

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Decision Report

Decision Maker	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Title	Determination of Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023
Date	11 May 2023
Report From	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to determine Hampshire County Council's (the Council) Post 16 Transport Policy Statement (the Policy) for 2023. As required by law the necessary consultation has been followed. The proposed changes focus on an increased parental contribution (charge) for transport. The Post 16 Policy for 2023 is now being presented for approval to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023 provided in Appendix B.

Executive Summary

- 3.1 The proposed Post 16 Policy Statement for 2023 was subject to a public consultation running from 20 February 2023 to 2 April 2023. The consultation was carried out on the Council's website and the proposed changes from the Post 16 Policy Statement for 2022 are detailed below in paragraph 3.7.
- 3.2 There is no automatic entitlement to local authority funded school or college transport once a student is over the age of 16. Hampshire County Council has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college or school of choice and, if needed, apply to their provider's student support for assistance.
- 3.3 Hampshire County Council recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that 16+ students with special needs or disabilities can access an education placement that is suitable for their needs and so do offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service that requires an annual

parental contribution.

- 3.4 The Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2023 recommends for approval outlines the transport service available to eligible Post 16 learners and enables Hampshire County Council to continue to meet its statutory requirements.
- 3.5 The Post 16 2023 Policy Statement will continue to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/ carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.
- 3.6 In 2022/23, for approximately 76.7% of Post 16 eligible students, the parental contribution was waived due to low income, in receipt of benefits, free school meals or exceptional circumstances.
- 3.7 Only one change was proposed to the Post 16 Policy Statement for 2023, with all other content remaining the same as the Post 16 Policy Statement for 2022. The one proposed change concerned the value of the parental contribution, which was proposed to increase the contribution to the amounts shown below:

Distance to travel	2022/23 Average Annual Full Cost of Service	2022/23 Annual charge	2022/23 Termly charge	Projected 2023/24 Average Annual Full cost of Service	Proposed 2023/24 Annual charge	Proposed 2023/24 Termly charge
Up to 5 miles	£3,572	£616.20	£205.40	£4,465	£783.19	£261.06
5.01 to 7.5 miles	£5,358	£853.44	£284.48	£6,698	£1,084.72	£361.57
7.51 to 10 miles	£7,144	£1,195.43	£398.48	£8,930	£1,519.39	£506.46
Over 10 miles	£10,716	£1,365.91	£455.30	£13,395	£1,736.07	£578.69

- 3.8 The proposed change to the Policy Statement is an uplift in parental contributions by 27.1%. Transport costs have risen significantly above inflation over the last year and the Council has experienced this cost pressure. The average cost per student for Post 16 transport has increased by 27.1% over the last 12 months, to a total of £3.7m across the Service.
- 3.9 This proposal will result in an increase in the amount of parental contribution received but this will only partially offset the rise in costs already experienced and funded by the Council. Parents will continue to contribute c.20% of the costs of the transport arrangement, with the Council funding the remaining 80% as in previous years.
- 3.10 If the Council were to increase the contribution towards the transport arrangements to more than the existing 80%, this will impact and reduce the limited resources available for other essential services for vulnerable children.

Contextual Information

- 4.1 This report includes the comments received in response to the annual consultation on the Post 16 Transport Policy that is required by statutory guidance, refer to Appendices C and D. As the Policy Statement is determined annually, parents and young adults make a new application for transport each year and eligibility for support is decided each academic year. The newly determined Policy Statement will be used for all new applications for assistance for the 2023/24 academic year.
- 4.2 The Policy Statement details the offer for sixth form age students aged 16 - 19 and adult students with an Education Health and Care Plan or a disability to the age of 25. The proposed Policy Statement explains that the Council will provide local authority funded transport, when it is necessary, to facilitate attendance. It also explains, that where the young person is aged under 18, the expectation of the Council is that parents or carers will be responsible for transporting their child, but individual circumstances of families will be considered when making eligibility decisions.
- 4.3 The Policy Statement is determined within a statutory timetable before the end of May each calendar year. It will be published for parents following the Executive Member Decision Day.

Finance

- 5.1 Hampshire County Council currently spends approximately £44 million each year on school transport, of which £3.7 million was spent on Post 16 transport assistance. Transport costs have risen significantly over and above inflation over the past year nationally, due to the increase in cost of living, inflation and conditions in the market. The transport market (bus and taxi) across the country is extremely challenging, with a national shortage of drivers and a significant reduction in competition, which are contributing factors to the overall increase in costs.
- 5.2 Within this context, the costs associated with Post 16 transport have increased by 27.1% over the last financial year.
- 5.3 The Council currently fund approximately 80% of the cost of an average Post 16 transport arrangement from revenue budgets. The parental contribution funds approximately 20%. The proposed increase in parental contributions for Post 16 transport would mean parents continue to pay the same proportion of the total transport cost as they have previously. If the Council were to increase the contribution towards the transport arrangements to more than the existing 80%, this will impact and reduce the limited resources available for other essential services for vulnerable children.
- 5.4 The Council offer the facility to pay Post 16 parental contributions in instalments on a termly basis.

- 5.5 For 76.7% of Post 16 eligible students in 2022/2023, the parental contribution was waived due to low income, in receipt of benefits, free school meals or exceptional circumstances. Parental contributions will continue to be waived under such circumstances in 2023/24.
- 5.6 The Council work to limit the spend on school transport wherever possible, whilst ensuring statutory requirements continue to be met. There are robust procurement processes in place where the School Transport Service regularly review contracts to optimise and obtain best value. Hampshire County Council also continue to work with central government to maximise funding for vulnerable young people, and to ensure the challenges in respect of the increasing spend on local authority funded school transport is recognised nationally.
- 5.7 This proposal will result in an increase in amount of parental contribution received but this will only partially offset the rise in costs already experienced.

