

## Annex 2:

### Notes the outcomes of the 28 working day public consultation

260 members of the public responded to the formal public consultation on the Council's website between 14th June and 21st July 2023.

Schools and current service users were notified of the consultation, given appropriate links to the consultation page, and notice of the closing dates. Officers also raised awareness of the consultation through e-newsletters and flagged the consultation in meetings with key stakeholders in the build-up to the consultation.

The consultation was promoted through the Council's social media platforms, professional networks including schools, the Parent Carer Forum (SEND Voices Wokingham) network, and the Children with Additional Needs (CAN) Network.

The Council directly contacted service users and sent reminder communications throughout the consultation period.

90% of responses were from Wokingham residents and 65% of respondents were service users.

Participants of the survey were as follows.

A Wokingham borough resident	90.63%
An elected borough councillor	0.00%
A town or parish councillor	0.00%
Representing an organisation	4.17%
Completing the survey for someone else	0.52%
Other (please specify):	4.69%

The survey responses have been categories as follows:

Broad agreement with proposed change greater % than disagreement
Broad disagree to proposed greater than agreement but less than 50%
Broad disagreement with proposed change greater than 50%

#### Summary:

Total number of responses received: **260**

Total percentage broadly in support of the proposals: 46%

Total percentage neutral or without an opinion: 22%

Total percentage who broadly disagree: 32%

6. Proposed changes to definitions (Section 2,2.3b)

Broadly agree:	35%
Neutral/ no opinion:	18%
Broadly disagree	46%

#### 7. Proposed changes to qualifying school and parental preference (Section 2.2.4)

Broadly agree:	33%
Neutral / no opinion:	22%
Broadly disagree	45%

#### 8. Proposed change to travel assistance during the school day and accompaniment (Section 2.2.6b)

Broadly agree:	38%
Neutral / no opinion:	32%
Broadly disagree	30%

#### 9. Proposed changes to timing of assessment of eligibility (Section 2.2.7)

Broadly agree:	41%
Neutral / no opinion:	20%
Broadly disagree	39%

#### 10. Changes to provision for children aged 5 to 16 with Special Educational needs and/or disabilities (Section 3.1)

Broadly agree:	35%
Neutral / no opinion:	22%
Broadly disagree	43%

#### 11. Changes to transport provided on medical grounds (Section 3.2)

Broadly agree:	38%
Neutral / no opinion:	34%
Broadly disagree	28%

#### 12. Changes to types of travel assistance provided (Section 4)

Broadly agree:	37%
Neutral / no opinion:	29%
Broadly disagree	34%

#### 13. Changes to travel assistance for those not eligible for free home to school transport under this: children below statutory school age (Section 6.1)

Broadly agree:	36%
Neutral / no opinion:	30%
Broadly disagree	35%

#### 14. Changes to travel assistance for those not eligible for free home to school travel assistance under this policy: fare-paying options for non-eligible children (Section 6.2)

Broadly agree:	28%
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Neutral / no opinion:	34%
Broadly disagree	38%

15. Changes to exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: a) change of address (Section 7)	
Broadly agree:	58%
Neutral / no opinion:	18%
Broadly disagree	24%

16. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: b) Pupils living in temporary accommodations (Section 7)	
Broadly agree:	40%
Neutral / no opinion:	29%
Broadly disagree	31%

17. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: d) changing schools (Section 7)	
Broadly agree:	42%
Neutral / no opinion:	22%
Broadly disagree	36%

18. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: h) elective home education (EHE) and Education other than at school (EOTAS) (Section 7)	
Broadly agree:	50%
Neutral / no opinion:	38%
Broadly disagree	12%

19. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance *children in foster care and those in our care (Section 7)	
Broadly agree:	65%
Neutral / no opinion:	24%
Broadly disagree	8%

20. New policy: to limit the number of times a parent / carer can submit an application for travel assistance, when circumstances have not changed following a refusal	
Broadly agree:	60%
Neutral / no opinion:	22%
Broadly disagree	18%

21. New policy: New section to clarify circumstances that on their own will not make a child eligible for travel assistance	
Broadly agree:	46%
Neutral / no opinion:	32%
Broadly disagree	22%

22. End current practice of providing 'fare payer' travel assistance for pupils in post-16 education.	
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Broadly agree:	14%
Neutral / no opinion:	16%
Broadly disagree	75%

Extract from the consultation portal.

