

**Decision Session: Cabinet Member –
Education, Children & Young People**

15 January 2014

Report of the Director of Children Services, Education and Skills

Review of Home to School/College Transport Policy – (16-25 year olds - Post maintained)

Summary

1. To consider consulting on changes to the Local Authority's (LA) home to school/college post maintained transport policy from September 2014 in response to the introduction of the single Education, Health and Care plan (for ages 0-25) alongside the new 0 – 25 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice and Children and Families Bill.

Background

2. With the broadening of the post-16 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) educational offer locally and the statutory move away from statements to the introduction of the single Education, Health and Care plan (for ages 0-25) alongside the new 0 – 25 SEN Code of Practice and Children and Families Bill, it is an appropriate time to review transport policies for those young people continuing into post maintained education as the current home to school/college transport policy does not consider assistance for those students above the age of 19.
3. Central government introduced Education Funding Reforms in 2013-14 ahead of but to sit alongside the Children and Families Bill, the revised 0-25 SEN Code of Practise and to support the new Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP). The reform passports responsibility for commissioning and funding high needs learner education places to the LA using the High Needs Support Block to fund learning support for York LLDD learners whose individual learning support for their study programmes is expected to run above £6,000 in any given

academic year. The Higher Needs Support Block is passported to the LA as part of the Direct Support Grant. It is the responsibility of the York LA to agree and commission individual educational placements for City of York higher needs support learners in local mainstream, specialist and out of area educational settings (by exception) deemed appropriate to meet the learners educational needs.

4. Locally within York there has been a move to try and provide those post 19 high needs students with education options more locally. In the past with limited local provision for this category of student the LA has had to pay high education and care fees for students to attend expensive out of city placements; residential and non- residential. The partnership response from the York education and care community is significant improvements in the local offer for these students attending York College, Askham Bryan College and York Learning. This benefits the students in terms of providing them with a local offer resulting in them not having to leave the York area and their family and friends. For the Local Authority this enables significant reduction in expenditure in not having to fund expensive out of city placements (fees and transport costs). The local offer reduces these costs significantly.
5. Locally the LA's home to school/college transport policy has moved towards encouraging as many pupils/students as possible to become independent travellers by increasing use of public transport. The success of the York's own independent travel training programme (YILTS service) has seen a growing number of SEN students transferring from dedicated home to school transport onto public transport following training. It is the intention to widen access to YILTS and with the recent offer of additional resource from both Streamline Taxis and First York this is likely to increase participation.

Consultation

6. It is proposed to consult with local Post Maintained education providers and CANDI (Children and Inclusion) a group of parents/ carers of children/young people who are disabled or who have additional needs aged 0-25

Options

7. Nationally the new Code of Practice and Guidance issued to LA's from central government indicates that policies are consistent and that all students have access to transportation whilst they remain in education. Learners with SEN for whom it is appropriate to remain beyond the compulsory age in order to complete their education, should be able to access the same level of service and not be disadvantaged accordingly.
8. A revised 16-25 post maintained transport policy needs to assist those students where need is greatest whilst recognising the significant financial restraints the LA is currently working under. The proposed policy options attempt to find a solution which is both fair to students and their families whilst minimising the need to increase expenditure too significantly. The options for consideration are:

Option 1. The policy is split for those students aged 16-19 (where there is a requirement to be in some form of education or training) and for those students aged 19-25.

For those students aged 16-19 with an Education, Health and Care Plan and where transport is a requirement of that plan they will be provided with free transport (most appropriate form of transport to be used as recommended by the Local Authority).

For those 16-19 year old students without an Education, Health Care Plan free transport would be provided, if they live more than 3 miles from the nearest educational establishment providing the course and the parents are on low income (free school meal eligible).

For students aged 19-25 who are deemed to be have high needs SEN (as set out in paragraph 3) would be provided with free transport providing the parents/carers of those students are on low income (free school meal eligible) or where the student lives independently. Those students whose family are not on low income or do not live independently will have to contribute the first £500 towards the cost of the most appropriate transport.

Transport will be restricted to one return journey each day. For those students at a residential education placement where day

travel is not possible transport will be provided each Monday morning and Friday evening. In the first instance, where parents are able to provide this transport or share journeys can be arranged, recompense mileage will be offered.

The LA will also seek to partner sharing transportation arrangements/costs including with other LA's sending learners with similar timetables to the same institution.

Option 2. As option 1 except the £500 contribution charge commences at the age of post 16 rather than post 19 for all students except those whose parents/carers are on low income or where they live independently.

Option 3. As option 1 except free transport will be provided to all students aged post 16 with an Education, Health and Care Plan and where transport is a requirement of that plan.

Analysis

9. Annex A sets out the proposed costs of the three options for the next three financial years. From September 2013 whilst awaiting preparation and consultation of a revised 16-25 post maintained transport policy, transport has been provided for a number of post 19 LLDD students attending local education provision at an estimated cost of £30k for the academic year.
10. The annual cost of a season ticket or a combined termly/monthly/weekly/daily public transport passes in York, especially with the extension of the yo-zone initiative to 18 years old means students annual transport costs on public transport have reduced for the significant majority of this age group. This not only encourages use of public transport but allows the LA to focus its reduced funding on supporting low income families.
11. For those students who cannot access public transport because of their needs or non availability the current average yearly cost of providing transport is approximately £2,200 per student. By introducing a £500 contribution towards costs for non low income families would still mean that the LA provides approximately 80% of the full cost.

12. The two neighbouring authorities to the City of York LA; East Riding and North Yorkshire have already introduced standard contribution charges for post 16 students. East Riding have included those students with SEN whilst currently North Yorkshire County Council will not be introducing charges for SEN students although they are consulting on increasing parental contributions for the 2014/15 academic year. Nationally many Local Authorities are consulting on introducing contribution charges for SEN post 16 students including Hampshire, West Sussex, Warwickshire, Cornwall and Nottinghamshire

Council Plan 2011-15 Priorities

13. Get York Moving – To encourage more use of public transport

Protect Vulnerable People – Ensuring services delivered meet the needs of SEN pupils and their families

Implications

14. **Financial** The financial implications for each option are set out in Annex A

- **Human Resources (HR)** There are no HR implications
- **Equalities** See Legal
- **Legal** Any proposed changes will need to meet the new statutory requirements of the Children's and Families Bill 2013 as well as the Equalities Act 2010.
- **Crime and Disorder** There are no crime and disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications
- **Property** There are no property implications

Recommendations

15. The Cabinet Member is asked to consider approving the commencement of consultation on option 2 (as set out in

paragraph 8) to make changes from September 2014 to the home to school/college transport policy 16-25 post maintained. These changes would continue to provide free transport to those students in whose parents/carers are on low income. For students whose families are not on a low income a £500 per year contribution would be required to assist in meeting the cost of transport.

Reason: To achieve budget saving targets.

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**Report
Approved**

Date 7 January
2014

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes:

Annex A – Proposed costs of the 3 options

Annex B – Glossary of Abbreviations used in the report