy have access to a range of concessionary bus and rail fares.

Details of the concessionary fares available on public transport in West Yorkshire for students aged 16-19 years can be found in Metro's leaflet, "Savings For Young People on Bus and Train Travel". Copies of this leaflet are available from the LA, Schools, Colleges and Metro Travel Centres or by visiting Metro's website at www.wymetro.com. Individual enquiries can be made by telephoning Metro on 0113 2517272.

Detailed route and timetable information for all journeys made by public transport in West Yorkshire can be obtained by telephoning Metroline on 0113 2457676 which is open 07.00 to 22.00 daily (excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day).

The Metro half-fare concession for young people aged 16-19 in full-time education who are resident in West Yorkshire is available seven days per week and is applicable to any journey made within West Yorkshire and not just for journeys between home and school/college.

A Student Plus Metrocard is available for anyone under 22 years old and must be used with a Student Plus Photo Card (a £2.00 administration fee is payable for the Photo Card). This can also be used by mature students 22 years and over in full-time education (i.e. 16 hours or more per week), available as weekly or monthly options. Full details are available in the "Student Plus MetroCard" leaflet, available from staffed bus and rail stations.

Generation M is Metro's website for young people in West Yorkshire and students should go to www.generationm.co.uk to find out more.

Where cross boundary travel is required between South and West Yorkshire students may wish to purchase a Megarider Gold. This provides 7 days unlimited travel across South and West Yorkshire on all buses and trams. The current prices are as follows:-

- 1 week ticket £17.00
- 4 weekly ticket £65.00
- 13 weekly ticket £200.00
- 52 weekly ticket £770.00

In addition to the arrangements made by the LA, governing bodies of schools and further education colleges may also provide support with transport costs and transport provision.

- St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College

The school has an agreement with Ross Travel to fund transport (W9 Service) for students who live cross boundary in South Yorkshire (i.e. Barnsley) to enable them to access the school. All students are expected to pay for a pass.

- Minsthorpe Community College

The 249 and 563 commercial service (M Travel) operates between Upton/South Kirkby and the College and is funded from fares taken on this service. However,

the College do fund a shuttle service (M Travel) between the College and Hemsworth Arts & CC to facilitate learning on the two sites.

- NEW College, Pontefract

The college provides a number of subsidised buses to/from college for students who would have difficulty accessing the college on public transport. Students are required to pay for an annual bus pass to travel on these buses.

3. WHO QUALIFIES FOR SUPPORT?

Learners will be aged between 16 and 18 years at the start of the academic year (i.e. 1 September) and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday.

Learners must be resident within the Metropolitan District of Wakefield

Young people will be engaged in learning or training at:-

- a school (including Academics):
- a further education institution
- an Authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education;
- an establishment funded directly by the YPLA e.g. Independent Specialist Providers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:
- a learning provider that is funded by the LA to deliver Foundation Learning or other accredited programmes of learning which lead to a positive outcome (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers);

Learners will normally be attending a full-time course at school or college. A full-time course is one that comprises 12-guided learning hours per week. Providing assistance for part-time courses will be considered in special circumstances under the same rules and conditions that apply to full-time students and taking into account available resources

Where a learner chooses a course outside the Wakefield District, the LA will exercise its discretion in responding to learner choice. Specific details of the course and reasons for choice will need to be given in order that an assessment can be made having due regard to the efficient and effective use of resources.

Where cross boundary travel is required and transport assistance is provided the LA will consider what transport support is available with neighbouring LAs in order to make the best use of the limited resources available.

Post 16 students are generally expected to take advantage of the concessionary fare schemes so they can access public transport for their daily travel to and from school/college in and around the Wakefield District. The following learners will be considered for additional support from the LA under this policy:

- Consideration will be given to encourage, enable and assist the participation of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25 years in education and training (please see further guidance on LLDD students)