260 responses

1. Are you responding as				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A Wokingham borough resident		90.38%	235
2	An elected borough councillor		1.15%	3
3	A town or parish councillor		0.00%	0
4	Representing an organisation		3.85%	10
5	Completing the survey for someone else		0.38%	1
6	Other (please specify):		4.23%	11
			answered	260
			skipped	0

3. Are you a parent / carer / guardian of a school-aged child or children?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		93.02%	240
2	No		6.98%	18
			answered	258
			skipped	2

4. Do you have a child or children who currently receive any home to school travel assistance under our current home to school travel assistance policies?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		65.25%	169
2	No		34.75%	90
			answered	259
			skipped	1

5. We have two home to school travel assistance policies, one for children aged 5 to 16, and another for children over 16.

Which policy(ies) do you want to comment on? If you would like to see the questions for both policies, please select both.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Home to School Travel Assistance Policy for children resident in Wokingham aged 5 to 16, including children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)	86.82%	224
2	Travel Assistance Policy for young people resident in Wokingham post-16, including young people with SEND	41.86%	108
		answered	258
		skipped	2

## 6. Section 2.2.3b Definitions

In this section, we are proposing to clarify how we measure distances from a child's home to their school. We would also clarify what we mean by a "suitable school", and what is meant by "nearest qualifying school".

### Current policy

b) "Distances" will be measured from where the home meets the public street, for example from the front gate to the nearest gate or point of access to the school premises, and by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely. As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. Distances for Extended Rights are measured in the same way. The upper limits for Extended Rights transport are measured via the shortest road route.

c) "A suitable school" is defined in the Act as the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any Special Educational Needs and/or Disability that the child may have.

d) "Nearest qualifying school" means the nearest available and suitable school.

### Proposed changes

b) We are proposing to add that distances will be measured in miles to two decimal places.

c) We are proposing to better clarify that a "suitable school", is a school that a child would have been offered a place at if they had applied.

d) We are proposing to clarify that a "nearest qualifying school" would include schools in neighbouring boroughs and is not always the same as a catchment school. The new definition would also describe under what circumstances travel assistance would be provided if the nearest qualifying school to the home address is full. Evidence would have to be provided by the parent/carer to show that they have applied for and been refused a place at the school which is the nearest school to their home address and any other schools closer than the school offering admission. This would include schools in neighbouring boroughs.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed changes?

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
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To what extent do you agree with the proposed changes?

1	Strongly agree		8.00%	18
2	Agree		27.11%	61
3	Neither agree nor disagree		16.44%	37
4	Disagree		17.78%	40
5	Strongly disagree		28.89%	65
6	Don't know / no opinion		1.78%	4
			answered	225
			skipped	35

Comments: (76)

## 7. Section 2.2.4 Qualifying Schools and Parental Preference

The proposed change to this section is only to clarify the existing policy rather than to change it.

### Current policy

The policy explains the eligibility criteria used when determining if a child qualifies for travel assistance.

### Proposed change

For all children, including those with SEND, a child may not qualify for travel assistance unless they attend the nearest suitable school which meets their needs. If a parent selects a school which is not the nearest suitable school which meets their child's needs, and following discussion with the SEND team, parents may then be responsible for making their own travel arrangements and paying for all travel costs for the whole time that their child is at that school. For children attending a mainstream school who do not have an EHCP, if the nearest suitable school becomes full after the parent applies for a school place at a school that is not the nearest, free travel assistance to any alternative school, would not be provided. The nearest suitable school will not necessarily be listed as a catchment school.

To what extent do you agree that the proposed change makes the policy clearer?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	8.93%	20
2	Agree	24.11%	54
3	Neither agree nor disagree	18.30%	41
4	Disagree	16.96%	38
5	Strongly disagree	28.57%	64
6	Don't know / no opinion	3.13%	7
		answered	224
		skipped	36
Comments: (63)			

**8. Section 2.2.6b Travel Assistance during the school day and accompaniment: b) Accompaniment**

This proposal would change the process for how we review these applications, rather than change the policy.

**Current policy**

We promote equality of opportunity for parents with disabilities. Where a parent's disability prevents them from accompanying their child along a walking route that would be considered unsafe without adult supervision, a reasonable adjustment might be to provide free home to school travel assistance. Under the current policy, the adult social care team considers a parent's disability and the transport team separately considers applications for travel assistance.

**Proposed change**

The new policy would direct adults who receive support from our adult social care team to contact their social worker if they have a disability which is impacting their ability to accompany their child along a walking route that would be considered unsafe without adult supervision.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	6.25%	14
2	Agree	30.36%	68
3	Neither agree nor disagree	24.55%	55
4	Disagree	15.63%	35
5	Strongly disagree	14.73%	33
6	Don't know / no opinion	8.48%	19
		answered	224
		skipped	36
Comments: (41)			



## 9. Section 2.2.7 Timing of assessment of eligibility

This proposal would clarify when travel assistance would be reviewed following a child's eighth birthday.

