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Department for
Transport



**To: Directors of Transport
Directors of Children's Services**

Cc: School Travel Advisers & Regional School Travel Advisers

18 November 2009

The Role of School Travel Advisers Post March 2010

The purpose of this letter is to set out what we think should be the focus for School Travel Advisers in 2010-11. It is endorsed by three Government Departments to demonstrate the wide-reaching benefits and support for this work.

The Travelling to School Initiative (TTSI) tasked every school to promote sustainable travel to school by encouraging more children to walk, cycle, use the bus or car share. To help schools achieve this, the Departments for Transport (DfT) and for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have been providing funding for School Travel Advisers to work with schools to create practical and deliverable School Travel Plans. By 31 March this year, 81% of schools had put such plans in place.

The Department of Health (DH) also has a strong interest in school travel and shares the desire to address the decline in the number of children walking to school. Developing a School Travel Plan is a criterion in Healthy Schools accreditation and active travel to and from school is given further impetus through the introduction of Enhanced Healthy Schools status. Promoting active travel is also a key element to both the Obesity and Physical Activity strategies within DH. DH and DfT will jointly be publishing a strategy on Active Travel.

Although the TTSI was originally due to finish in March 2010, in an increasingly carbon and obesity conscious world, we felt that it was right to continue funding School Travel Advisers for a further year – until March 2011. £6.8 million will be paid via the Area Based Grant mechanism. Essentially the TTSI is about changing attitudes and behaviour towards travel to school. We know such changes can take a long time and need continued and sustained effort.

As the vast majority of schools will already have a School Travel Plan in place, the following is a menu of actions from which we would like you and your School Travel Advisers to pick, in order to ensure that School Travel Plans remain effective and active travel becomes embedded in the school community. Not everything will be practical in your authority and priorities may vary (depending, for example, which targets are included in your Local Area Agreement).

In the spirit of the new strategic priorities, particularly the 21st Century Schools agenda, we believe that the way forward lies in School Travel

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Advisers working with others to build partnerships both inside and outside the authority: Primary Care Trusts (to underpin the relationship between health and travel, particularly obesity and physical activity), sustainability (particularly air quality and climate change issues) and traffic congestion. And we are expecting a focussed effort on getting and delivering results.

School Travel Plans

- Work with any schools still without a School Travel Plan including those that open during the year
- Refresh and revitalise plans at schools with a School Travel Plan (you may want to carefully target certain schools, such as those with the greatest potential for modal shift, or where there is an obesity issue)
- Widen the scope of existing School Travel Plans to ensure that they address all pupil needs (journeys to/from school at normal start/finish times; journeys to attend pre and after school events and journeys during the school day to attend activities at other locations)
- Widen the scope of plans to cover journeys made by teachers and other staff, including their commute to work

Linkage with other strategies

- Link with healthy schools
- Link with sustainable schools and schools gaining sustainable school status

Key documents and strategies in your authority

- Work across the local authority to improve the quality of Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategies
- Input to Local Transport Plans (you may want to refer to the essential guide recently published by the Department for Transport at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/guidelocalauth/>)

Journeys around the new 14 – 19 agenda

- Look at how schools and colleges will tackle the journeys their students need to make

Data

- Work with schools to help them complete the relevant aspects of the school census more accurately
- Analyse the data for your authority alongside MIS officer to improve the quality

Implementing practical measures

- Assist schools in identifying and then implementing appropriate traffic engineering measures – e.g. pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, safe routes to schools, cycle parking

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- Provide a bridge between the school and a public transport operator – for example, around the timing of bus services and the location of bus stops
- Help schools introduce Bikeability – the modern cycle proficiency course – and other cycle initiatives such as Bike IT and Go Ride
- Help schools introduce walking initiatives
- Help schools with road safety initiatives
- Work with teachers over school lesson plans

School Travel Advisers, who are currently supported at regional level by Regional School Travel Advisers, are working with schools on the completion of School Travel Plans due to be submitted for approval in March 2010. Regional School Travel Adviser secondments to DCSF are due to end in March 2010. Funding for RSTAs is currently being reviewed and we hope to be able to share the results of this with you shortly. We are being asked about School Travel Plan quality assurance arrangements for the plans submitted by March 2010 and can confirm that quality assurance will take place and we will notify School Travel Advisers of the arrangements via the Regional School Travel Advisers in due course.

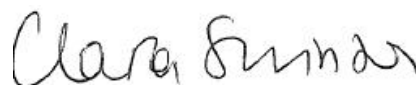
Earlier this year we commissioned an independent evaluation of the TTSI and we expect to be able to publish the evaluation report in a few weeks time. We are very grateful to School Travel Advisers, Regional School Travel Advisers and other LA colleagues who have contributed to the evaluation.

We would like to thank the School Travel Advisers and Regional School Travel Advisers for their enthusiastic participation in the TTSI so far. As we approach 2011 we will see increasing cross-government working as Children's Trusts develop and the Pupil and Parent Guarantees are introduced, embedding best practice into schools. We hope the School Travel Advisers continue to invest their time and effort into taking this work forward with the same degree of energy and enthusiasm.

Peter Livesey
Joint Chair TTSI

Jessica Matthew
Joint Chair TTSI

Clara Swinson
Dept of Health



DCSF
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London

DfT
Great Minster House
Marsham Street
London

Wellington House
Waterloo Road
London