- The distance between home and school or college, offering a suitable course, must exceed 3 miles by the shortest available walking route. This may be disregarded where learners require assisted transport as a result of their learning difficulty and/or disability.
- Consideration will be given to learners who are vulnerable to becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) at the age of 16 or 17 or have already become NEET
- Consideration will be given to learners who live in particularly rural areas where the transport infrastructure is limited
- Able to prove need. Learners must be able to demonstrate that in the absence of an award/assistance they would experience difficulties in accessing or completing their education and training because of financial constraints and/or other barriers
- Learners attending residential school/colleges. If a learner has to attend a school or college, which cannot be accessed by daily travel, help may be available subject to the criteria set out in this policy.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who require assisted transport will have journeys organised to/from school or college at the start and end of each full academic term and half term. Alternatively, travel expenses may be provided based upon the most economical public transport rate for the journey in question, or a car mileage allowance may be considered.
- Learners who attend residential school/colleges will still be subject to the charging element although consideration will be given to the limited number of journeys required.
- Journey Times. We expect young people to reach their establishment of education and training without incurring such stress, strain or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefiting from the education provided. Best practice suggests a child of secondary school age may reasonably be expected to travel 75 minutes each way to access learning. It is reasonable to apply similar expectations to learners of sixth form age.

However, where the learner has a learning difficulty and/or disability this may necessitate a shorter maximum journey time. Each case will therefore need to be assessed individually.

- Young people involved in an Apprenticeship and are under 22 will be entitled to apply for a Student Plus Metrocard.

Learning providers are responsible for ensuring that non-employed programme-led apprentices have reasonable expenses met in full where these are needed to overcome barriers to learning.

- Learners on work based learning courses are not eligible for support through this policy.

4. HOW WILL LEARNERS BE ASSESSED FOR ASSISTANCE?

Learners are encouraged to take advantage of the concessionary travel arrangements available. However, if a learner can demonstrate they have exceptional circumstances as to why additional assistance may be required then he/she must complete and return the appropriate Application Form together with any supporting documentary evidence.

Irrespective of the school or college to be attended all applications for assistance should be made by completing the appropriate application form which you should obtain by contacting :-

Wakefield MDC
Family Services
Home to School Transport
Room 60, County Hall
Wakefield
WF1 2QL
Telephone : 01924 306980
Fax : 01924 305611
E-mail : hst@wakefield.gov.uk

The Transport Policy Statement 2010/2011 is available from 31 May, 2010 and application forms available from **1 June, 2010**. You can contact the Home to School Transport Team for further details or download the information from the Council's website.

It is important you submit your application form with the appropriate supporting information as failure to provide this may result in a delay in your application being processed.

COMPLETION OF THE APPLICATION FORM DOES NOT MEAN LEARNERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE: THE FORM IS AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN ORDER THAT THE TRANSPORT TEAM CAN UNDERTAKE AN ASSESSMENT

Learners are encouraged to attend courses within the Wakefield District and only when it is absolutely clear that such provision cannot be met locally will consideration be given for students to receive help with travel to attend colleges out of the district. Where a suitable course is available in the Wakefield district, but the learner or parents/carers wish to attend a college outside the district this will be on the clear understanding they will be fully responsible for all travel and related costs. However, where the local college (Wakefield College or NEW College) cannot meet the learners specific needs (i.e. curriculum or care needs) then the college will be expected to provide written evidence to this effect.

The following information may also be requested to support the learner's application for assistance:-

- Medical evidence from either a GP or specialist;
- Evidence of previous assisted transport;
- Supporting evidence/recommendation from the Connexions Service;
- Supporting evidence/recommendation from Family Services, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team.

5. FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES (LLDD)

Where a learner is in receipt of a statement of special educational needs and continues in full-time education, assistance with travel may continue if the Year 11 review clearly indicates that transport is an integral part of their statement. This is to ensure that no learner by reason of a disability is deprived of being able to attend a course of further education. If however, this is not identified at the Year 11 review students previously in receipt of transport provision while at school will have their transport arrangements reviewed on transferring to college.

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be treated no less favourably than other learners and recognition will be given to the differential costs they may incur in comparison to other learners. Arrangements will not be limited to those learners who have been previously assessed as having a statement of special educational needs. Learners transport needs may change throughout their education and equally their disability status may change.

The LA will however pursue different approaches when considering what is necessary to facilitate attendance at educational establishments by learners in order to make the best use of the limited resources available.

6. ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

Where appropriate the Local Authority (LA) will encourage LLDD learners to undertake independent travel training to enable such learners to use public transport in order to attend school/college. However, not all learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability will be capable of using public transport, therefore, each case will be considered on its own merits.

The LA will also consider alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments of education and training including:-

- a walking escort;
- an escort to accompany the learner on public transport;
- a contribution towards mileage expenses;
- a free travel pass as an incentive and support to encourage learners to transfer from assisted transport to public transport;
- independent travel training.

The LA may also consider whether non-transport solutions could facilitate learner access to education and training. For example, peripatetic teachers, mobile provision, variations to session times and e-learning. This may be particularly beneficial in terms of the 14-19 agenda.

7. INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

As learners become older and move towards greater independence they may want to develop their skills of independent travel and, for some, this may mean using public transport or walking to school/college. For others transport assistance may be required throughout school/college life.

Two full-time Independent Travel Trainers have been appointed on behalf of the Wakefield Transport Partnership supporting schools and colleges in providing identified young people with the skills necessary to provide them with more opportunity to access a wider range of facilities including transport.

Schools and colleges work in partnership with the Travel trainers, learners and their families to enable learners to achieve greater levels of competency in their independent travel.

If you would like more information about the work of the Independent Travel Trainers' role please contact:-

Wakefield MDC
Transportation and Highways
Road Safety Team
Newton Bar
Wakefield
Telephone : 01924 306348
E-mail : twilsher@wakefield.gov.uk

8. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CHARGING FOR TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE

(i) Charging

For those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities a modest level of charging was introduced where they required assisted transport and were new entrants to post 16 education from September, 2006. This will also apply to learners in the 2010/2011 academic year. Learners and/or parents/carers will be notified of the charges in advance of the travel arrangements and invoiced at the start of each term.

Independent travellers may access the concessionary fare scheme and purchase a School Plus Metrocard. The Partnership acknowledges young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may be unable to take advantage of this scheme and so the level of charging has been designed to ensure there is a "level playing field" in this regard.

Where it has been agreed to provide assisted transport learners and/or their parents/carers will be invoiced at the start of each term based on the current cost of a School Plus Metrocard (£8.00 per week) for the Autumn Term 2010, Spring Term 2010 and Summer Term 2011.

Costs may vary depending on the actual number of study days/weeks.

PLEASE NOTE: Refunds of transport costs cannot be made for occasional days absence. If however the student is absent for full weeks due to illness then refunds will be considered upon receipt of confirmation of attendance details from the school/college attended.

9. OTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Families in particular hardship can apply via the appeals process to have the charges waived. When the appeal is submitted against the charging element on the grounds of financial hardship, the LA will use the household income banding used for EMA purposes to determine the level of charges applicable, as follows:-

Household income (2009/2010 financial year)	Charges applicable
Up to £20,817 per annum	Charges waived
£20,818 - £25,521	1/3 rd of School Plus Metrocard up to a maximum of £8.00 per week
£25,522 - £30,810	2/3rds of School Plus Metrocard up to a maximum of £8.00 per week.
More than £30,811	Full charge payable up to a maximum of £8.00 per week

- Consideration will also be given to learners who do not qualify for EMA due to a change in circumstances (i.e. loss of job/redundancy etc);

(i) Education Maintenance Allowance

Learners can apply for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) which provides a means tested allowance of up to £30.00 per week. Further details of the EMA Scheme can be obtained from www.direct.gov.uk/ema or the Learner Support Helpline on 0800 1218989.

(ii) Discretionary Learner Support (dLS)

Discretionary Learner Support, formerly referred to as Learner Support or Hardship Funds is aimed at providing exceptional support to individual learners who are experiencing financial difficulty with meeting costs associated with learning. dLS is not to be used routinely to fund transport costs. LAs cannot therefore take into account that YPLA provides funding to colleges and providers when determining what transport arrangements it needs to make.

(iii) Young Parents – Care to Learn (C2L)

C2L can help pay for childcare and travel costs for learners aged 19 and under at the start of their course. The additional costs of taking a child to and from childcare may be claimed, within a set weekly limit. C2L does not support the costs of travel to the Learning Provider. Learning Providers should be encouraged to support learners to apply for C2L. Further details are available on directgov website.