### Current policy

Where travel assistance is currently provided, it would normally be reviewed following the child's eighth birthday and then removed if the child is no longer eligible. The current policy does not specify the notice period parents / carers will receive before transport is removed following the review. A child under eight is eligible for travel assistance if their nearest suitable school is more than two miles away. A child over eight years old is eligible if their nearest suitable school is more than three miles away.

### Proposed change

We are proposing to expand this section to clarify that when a child turns eight, their travel assistance would be reassessed. If a child no longer qualifies for travel assistance because their nearest suitable school is less than three miles away, the travel assistance would end at the end of the school term following the assessment.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	8.48%	19
2	Agree	32.14%	72
3	Neither agree nor disagree	22.32%	50
4	Disagree	17.41%	39
5	Strongly disagree	16.96%	38
6	Don't know / no opinion	2.68%	6
		answered	224
		skipped	36
Comments: (42)			

**10. Section 3.1 Provision for children aged 5 to 16 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities**

This proposal aims to clarify what happens when parents express a preference for a school to be named in an education and health care plan (EHCP).

**Current policy**

The current policy states that we have a responsibility to provide travel assistance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who attend their nearest suitable school within the statutory walking distance from their home if they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of mobility problems or associated health and safety issues related to their special education needs and/or disabilities.

**Proposed change**

We are proposing to clarify that for parents of children and young people with an EHCP, if they request that a school other than the nearest school which could meet their child's needs be named in the EHCP, travel assistance will not be provided unless the low income criteria are met.

To what extent do you agree that the proposed change makes the policy clearer?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	7.62%	17
2	Agree	26.01%	58
3	Neither agree nor disagree	18.83%	42
4	Disagree	15.70%	35
5	Strongly disagree	26.91%	60
6	Don't know / no opinion	4.93%	11
		answered	223
		skipped	37
Comments: (52)			

## 11. Section 3.2 Transport Provided on Medical Grounds

This proposal would change the travel assistance available for pupils with temporary medical conditions.

### Current policy

The current policy states that we will consider providing travel assistance for pupils with temporary medical conditions. Applications for travel assistance on this basis must be supported by appropriate evidence from a medical professional. If the child attends a school which is not their nearest suitable school, parents will normally be required to pay a contribution towards the costs and the assistance will be reviewed every half term.

### Proposed change

National guidance requires councils to provide travel assistance to the nearest school which meets a child's needs, unless the low income criteria apply. We are proposing to amend our policy to bring it in line with national guidance, and to clarify what information is needed to apply for assistance and how long it will be provided for.

For applications for travel assistance based on medical grounds, the child or young person must be attending their nearest suitable school. The application must be supported by appropriate evidence from a medical professional, which would normally be a letter from a consultant, or another medical professional involved in the child's medical welfare. Travel assistance would only be provided for the time specified by the medical practitioner. If a time period has not been specified, or the medical condition is long term, we would review the situation at least once each term and may require further evidence.

To avoid excessive delays in assessing applications, we are proposing to add to the new policy that where additional medical evidence is requested, it must be provided within 20 working days or the application will be refused. If the medical evidence cannot be provided within 20 working days, an extension must be requested before the period expires.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	8.44%	19
2	Agree	29.78%	67
3	Neither agree nor disagree	24.44%	55
4	Disagree	17.33%	39
5	Strongly disagree	11.11%	25
6	Don't know / no opinion	8.89%	20
		answered	225
		skipped	35
Comments: (33)			

## 12. Section 4. Types of Travel Assistance provided

This proposal would clarify the role of a personal assistant / escort and could require a parent to act as the escort for their child in certain circumstances. This applies to all children and young people who are eligible for travel assistance.

### Current policy

The current policy states that the types of transport assistance that might be offered include, but are not limited to: A parent consenting to use their car in return for payment of a mileage allowance; A parent consenting to a walking escort or responsible adult to escort the young person on public transport; Training and support to travel independently (see Independent Travel Training section below for more details); Free passes for children on public transport; Provision of a seat on a dedicated school bus or minibus; or A seat in a taxi, usually shared with one or more other pupils, where a pupil's needs require more personalised arrangements.

### Proposed change

The new policy would clarify that the role of a personal assistant / escort is to accompany a child when travelling within a council commissioned vehicle when the child or young person has additional needs that mean that they cannot travel in a vehicle without one. In some circumstances personal assistants / escorts may also be provided as part of a travel training arrangement to encourage greater independence for a young person and to help with the transition to adulthood.