Consultation and Equalities

- 5.8 The public consultation on the 2023 Policy Statement ran from 20 February 2023 to 2 April 2023. The public were invited to make comments via a publicly available website. Communications promoting the consultation included a press release, details on the Council's website, communications sent to schools, emails to existing service users and post-16 settings and an email to County Councillors. The consultation was also promoted via the Council's Facebook and Twitter social media channels.
- 5.9 There were 31 individual responses to the consultation, which is an increase from six received in response to last year's consultation. One respondent supported the proposed change to the value of the parental contributions and 12 stated their objection to the proposed increase. The remaining 18 respondents did not explicitly state their support or objection, although unfavourable comments about the proposal were included in the feedback from these respondents.
- 5.10 Responses were collated and themed under the following headings:-

Subject	Number of respondents raising within their comments
Cost of living/Inflation concerns	21
SEN inclusion	21
Distance to placement	13
Lack of suitable alternative travel options	6
Impact on work commitments	3
Hampshire Transport Contracts – obtaining best value	3
Lobby Central Government for funding	2
Benefits/Personal Independence Payment	2
Disproportionate impact for families in rural areas	2

N.B. One response can cover multiple headings.

- 5.11 Analysis of the responses has been included within slides in Appendix C. The full anonymised responses are included with Appendix D.
- 5.12 Within the responses are a number of suggestions for the wider Hampshire County Council Services to consider – these are included within (Appendix D). A high level summary of these are included within the slides (Appendix C). These suggestions will be collated and shared with the relevant directorates or services.
- 5.13 The Council's Post 16 Transport Policy Statement is compliant with and is based upon DfE guidance. Post 16 Transport assistance is not required by law but is provided as discretionary support by the Council in recognition of the additional difficulties faced by families with a with an Education Health and Care Plan or a disability.
- 5.14 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced for the Post 16 Transport Policy for 2023 and is provided in [Appendix A](#).

Climate Change Impact Assessment

- 5.15 Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impact of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Council does.
- 5.16 The carbon mitigation tool and climate change adaptation tool were not applicable because the decision relates to the annual determination of a statutory policy for determining the eligibility for local authority funded transport assistance for students aged 16 to 25. This is the first administrative step in meeting the duty to support Post 16 students' journeys to and from their educational setting as it will ensure that help is provided when it is necessary to facilitate attendance.
- 5.17 The policy is important for meeting Hampshire County Councils' strategic priorities as it provides an opportunity for local authority funded transport that enables young people to get a good start in life and assists in overcoming inequality. Also, the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement helps people with special educational needs and/or a disability to find and access support within the community.

Conclusion

- 5.18 The proposed Policy Statement aids parents/carers and users of the service to understand the transport service available and who may be entitled to support. The Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023 recommended for approval provides details of the service available to eligible Post 16 learners and enables Hampshire County Council to continue to meet its statutory duties.

Supporting information

- a) Equality Assessment – [Appendix A](#)
- b) Proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement – [Appendix B](#)
- c) Slides of Consultation Responses - [Appendix C](#)
- d) Anonymised comments under subject headings - [Appendix D](#)

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Decision Record.pdf (hants.gov.uk)	23 March 2022
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772913/Post16_transport_guidance.pdf	January 2019

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Equalities Impact Assessment: [Appendix A](#)

Equality Impact Assessment

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is an obligation within the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give ‘due regard’ to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid ‘due regard’ to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

Title: Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023

Related EIAs: EIA Number: 220

EIA for Savings Programme: No

Service affected School Transport - Post 16

Description of the service/policy/project/project phase: The provision of transport to an education setting for young people who are older than school age is not a statutory requirement. Hampshire County Council have exercised discretion beyond the statutory requirement to offer transport assistance to young people between 16 and 18 years old who have an Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) or disability. The Post 16 Transport service provides transport for approximately 560 users each day and costs £3.7m per annum. The Policy Statement details when and how the Council will support attendance in Post 16 education where travel/transport is perceived as a barrier. It allows parents/carers and users to understand how young people aged over 16 with an EHCP or a disability aged over 16 and in education may be eligible for a local authority funded transport service. The external (supplier) costs of providing transport to post 16 learners has increased by 27.1% in the last 12 months as a result of a shortage of drivers, decreased competition in the transport market and increased fuel costs.

New/changed service/policy/project The Post 16 Transport Policy Statement has one change from the 2022 Policy Statement which is a proposed increase in parental contributions (charges) in line with the increased transport costs being incurred by the council. The increase proposed is 27.1%. The parental contribution is a proportion of the full cost of providing the service; the parental contribution is approximately 20% of the total and Hampshire County Council cover 80%. These proportions will not change as a result of the proposed change in charges. To illustrate, the annual parental contribution for a journey to school/college of between 5 and 7.5 miles was £853.44 last year (20% of the

total cost of providing the service). Due to this proposed change it will increase (by 27.1%) to £1,084.72 which is 20% of the average annual cost of providing this service, a total of £5,358 in this example. This charge is waived where the child's parent(s)/carer(s) receive income-based benefits or are on a low income. Currently the charge is waived for 77% of parents. This proportion should not be affected by this change.

Engagement

The Council carried out a public consultation designed to give Hampshire residents and wider stakeholders the opportunity to have their say about proposed changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy. The consultation ran from 20 February to 2 April 2023.

Communications promoting the consultation included a press release, details on the Council's website, communications sent to schools, emails to existing service users and post-16 settings and an email to County Councillors. The consultation was also promoted via the Council's Facebook and Twitter social media channels

There were 31 individual responses. One respondent supported the proposal, 12 stated their objection and 18 did not explicitly state support or objection although unfavourable comments about the proposal were included in the feedback from these respondents. Feedback from respondents was mainly focused around cost of living/inflation concerns, Special Educational Needs (SEN) challenges and distance to placement. Full details of responses have been detailed within the Executive Member Decision Report on the 11 May 2023.