Young Parents will also be entitled to apply for a Student Plus Metrocard.

(iv) Mobility Support

The LA may take into account receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) when assessing what support might be needed by a learner (i.e. as a proxy of the severity of a disability) but may not require the learner to use this to support their transport costs to learning.

Where a parent has not obtained a vehicle the mobility allowance **may** still be taken into account when determining what (if any) level of assistance to provide.

In certain circumstances it may be more cost effective to offer parents/carers a mileage allowance in order for them to make their own arrangements to transport the learner to school/college rather than commission a taxi or specially adapted vehicle.

Each case will be assessed individually dependent upon their particular need and personal circumstances.

10. APPEAL AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Learners and/or parents who wish to appeal against the decision not to award assistance, to withdraw existing support or to appeal to have the post 16 transport charges waived, should do so by completing and returning the appeal form, together with any supporting documentary evidence to Family Services, Home to School Transport Team, Room 60, County Hall, Wakefield. WF1 2QL clearly setting out the reasons for the appeal.

Where invoices have been submitted for payment of transport costs but parents/carers then wish to appeal against the charge they must do so within 21 days of the date of the invoice, otherwise the Transport Team will be unable to intervene and recovery of the charges will be passed to our Sundry Income Section.

Once information has been received this will be presented to a Transport Panel of Senior Officers who will review the case. If the Panel is persuaded to make an exception to the policy the application will be agreed at this stage of the process. If the Panel do not feel able to make an exception to the policy the application will be refused. Those parents who wish to take advantage of the two-stage appeal process can make submission to the Awards and Appeals Regulatory Board, which consists of Elected Members of the Council.

If learners are not satisfied with the outcome of the Board's decision and wish to make a final complaint/appeal this can be done by writing to The Secretary of State.

11. GENERAL

(i) Start/Finish Times

Providing assisted transport (e.g. taxis, specially adapted vehicles) will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. However, where assisted transport is provided this may be shared with other learners. Although every effort will be made to supply assisted transport for the start and finish times of the course day, it may be necessary in certain circumstances (e.g. where learners live within the same location and attend the same college but have different course times) for some learners to experience a degree of "positive study time" at college. It is considered reasonable for this to be up to an hour in

school/college but where the learner has a learning difficulty and/or disability consideration may need to be given to a shorter time period.

(ii) Induction

Many learners undertake a period of induction the first two weeks of the Autumn Term (this may involve staggered session times, different attendance days and college sites). Where learners share assisted transport it may not be possible for transport arrangements to be put in place due to the many variables involved and parents/carers should endeavour to be as flexible as possible and make their own arrangements during the induction fortnight. The LA will then liaise with the learner and school/college to establish a regular pattern of attendance so that transport arrangements can be put in place following the induction process.

(iii) Withdrawal/Suspension of Transport Assistance

Learners who are in receipt of assisted transport and subsequently fail to attend school or college, without a valid reason, may have their transport support withdrawn or suspended temporarily.

Learners who are in receipt of a free travel pass undertake to ensure that the conditions of use imposed by the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro) are complied with. Learners who are found in breach of Metro's conditions of use, the LA's guidelines for managing pupil/student behaviour on transport or the school/college's own behaviour policy may result in the temporary or permanent withdrawal of the pass. Where a sanction is applied learners/parents can still apply to have the decision reviewed via the appeals process. Similar action may also be taken for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are in receipt of assisted transport where it is deemed the behaviour of the learner is likely to place themselves or others at significant risk. This action will only be taken as a last resort after all options have been explored.

Where assisted transport has been provided following an assessment the learner and/or parents/carers will be expected to make a contribution towards the post 16 transport charges. However, where there are financial hardship grounds or any other particular circumstances that may be relevant the learner and/or parents/carers can take advantage of the two-stage appeal process. Every opportunity will be given for learners and/or parents/carers to pay the charges by smaller, more manageable payments suitable to the learner and/or parent/carer.