The new policy proposes that if a child attends a school within the statutory walking distance (two miles for children under eight years old; three miles for children eight years old and older) and a personal assistant /escort is required, the council may request that a parent act as the personal assistant / escort. We would make the decision about asking a parent to accompany their child based on the type of transport provided.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	7.62%	17
2	Agree	29.15%	65
3	Neither agree nor disagree	23.32%	52
4	Disagree	18.83%	42
5	Strongly disagree	15.25%	34
6	Don't know / no opinion	5.83%	13
		answered	223
		skipped	37
Comments: (49)			

**13. Section 6.1 Travel Assistance for those not eligible for free home to school transport under this policy: Children below statutory school age**

This proposal would remove all travel assistance for children under the age of five.

**Current policy**

There is no statutory duty to provide travel assistance for those under the age of five. Under the current policy, we provide travel assistance for children under the age of five on a case-by-case basis.

**Proposed change**

We are proposing to remove any travel assistance for children under the age of five.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	11.71%	26
2	Agree	23.42%	52
3	Neither agree nor disagree	23.87%	53
4	Disagree	12.61%	28
5	Strongly disagree	22.52%	50
6	Don't know / no opinion	5.86%	13
		answered	222
		skipped	38
Comments: (43)			

**14. Section 6.2 Travel assistance for those not eligible for free home to school travel assistance under this policy: fare-paying options for non-eligible children**

This proposal would continue to use the low income criteria for eligibility, but remove the extra discount for pupils from low income families who purchase a 'fare paying' seat on council commissioned school coaches and change how refunds are handled.

**Current policy**

If a pupil does not qualify for free travel assistance under the existing policy, a seat may be purchased on an existing contract vehicle where a seat is available, subject to certain conditions. This is called a 'fare payer fee' and is currently set at £785 per year. If a family are on a low income, we currently give them a 50 percent discount on the fare payer fee.

**Proposed change**

National guidance does not require councils to make seats available on a fare payer fee basis on council commissioned school transport. Where fare payer seats are made available, these are at the council's discretion, and under our terms and conditions.

Under the new policy, we would continue to use low income as part of the main eligibility criteria for travel assistance, but no further discount for students from low income families would be given.

Where an annual pass has been purchased from the council and is no longer required, we are proposing to change the refund policy so that a refund would be provided for full school terms only. To receive a refund against an annual pass, the bus pass must be returned to the community transport team and then a refund will be processed from the start of the next school term for which the pass was valid.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	5.83%	13
2	Agree	21.52%	48
3	Neither agree nor disagree	26.01%	58
4	Disagree	20.63%	46
5	Strongly disagree	17.94%	40
6	Don't know / no opinion	8.07%	18
		answered	223
		skipped	37
Comments: (40)			

**15. Section 7. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: a) Change of address**

The proposed change to this section is only to clarify the existing policy rather than to change it.

**Current policy**

When a family moves house, they need to let us know as soon as possible, as eligibility for travel assistance will need to be reviewed.

**Proposed change**

We are proposing to make it clear that when a family already receives travel assistance and they move house, they will need to reapply for travel assistance. When this happens, travel assistance will only be provided to the child's existing school if a place has been applied for at the nearest suitable school to the new address, and a place is refused due to the year group being full.

We are also proposing that the policy strongly advises parents to check the availability of school places before moving house, as there are no guarantees that places will be available at a new school.

To what extent do you agree that the proposed change makes the policy clearer?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	10.67%	24
2	Agree	46.67%	105
3	Neither agree nor disagree	16.00%	36
4	Disagree	7.56%	17
5	Strongly disagree	15.11%	34
6	Don't know / no opinion	4.00%	9
		answered	225
		skipped	35
Comments: (32)			

**16. Section 7. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: b) Pupils living in temporary accommodation**

This proposal would limit the length of time travel assistance is provided for when a pupil is in temporary accommodation.

**Current policy**

For children aged five to 16 and living in council arranged temporary accommodation, travel assistance may be provided for a limited period. The policy does not specify how long the assistance will be provided.

**Proposed change**

We are proposing that pupils living in council arranged temporary accommodation, which is three miles or more from their current school, would be offered travel assistance for a limited period of time (generally one term). Any further travel assistance would be subject to the usual eligibility criteria.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	5.86%	13
2	Agree	34.23%	76
3	Neither agree nor disagree	20.27%	45
4	Disagree	15.32%	34
5	Strongly disagree	15.32%	34
6	Don't know / no opinion	9.01%	20
		answered	222
		skipped	38
Comments: (39)			



**17. Section 7. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: d) Changing schools**

We are proposing to add a new subsection to Section 7 called 'managed moves'.