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The established policy and legislation, from 2021 affect learners at specific ages differently, particularly those aged 16 on 1st September 2023 and those aged 17 on that date, although only until their 18th birthday. Therefore, the impact on age identified here is in respect to the legislative requirements and the subsequent considerations made by Hampshire County Council (HCC) when deciding on the support necessary in relation to travel and transport to facilitate a young person's attendance at their place of education.

As a young person becomes a Post 16 learner, HCC considers transport support is only necessary if it is essential to enable them to attend their programme of study. If the young person is able to access other forms of travel, support/funding, and has the available means to access their education setting, then they would be expected to use these in the first instance.

Mitigation

Where transport is necessary to facilitate attendance, the Council will provide transport assistance. Each young person will be considered on a case by case basis to ensure provision reflects actual need with the contribution waived for learners from families in receipt of income based benefits or who are on a low income.

Disability

Impact on public: Negative - High

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The vast majority of young people over the age of 16 in education will attend placements which are accessible from their home address. However, where a young person or a family member (with responsibility for the young person) has Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND), a health issue/concern, or disability this may make accessing an education placement difficult or impossible without HCC providing support with travel/transport arrangements. The proposed policy change concerns provision for this cohort of learners (and their families) and recognises the potential impacts on this protected characteristic.

HCC ensure support is available if it is considered necessary in order for the young person to attend their education placement / training. Where possible and where appropriate, HCC will support young people to use public transport and make their own journeys independently, and will expect parents to provide transport assistance.

Mitigation

Hampshire County Council recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that 16+ special needs or disabled students can access a place that is suitable for their needs and so do offer a transport service, under discretionary powers. The transport arrangements require a parental contribution. This can be paid in instalments on a termly or monthly basis if required. The Post 16 2023 Policy will continue to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/ carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The School Transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special educational needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on gender reassignment and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The School Transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact on this characteristic and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Race

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The School Transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on race and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Religion or Belief

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The school transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on religion or belief and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Sex

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The school transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on this characteristic and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The school transport service service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on sexual orientation and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The school transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. There is no identified impact based on this characteristic and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Poverty

Impact on public: Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

The school transport service is provided based on geography, safety of route and on some occasions, the special needs of the eligible child. HCC recognises there is a potential intersectionality link between disability and/or SEN and poverty characteristics. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report - UK Poverty 2022 identified: "The poverty rate for individuals who live in families where someone is disabled is 31%, 12 percentage points higher than those who live in families where no-one is disabled. Of all families in poverty, just under half contain someone who is disabled, compared with 3 in 10 of families not in poverty." and "A key driver of the higher poverty rate is the lower employment rate both for disabled people and in families where someone is disabled. Among families where someone is disabled, the workless rate is 26%, compared with 10% of families where no-one is disabled. Among those families who are working, 17% of those where someone is disabled only work part-time, compared with 11% where no-one is disabled."

The Post 16 2023 Policy will continue to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/ carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

On this basis, the impact based on this characteristic has been assessed as negative - medium.

Mitigation

The charge is waived where the child's parent(s) receive income-based benefits or are on a low income. Currently the charge is waived for 77% of parents. This proportion should not be affected by this change.

Families with a low income, but not in receipt of the above benefits, where the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to around £16,190; or those with exceptional circumstances, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

Where a charge is made parents have the option to pay the annual charge in termly instalments, each of 1/3 of the total.

Rurality

Impact on public: Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale

Families living in rural areas often face a longer journey in terms of distance and journey times to access Post 16 provision. Public transport may be a more restricted offer. The longer journey and restricted public transport may limit families' capacity to support their child's travel. As journeys from rural areas will tend to be longer, the cost of providing transport for young people from rural areas are greater on average. Therefore the charges

are grouped into four bands based on distance. Due to the longer distances, rural families will be more likely to be in a higher band with a higher charge.

Mitigation

Where transport is necessary to facilitate attendance, the Council will provide transport assistance. Each young person will be considered on a case-by-case basis, including the proposed journey and any limitations on infrastructure, to ensure provision reflects actual need. The Post 16 2023 Policy will continue to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/ carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

Geographical Impact: All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

The proposed increase in parental contributions for Post 16 transport, would mean parents continue to pay the same proportion of the total transport cost as they have previously. If the Council were to increase the contribution towards the transport arrangements to more than the existing 80%, this will impact and reduce the limited resources available for other essential services for vulnerable children.

This EIA principally focuses on assessing the impacts of the proposed change on the public with no proposed changes to staff working terms and conditions, therefore the impact on staff has been assessed as neutral throughout.

Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

EIA reference number: 00403

Date of production of EIA for publication: 20/04/2023

2023 Transport policy statement for students in further education aged 16–18 and continuing students aged 19.

Name of LEA: Hampshire

Department Responsible: Education

Hampshire County Council 2023/2024 Transport Policy Statement for students in further education aged 16-19, continuing students and young people aged 19-24 with learning disabilities.

1. Commitment

Hampshire County Council (HCC) and its post 16 providers are committed to ensuring transport is available to enable students to access education and training as set out in this policy statement. Support is provided either by the County Council or post 16 providers. This policy statement applies for 2023/2024 only and sets out the support available.

There is no automatic entitlement to free school or college transport once a student is over 16. The County Council has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college of choice and, if needed, apply to their college's student support for assistance. The cost and mechanical process of transporting young people with special educational needs is greater and more complex. HCC recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that 16+ special needs or disabled students can access a place that is suitable for their needs and so do offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service that requires an annual parental contribution.

2. General transport available

There are a number of public transport service providers in Hampshire. Colleges and schools in Hampshire have their own transport arrangements but the situation does vary. Students should check with their setting about the transport arrangements and ticketing prices that can apply to both bus and train travel. The following link provides the information supplied by colleges and sixth form establishments.