Where the learner and/or parents/carers during the course of the academic year fail to make payments or make a reasonable contribution towards their assisted transport, engage with the appropriate agencies to secure a manageable payment plan or submit an appeal, then the learner may have their assisted transport withdrawn for the following academic year.

This action will only be taken as a last resort after all other options have been explored.

The only exception to this will be those learners who attend a school or college where the provision of transport is incorporated into their statement of special educational needs by the Wakefield Family Services, Special Educational Needs Group.

(iv) Mid-Year Changes

Although the LA is obliged to publish the Transport Policy Statement by 31 May, the Partnership may make additional arrangements which become necessary as it continues to monitor progress throughout the year, and amend and re-publish the statement in year in response to complaints or to a direction by the Secretary of State.

12. EXTENDED CONSULTATION: ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/2012

- Currently the LA consults with the Post 16 Partnership, however, from 2011/2012 the LA must consult persons of sixth form age (i.e. 16-19) and their parents/carers.

The DCSF guidance on Home to School Travel and Transport states that “LAs should consult widely on any changes to their local policies on school/college travel arrangements with interested parties”. Further guidance indicates that any consultation should last for at least 28 working days during term time and should be extended to take account of any school/college holidays that may occur during the period of consultation.

We therefore propose to add persons of sixth form age and their parents to the list of named stakeholders as set out under Part 1 of this statement when drawing up our Transport Policy Statement for 2011/2012 and for the appropriate consultation to take place in April/May 2011 for 4 weeks.

- There is also a new requirement to prepare and publish a Transport Policy Statement for young people aged 19-24 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for the academic year 2010/2011 and to consult a number of parties in producing the statement including young people and their parents/carers.

The Partnership will work with Adult Services to develop this policy including the commissioning of transport for students with LLDD

USEFUL CONTACTS

Wakefield MDC

Family Services
Home to School Transport
Room 60, County Hall
Wakefield WF1 2QL
Telephone : 01924 306980
Fax : 01924 305611
E-mail : hst@wakefield.gov.uk

Wakefield MDC

Transportation and Highways
Independent Travel Trainers
Road Safety Team
Newton Bar
Wakefield
WF1 2TX
Telephone : 01924 306348
E-mail: twilsher@wakefield.gov.uk

Wakefield MDC

Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team (SENART)
Family Services
Block C
Normanton Town Hall
Normanton
Wakefield
WF4 2DZ
Telephone : 01924 302465

Connexions Service

24 Wood Street
Wakefield
Telephone : 01924 371579

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro)

Wellington House
40-50 Wellington Street
Leeds
LS1 2DE
Telephone : 0113 2457676
E-mail : www.generationm.co.uk

Wakefield College

Financial Support
Margaret Street
Wakefield WF1 2DH
Telephone : 01924 789283
E-mail : student.finance@wakefield.ac.uk

NEW College

Student Services

Park Lane

Pontefract WF8 4QR

Telephone : 01977 702139

E-mail : studentservices@newcollpont.ac.uk

Oakfield Park School

Barnsley Road

Ackworth

Pontefract

WF7 7DT

Telephone : 01977 723145

Highfield School

Gawthorpe Lane

Gawthorpe

Ossett

WF5 9BS

Telephone : 01924 302980

Hemsworth Arts & Community College

Station Road

Hemsworth

Pontefract

WF9 4HW

Telephone : 01977 624220

Minsthorpe Community College, A Specialist Science College

Minsthorpe Lane

South Elmsall

Pontefract

WF9 2UJ

Telephone : 01977 723810

Ossett School

Storrs Hill Road

Ossett

WF5 0DG

Telephone : 01924 302830

Outwood Grange Academy

Potovens Lane

Outwood

Wakefield

WF1 2PF

Telephone : 01924 303815

St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College

Cutsyke Road

Featherstone

Pontefract

WF7 6BD
Telephone : 01977 691000

Pennine Camphill Community, Specialist FE College

Wood Lane
Chapelthorpe
Wakefield
WF4 3JL
Telephone : 01924 255281
E-mail : enquiries@pennine.org.uk

Dewsbury College

Halifax Road
Dewsbury
WF13 2AS
Telephone : 01924 465916

Barnsley College

Church Street
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 2AX
Telephone : 01226 216248