College and School Details

Will be added as a number of links to the various college websites.

Other transport support

Post 16 education providers and other agencies provide support with transport in certain cases, for example:

Cycle schemes:

- Care to Learn - <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview>
- Wheels to Work - <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/wheels-to-work>
- Brain in Hand - <http://braininhand.co.uk/>

3. Qualification for support from Hampshire County Council for students attending colleges and schools with sixth forms (including academies)

HCC will assist with travel expenses for post-16 students with special educational needs or a disability. A parental contribution towards the cost of this transport will be required; the cost will be decided by applying the following charging schedule:

Distance to travel	Annual charge	Termly charge
Up to 5 miles	£783.19	£261.06
5.01 miles to 7.5 miles	£1,084.72	£361.57
7.51 miles to 10 miles	£1,519.39	£506.46
Over 10 miles	£1,736.07	£578.69

Transport will normally only be offered if the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or if the student has a disability which means he/she requires transport arrangements to be provided. The student or their parents will need to apply for transport and evidence that HCC must provide transport to facilitate attendance, and evidence that without transport assistance, the student will be unable to attend the educational placement.

When assessing an application for transport assistance, HCC will refer to the criteria provided in [Appendix 1](#).

4. Post 16 training providers and apprenticeships

The same qualifications as set out in paragraph 3 apply for students attending post-16 training providers. Students in apprenticeships with employed status do not qualify for any assistance with travel costs.

5. Qualification for support from colleges and schools with sixth forms including academies

In addition to the support available from HCC, post-16 providers may also provide financial support towards transport costs for certain students such as young parents, those from low-income families, those at risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). This is determined by the provider and is often based on how they have locally determined to use 'hardship' funds.

Please follow the link below to information provided by post-16 providers regarding transport services [College and School Details](#)

6. Assistance with transport for students over the age of 19 with learning difficulties or disabilities

Students over the age of 19 may qualify for transport assistance if they are subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan. It will then be provided either up until the age of 24 or until the student completes the course, whichever is the earliest. A new application will need to be made each year to access the service.

The student or their parents will need to apply for transport and evidence that HCC must provide transport to facilitate attendance and evidence that without transport assistance, the student will be unable to attend the educational placement.

When assessing an application for transport assistance, HCC will refer to the criteria provided in [Appendix 1](#)

7. Independent Travel Training

The County Council provides some mobility/independence training for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Children in special schools will be subject to transition plans in year 9 and independence training can form part of that plan. Some colleges also provide mobility/independence training.

8. Students attending providers outside Hampshire

The County Council may provide assistance with transport to support students attending providers outside of the county, but students need to qualify for support against the criteria outlined in paragraph 3. The provider attended may also be able to provide some support, see paragraph 5.

9. Students attending providers in Hampshire but living outside the county

Such students should apply to their home Local Authority for assistance. However, providers themselves may provide assistance and are not bound by county boundaries.

10. Applying for assistance with transport

Students wishing to apply for help with transport can do so by accessing the HCC website where further details are available: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/yourfuture.htm>.

Students may also wish to apply to colleges direct for help. Paragraph 12 provides details of the colleges and their contact details together with an outline of the assistance they provide.

Please be aware that eligibility for transport assistance is re-assessed annually and a new transport application is required each academic year if assistance is still required. If the student's personal circumstances change within an academic year, their eligibility for transport assistance will need to be re-assessed and a new application required.

11. Appeals/Complaints

Complaints regarding any aspect of the policy statement must first be taken up with HCC. If these do not result in a satisfactory outcome, young people or their families may complain to the Secretary of State for Education.

Students wishing to make a complaint or an appeal regarding a transport entitlement decision, or subsequent transport arrangements or the requirement to make a contribution to the cost of travel should write to the Head of Information Transport and Admissions, Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UG. The appeals process is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

12. College and School Details

To be added when published; this will comprise of links to school and college organised transport. The information published will be the most up to date information supplied directly by schools and colleges and will not be amended.

Appendix 1

Criteria applied to determine eligibility to transport to a Post 16 provider

1. The following criteria apply to all students:

Necessity: The Council will provide transport assistance when it is necessary to facilitate the student's attendance at their educational setting.

Minimum distance: The journey from to school/college must be more than three miles, measured by the nearest available walking route.

Eligible but living within walking distance? Transport may be provided within the walking distance if it is necessary to facilitate attendance. Factors that may be taken into account include:

- The student's ability to walk
- The student's need to be accompanied by an adult.

Which college or school? Travel assistance will be given to the nearest school or college considered to be the most suitable placement for the student and which offers a course or programme which is designed specifically to meet the special needs of the student concerned. If the course or programme is not specifically designed to meet the needs of those with SEN, travel assistance will be given to the nearest college offering an appropriate course. A course is deemed appropriate where it enables a student to meet his or her career objectives.

A student attending their nearest special school or school with a sixth form named in his or her EHCP may qualify, subject to the other criteria detailed in this Appendix.

Pick-up and drop-off points: Where the distance between a nearest pick-up or drop-off point and home or college is less than 1 mile, HCC will not normally provide transport for that part of the journey. However, transport may be provided for students within these distances where this is recommended following an assessment of their individual needs. The criteria used to determine entitlement within walking distance apply in these circumstances.

Journeys to and from other destinations: Transport is not offered to or from points other than the college and home.

Waiting Time: The expectation is that students will share transport and the drop off and collection arrangements are made in line with the college start and finish times. Transport is not able to take into consideration individual student's timetables and where appropriate, the transport arrangement may include a waiting time at the start and/or end of the day.

Residential Placements: Some students with complex and/or severe needs are placed in a residential out of county special school or college because there is no appropriate provision available locally. Such students will receive transport at the start and end of each term, half term and at other school/college closures. Any additional transport will be the responsibility of parents/carers.

2. The following apply additionally to student's aged 16 or 17 in September 2023:

Parental Assistance: The Council expects that parents and carers take responsibility for facilitating their child's attendance in education where they are able to do so. Families/applicants may apply for transport and explain their circumstances which make support from HCC with transport necessary to enable their child to attend their place of education or training. All requests for transport will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Charges: If transport is provided by HCC, a parental contribution may be levied.

When the student's parents are in receipt of Income Support; income-based Jobseekers Allowance; income-related Employment and Support Allowance; support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit; Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190); Working Tax Credit run-on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit; or Universal Credit, the charge will be waived.

Families in receipt of free school meals (due to low income) are not required to pay the contribution.

Families with a low income, but not in receipt of the above benefits, where the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to around £16,190; or those with exceptional circumstances, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

3. The following apply to student's aged 18 when the transport starts in September 2023 or already 18 at the time of application or 19 or over and continuing on a course that they started before their 19th birthday:

Parental assistance: There will be no expectation that a parent will assist with their adult child's transport arrangement, although parents who wish to do so will be welcome to support their adult child's transport arrangement.

Charges: If transport is provided by HCC, a parental contribution may be levied.

When the student's parents are in receipt of Income Support; income-based Jobseekers Allowance; income-related Employment and Support Allowance; support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit; Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190); Working Tax Credit run-on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit; or Universal Credit, the charge will be waived.

Families in receipt of free school meals (due to low income) are not required to pay the contribution.

Families with a low income, but not in receipt of the above benefits, where the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to around £16,190; or those with exceptional circumstances, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

4. The following applies to students aged 19 or over and starting a new course:

Charges: If transport is provided, no contribution towards the cost of transport will be levied .

5. School Transport - Review/Appeals Process

Parents and /or Young People who wish to challenge a decision about:

- the transport arrangements offered
- their own or their child's eligibility
- the distance measurement in relation to minimum distances; and
- the safety of the route
- cost

may do so by writing to School Transport Team, Elizabeth II Court North (2nd Floor), Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UG or emailed to school.transport.cse@hants.gov.uk.

In the first instance, a case will be reviewed by a Senior Officer of HCC. In cases against refusal of a transport service, there is recourse to a further appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.

For concerns about the transport arrangement offered, a senior officer outside of the School Transport Team and who holds a comprehensive understanding of the transport policy and legislative framework will make decisions on appeals.

The full Review/Appeals Process in relation to assistance with travel and eligibility is detailed within Hampshire County Council's School Transport Policy, a link to which is included below. The process by which School Transport appeals are handled for a young person attending a post-16 provision matches that detailed in this Policy.

[School Transport Policy](#)

Appendix C



Decision Report
Slides Post 16 Charge

Full comments

Parent:

Feedback on the Consultation on Hampshire County Council's Post-16 Transport Policy for 2023/24

The proposed annual price in the consultation email is £783.18. I have twins at (redacted) School so my annual price would be $2 \times £783.18 = £1,566.19$.

1. The increased "cost of living" has to be mentioned.
2. Distance from home to school is approx. 2.95 miles. Acceptable to walk on a dry, warmer day, but not on a wet, cold darker day.
3. My twins would turn 16 in (redacted month) 2024 with a term and half remaining at (redacted) School. Can bus passes be purchased per term?
Working hours and single car/driver preclude driving the twins to/from school.

Parent:

I strongly oppose the proposed rise in fee for parental contribution. It is already a struggle for families (like mine) not on benefits. This increase in fee will be pushing the boundaries of unaffordable.

Parent

I support the increase in costs as long as they are thoroughly means tested.

Parent:

The increase in cost will potentially have the impact of forcing me, and I am sure other parents, giving up work to transport my daughter to college rather than trying to find the extortionate charge you are proposing. When post 16 attendance at college is mandated, these costs make it very difficult for parents to pay costs with the cost of living crisis. We live over 6 miles from the nearest college along country roads unsuitable for cycling. I object to this proposed increase.

Parent:

My contribution follows:

Provision of transport to and from school or other educational establishments can be vital for many children with disabilities and SEN. Although government guidelines do not suggest free transport for children over 16 with EHCPs, other legislation such as the Equality Act does provide the right of these children (even without an EHCP) to be able to access education to the same degree that a child without their difficulties would. It's also hard to understand why a 15-year-old child who needed free transport to school suddenly doesn't need that transport when they are 16.

For my own daughter for instance who has ASD, Tourette's anxiety, having to get the bus to college has been a big contributory factor in her attendance falling from nearly 100% at her previous school to around only 70% now as it generates huge anxiety, in part due to her difficulty with crowded and noisy environments, and in part due to previous experiences of other passengers and even drivers being unkind to her – sometimes even though she makes it to the bus stop she cannot bring herself to get on when it arrives. A month ago I decided to 'bite the bullet' and apply for the transport again and make the contribution, but this has still not come through (very slow response times from your SEN/transport team are another issue).

I'm fortunate to earn an above average salary (although being a single parent there is only one of me), but even then the current contribution you ask for is a very substantial amount of money – I'd imagine for a lot of families it's very difficult indeed to manage, if not

impossible, so I would urge you not to increase the contribution at all, and in fact to consider dropping it altogether.

I realise that the root problem is the woeful national underfunding of provision for SEN vs what children are entitled to, but the council is in a much better position than I am to lobby central government on this, and it should be considered that investment in these children is cheap at the price in comparison with what it will cost to support them later in life through things the council also has to pay for such as social services, supported living etc (plus unemployment benefit etc from central government) which is much less likely to be necessary if they receive the education they are entitled to.

Parent:

I would like to express my views regarding post 16 school transport.

The government require all students to be in education or training until 18. You can leave school on the last Friday in June if you'll be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. You must then do one of the following until you're 18:

stay in full-time education, for example at a college

start an apprenticeship or traineeship

spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training.

Therefore as this is the case, I do not understand why parents are expected to pay for school transport on principle.

I understand that you are taking measures to ease the cost of transport for less well off families but I do not see why families should be paying for this at all. I absolutely would not support the increase of costs and believe this should be entirely funded by central government.

I live, as many do in Hampshire, in a rural area. None of our local secondary schools have a 6th form, therefore my son has no option but to travel a significant distance to college - 16 miles. Why should we be penalised for Hampshire's lack of local 6th form provision?

Many thanks for asking for feedback on this, I hope that it will be heeded but fear as always, that the decision is already made.

Parent:

I'm writing to feedback on the proposal to increase the cost of transport post 16 by 27%.

My son will start college next year. We live in rural Hampshire, 16 miles from the nearest college. My pay rise this year (NHS) has been 1.7%

My feedback would be that the council needs to work with their suppliers to understand the reason for this huge increase and avoid it. As a public sector worker this is not unfamiliar to me. There are options other than just agreeing to supplier requests for huge cost increases. I don't believe any part of the cost structure has increased by 27%. It simply isn't affordable.

Parent:

Our daughter has autism, ADHD, anxiety and OCD. In the past she has been suicidal and inflicted self-harm. She was bullied throughout Junior School and Senior School and now has PTSD following physical assaults (that took place in full view of teaching staff).

It is not our daughters choice to have Special Educational Needs (SEN). She does not want to appear different. As parents, we'd prefer it if she were well enough to use public transport and access the nearest college for mainstream courses but this isn't possible. As a result she must travel for an hour each way to and from her college using post-16 transport.

Hampshire County Council are proposing to demand a 27.1% increase in cost to the parents of such children. We believe this is a morally flawed decision. Please consider the following:

1. It implies there is a choice for the parents - pay or your child doesn't get access to education.
2. It implies there are other options for the child (despite the fact that these children have Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) that name the educational provision.
3. It places an increased financial cost (almost 3 x the rate of inflation) on parents of children with SEN during a National cost of living crisis.

In addition to the moral and ethical issues with this proposal, please also consider:

4. Legally it will be open to challenge.
5. It is highly likely to attract media interest.
6. Those politicians who have voted in favour are likely to appear to less electable - voters tend not to like behaviour by politicians that targets the more vulnerable members of society.

Please note. I wish to protect the privacy of my daughter.

Parent:

Please find below my comments in response to the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy changes.

I appreciate the requirement to claw back costs, however I wonder if there could be a better way. For example: There doesn't appear to be a placement in Hampshire for my son to attend. His out of county school has possibly sourced an out of county placement. Our travel costs are therefore increased from what would have been a weekly local bus pass to the local college of approx. £20 per week to over £1,700.00pa; approx. £45pw through no fault of our own.

Parents of SEN children are already spending more than the average parent on their child i.e. due to sensory difficulties i.e. my child struggles with texture and the options available are far costlier than normal attire.

Perhaps a different charging structure could apply. A bit radical but how about a complete overhaul of the current system: All students, mainstream or SEN, are charged the exact same. HCC could perhaps get a huge discount from the Bus companies to run this process which could enable SEN children to pay the same as non-SEN. Make it a requirement for all schools and colleges, whether mainstream or SEN, to sign up to the process. Bus companies charge £1 a day for transport. Transport has to be paid in advance (weekly, monthly, termly). HCC charges £2 a day. The difference bridges the gap whilst making it an inclusive service.

Another idea would be to bring all the taxi services in house to save money on the overhead costs that are being paid out to the various subcontracted firms. This could be a great way to become an even more inclusive employer – those with disabilities who are struggling to obtain employment would be perfect for this role; showing the rest of the UK the way forward, whether driving, a person to sit in the taxi, or the office administration. I know someone who is mute and is employed as an administrator. She is employed now but it took her so many years to gain employment. This could be beneficial to our SEN children who leave education and another opportunity to provide work experience and apprenticeships too.

Meanwhile, is there a way of paying the fee to HCC weekly for those who don't have a spare £1,700 or £600 termly to pay in advance? My child is in year 11 and I am not sure of the process – this could already exist, but too early for us to know the details yet and is another concern to add to the list to worry about.

Parent:

I am writing today to strongly disagree with the proposal to increase parent's contributions. We already pay a huge amount towards transport. It is not our children's fault that they need access to private transport rather than public transport.

It is also not our children's fault that the closest colleges that can meet their needs are a lot further than their local colleges. I'm not expecting for it to be free and would be more than happy as I was with my neurotypical child to pay the same amount for a mainstream bus pass which was around £800 for the year !!! we already pay significantly more for our child who cannot use public transport but raising it this amount is ridiculous it seems the most vulnerable are being targeted again. As I said before it is not my Childs fault that the closest college that meets his needs is over 10 miles away and it's not my Childs fault he can't use public transport and penalising us by expecting us to pay what was already such an incredibly high contribution is frankly with the current situation of the cost of living is a stretch too far so I urge you to reconsider this decision ?

Parent:

I appreciate the requirement to claw back costs, however I wonder if there could be a better way. For example: There doesn't appear to be a placement in Hampshire for my son to attend. His out of county school has possibly sourced an out of county placement. Our travel costs are therefore increased from what would have been a weekly local bus pass to the local college of approx. £20 per week to over £1,700.00pa; approx. £45pw through no fault of our own.

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closest college that meets his needs is over 10 miles away and it's not my Child's fault he can't use public transport and penalising us by expecting us to pay what was already such an incredibly high contribution is frankly with the current situation of the cost of living is a stretch too far so I urge you to reconsider this decision ?

Parent:

My son makes use of this service and we contribute fully as we are not in receipt of benefits , and of course, if we were we would be getting service for free !

The impact to us as a family will be massive ..

Most children, using this service up to the age of 20 cannot even claim universal credit in their own right as they are crazily, considered as dependent children in education because as a family we get a very small amount of child benefit ! Just to send a child to education will cost us over £1000 a year in Transport ! in our situation we are already struggling to make ends meet as our children are not capable of getting part time jobs that their siblings would've done at the age of 19/20 and would be already contributing to the household through paying rent.

For this proposed cost increase to go out to post 16 I see as discriminatory ! What are these children supposed to do ? Sit in day centres all day with people who are perhaps so much more disabled than they are not capable of learning .

Parent:

Further to your recent email regarding the rise in cost for post 16 transport.

Unfortunately our household income has not increased by the 27.1% proposed and will find it difficult to afford to pay the increased amount.

Unfortunately when it comes to choice for SEN children/young adults and their further education they have "no choice" as support and suitability of a placement is limited and more often than not local.

Currently I pay the same amount as someone who's post 16 child/young adult might do to attend a 5 day a week course when my son only attends 4 days a week. Maybe this could be another consideration when working out the costs.

Families of these young people , such as ourselves work full time and are self employed and the value we get from the transport service is essential. If we can't work the extra 2 or so hours a day to take them to college then this has a direct impact on our earnings.

These young people cannot travel independently and require escorts.

Can transport solutions not be shared with other authorities such as Portsmouth as for sure some of these young children will be attending colleges in the Hampshire area and vice versa.

I fully disagree with the proposal

I drive for a living and I have only increased my fees by 9% due to increased fuel costs !

And whilst I appreciate the staff or transport might not be as available as you would like, I see this is a very sinister move to discourage parents from requesting any transport .. and as I say above, surely there are more appropriate methods of sharing Transport between authorities !

Parent:

Families with disabled children have enough to deal with without the additional extra stress of costs rising for transport.

My disabled 19 year old daughter cannot access a college close to home as they are not equipped for her powered wheelchair, the specialist teacher advisor pointed us to a college that is 21 miles away as this was the closest one that can cope with the wheelchair, I cannot work due to health issues myself and cannot always drive her to college. It is so unfair that every year we have to find just under £1500 to put this up to just over £1700 is absolutely absurd

Parent:

I strongly disagree with any increase to school transport costs. This will obviously be a blow for parents at a difficult economic time, and costs for post 16 transport are already be considerably higher due to greater distances to in accessing appropriate placements at college.

Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association:

Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association is a charity supporting people with Down syndrome and we have over 500 members, the vast majority living in Hampshire. We have raised this consultation with our members, and there has been no feedback supporting the proposed step rise in parental contribution. All families were against this increase, with many feeling very strongly that these rises are a step too far.

Parent:

I could not afford the proposed parental price increase for school transport. I cannot afford the current price either but fortunately my application for a discretionary waiver due to my income was accepted this year.

Being a parent of a child with considerable special educational needs, sending my child to a nearby mainstream setting is not an option. I feel that charging parents for transport costs to SEN settings unfairly penalises parents for having children who happen to have disabilities.

Parent:

I am writing today to strongly disagree with the proposal to increase parent's contributions. A huge amount is already paid towards transport. It is not the children's fault that they need access to private transport rather than public transport.

It is also not the children's fault that the closest colleges that can meet their needs are a lot further than their local colleges. We are not expecting for it to be free and would be more than happy to pay the same amount for a mainstream bus pass which was around £800 for the year !!!

Parents already pay significantly more for a child who cannot use public transport but raising it this amount is ridiculous it seems the most vulnerable are being targeted again. As I said before it is not the children's fault that the closest college that meets the needs is over 10 miles away and it's not the child's fault they can't use public transport and penalising the parents by expecting them to pay what was already such an incredibly high contribution is frankly with the current situation of the cost of living is a stretch too far so I urge you to reconsider this decision ?

Grandparent:

To increase by 27.1% in one go is eye watering to say the least and will impact greatly on my family!

My 19 year old grandson cannot manage on his own therefore is not able to work even part time to be able to contribute anything to the household budget.

It appears to me to be very unfair to penalise a family in this way, when others get so much?! Especially a young lad who still needs education.

Do please re-consider this massive increase by perhaps finding SOME of the money needed elsewhere in the County Coffers!?

Parent:

I am writing to you in response to the Post -16 Transport Service annual consultation and proposed increase in parents contribution. As a busy working family, we rely on Post-16 transport to ensure our daughter has access to college (further education) regularly and

safely. Our daughter has an EHCP in place that names (redacted) as the nearest most appropriate setting to meet her learning needs. We live in (redacted) and initially during transition from secondary school, we had applied to (redacted) college as our local college and attended an open evening. We later received a letter stating “they could not meet her needs in the community”

Having explored further colleges, (redacted college) was named on her EHCP. She attends the school of individual learning (within the mainstream college) and is currently working on level 2 of a performing arts course and thriving both academically and socially, her confidence has grown. We are so pleased with her placement.

Both myself and my husband work, we are happy to contribute towards her travel using a percentage of our daughters PIP to help with costs. We currently pay £1,365.91 per academic year. The proposed increase to £1,736.07 is a significant increase, particularly in today's financial climate. I appreciate the 27.1% increase in transport costs, however I feel this is unreasonable to pass the whole increase onto families. My wages have not been increased 27.1% nor has my daughters PIP payments. It feels like working families on a middling income are always hit the hardest, we earn too much to claim financial support or state benefits, but struggle with the increasing rise in the cost of living. My concern that targeting the transport payments of vulnerable young adults right to further education will restrict opportunities and add further barriers to accessing provision and have a detrimental impact on their future independence.

I understand that all services are feeling the financial strain, but further education is a crucial part of our young peoples social and emotional development, encouraging these young people into appropriate provision should be a priority as they move into adulthood. It brings to mind a quote from Mahatma Gandhi

“The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats it's most Vulnerable members”

Parent:

I am writing today to strongly disagree with the proposal to increase parent's contributions. We already pay a huge amount towards transport. It is not our children's fault that they need access to private transport rather than public transport. This rise is it goes ahead will have a detrimental effect on our family and additional pressure we just don't need in the current financial crisis.

Hook Parish Council:

Hook Parish Council notes the proposed increase in parental contribution towards post-16 transport, and wishes to express its disappointment at the magnitude of that increase.

Parent:

I have been advised by my sons school about the changes to the post 16 travel restrictions and arrangements. I would like to add comments that there should be allowances made to families on low income, single parent and benefits. I am a single parent on a low income and on child tax credit and I have never been able to get help with school transport and now as my son near the ends of school and goes onto college the cost of transportation will be potentially more expensive as there will be no support from the school as a normal Costs for transportation (bus) will apply. Help with education should be provided where needed to reduce anxiety on how they will get to their place or further education is imperative. This cohort has suffered enough through covid times and they need all the support they can get to give them the best chance. By not provided some help you run the risk of children not being able to continue their education and having therefore not having the best opportunities.

Parent:

Just wanted to give my feedback on the increases in transport provision. Whilst I appreciate transport costs have increased, the reality is that neither (redacted child name) disability benefit nor my income has increased by 27.1% and therefore there is no additional money to pay for such a huge increase. Unfortunately, he needs to be in this particular school as it is the only one which can meet his needs, so we won't have a choice but to pay it, but the reality is our family is already really struggling financially (like most families out there) and this is a huge added burden that we have no option but to pay. Maybe staggering the increases over 18-24 months could be considered so it isn't such a big increase all at once.

Parent:

Just wanted to comment on the proposed post-16 transport policy for 2023/24. Very surprised and disappointed that you haven't contacted those who actually use the service for feedback on this. I am very strongly against the proposal to raise the parental contribution by an outrageously huge 27% and do not agree at all that this huge rise is in proportion to rising costs at all - are drivers being paid 27% more? Students with disabilities who need school transport are not able to walk to school and have no other option than to use school transport and it is simply discriminatory to expect parents of disabled students to incur such an unreasonably high increase in the cost of school transport. When school between 16 and 18 is compulsory and disabled students can't access school without school transport, I struggle to understand why parents should have to pay for transport at all and an increase as ridiculously high as this is just not justifiable.

Parent:

I'm beyond stressed and depressed with reading the increase of 27.1% next year! I will have to pull my daughter out of her post 16 position. Or put her in disabled living place. For where I will be doing better by her. Giving her the help she needs. This will only cause a bigger cost to Hampshire City Council. For not only transport but to live somewhere else each week/month. I have no clue on how we will pay for this year's invoice we have just received last week. Giving 28 days to pay. Let alone try and find even more money next year! We don't qualify for any help. But are on our (redacted) due to interest rates going up. Let alone everything else.

Grandparent:

I am writing today to strongly disagree with the proposal to increase parent's contributions. We already pay a huge amount towards transport. It is not my grandsons fault that he needs access to private transport rather than public transport.

It is also not my grandsons fault that the closest college meeting his needs is a lot further than his local college. I'm not expecting for it to be free and would be more than happy as I was with my neurotypical child to pay the same amount for a mainstream bus pass which was around £800 for the year !!! we already pay significantly more for our grandson who cannot use public transport but raising it this amount is ridiculous it seems the most vulnerable are being targeted again. As I said before it is not my grandsons fault the closest college meeting his specific needs is over 10 miles away and it's not my grandsons fault he can't use public transport, penalising us by expecting us to pay what was already such an incredibly high contribution is frankly with the current situation of the cost of living a stretch too far, I urge you to reconsider this decision ?

Peter Symonds College:

My comment would be - is the increase in parental contribution in line with costs if the student did not require SEN transport and travelled by public transport? Costs could impact on student choice of placement.

Parent:

I have read the proposed changes to the parental contribution for post-16 school transport. Whilst I understand that there is no statutory duty for a local authority to provide home-school transport for 16-18 year olds and the need to increase the parental contribution, I do not agree with your current charging structure, nor your proposed increases.

My son attends (redacted) and travels every day by taxi from (redacted). This means that we have to pay the highest parental contribution of £1,365.91. However, (redacted) is the nearest Post-16 provision that can meet my son's needs, so it feels unfair (and probably discriminatory) that we have to pay £750pa more than someone who is lucky enough to have a suitable provision nearer to where they live. It is not our choice or preference that my son has to travel so far. Is this not disability discrimination?

I feel that having a banded charging structure depending on distance can only be fair if it is applied only when the young person is travelling more than the minimum 5 miles by choice (i.e. when there is a nearer Post-16 provision that can meet needs, but the young person chooses to travel to one that is further away)

With the proposed increases, this only increases the unfairness / discrimination. For someone travelling less than 5 miles, they will end up paying an extra £166.00 pa more. For families like ours, we will have to pay an additional £370pa - how is this fair? Not only do we already pay more than double, but you are proposing that the size of the increase will also be doubled!

I do hope that you take on board my comments and consider coming up with a fairer charging structure.

Forest Park School:

Young people who attend specialist settings for their post 16 do so as their needs require it. Generally, at my school we are their local specialist provision.

It seems incredibly unjust to be even charging them at all when they have little or no other option, but to now consider an increase on top of that will make things even harder in already complicated families.

Transport needs to be considered within the funding allocation for each child attending specialist settings and this should be arranged as part of their EHCP. The funding needs to be topped up to provide transport.

That way the complete package for children is managed. Any parental contribution could be considered if the child is not attending their local provision or makes special requests.