**Current policy**

When a family decide to change their child's school after they have started, the current policy states that any transport assistance that has been provided will need to be reassessed.

**Proposed change**

We are proposing to clarify that when a school and a parent agree that it is in a child's best interest to change schools (which is referred to as a 'managed move'), any future travel assistance would need to be reassessed. If a child currently has travel assistance and moves to a school further away, they would be reassessed and if the new school is not their nearest suitable school, they would no longer qualify for travel assistance.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	7.66%	17
2	Agree	33.78%	75
3	Neither agree nor disagree	17.12%	38
4	Disagree	20.72%	46
5	Strongly disagree	15.32%	34
6	Don't know / no opinion	5.41%	12
		answered	222
		skipped	38
Comments: (39)			

**18. Section 7. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance: h) Elective Home Education (EHE) and Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)**

We are proposing to change the way we process applications for pupils who have education other than at school (EOTAS).

**Current policy**

The current policy states where we arrange for a pupil to have education other than at school, we will provide travel assistance subject to the normal eligibility rules.

**Proposed change**

Under the current policy, we pay mileage for students who receive education other than at school. We are proposing to instead work with families whose children and young people receive EOTAS packages to build travel assistance funding into the overall EOTAS funding package. This would remove the need to submit separate travel assistance mileage claims.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	10.36%	23
2	Agree	40.09%	89
3	Neither agree nor disagree	27.48%	61
4	Disagree	4.95%	11
5	Strongly disagree	6.76%	15
6	Don't know / no opinion	10.36%	23
		answered	222
		skipped	38

Comments: (22)

**19. Section 7. Exceptional circumstances, change of circumstances and other assistance**

We are proposing to change the way we process applications for children in foster and those in our care.

**Current policy**

The current policy does not clearly specify which team a foster carer should approach in relation to travel assistance. Requests are often submitted to the child's social care team and then forwarded to the transport team to deal with. As a result, families need to deal with several different departments.

**Proposed change**

We are proposing to have the need for travel assistance be considered by the children's social care team who are responsible for foster children and those in our care. Any funding for travel assistance would then be provided as part of the overall care package.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	13.39%	30
2	Agree	51.34%	115
3	Neither agree nor disagree	19.64%	44
4	Disagree	3.57%	8
5	Strongly disagree	4.02%	9
6	Don't know / no opinion	8.04%	18
		answered	224
		skipped	36
Comments: (14)			

## 20. New policy section

This proposal would limit the number of times a parent / carer can submit an application for travel assistance, when the circumstances have not changed following a refusal.

### Current policy

The current policy does not specify how many times an applicant can apply for travel assistance.

### Proposed change

Create a new section

As the current policy does not specify how many times an applicant can submit an application, there are times when applicants repeatedly apply, even though it has already been refused and the circumstances have not changed. Reviewing these applications is not an efficient use of the council's limited resources.

We are proposing to limit the number of times an applicant can apply so applications would only be considered once by the community transport team, once at Stage 1 appeal and once at Stage 2 appeal. The only exception to this is if there has been a change in circumstances and then a new application may be made.

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	12.95%	29
2	Agree	44.64%	100
3	Neither agree nor disagree	21.43%	48
4	Disagree	9.38%	21
5	Strongly disagree	8.93%	20
6	Don't know / no opinion	2.68%	6
		answered	224
		skipped	36
Comments: (23)			

## 21. New policy section

This proposal would add a new section.

### Current policy

We would like to add a new section to the policy that clarifies certain circumstances that on their own will not make a child eligible for travel assistance.

### Proposed change

Create a new section

The following circumstances will not be considered in evaluating whether a child meets the eligibility criteria for travel assistance. This does not mean that a child that meets one or more of the criteria below will not receive assistance, but that they will not receive assistance solely because of the following:

- Journeys to and from breakfast or after school clubs
- Trips and journeys during the school day which are in the curriculum
- To or from a venue that isn't your normal home address, for example the address of a childcare provider or a short break placement (unless there is a legal order in place, or a statutory care plan agreed by us)
- If your child is unwell and has to be collected from school during a school day
- If your child is excluded during a school day
- For medical appointments or other approved activities which affect the start or end of and during the school day
- If a child has missed the contracted transport
- For transitional/integration placements in schools/colleges
- For attendance at work experience programmes
- If a child is withdrawn from school by their family and placed in an alternative education setting
- To fall in line with other family members travelling in the same/similar direction
- Work commitments or domestic difficulties of parents/carers including taking other children to school or a pick-up point
- Parents are unwilling, or unavailable to escort their child to school or pick-up point
- Single parent families
- Children in temporary care, including foster care
- An inability to afford existing transport arrangement, for example, resulting from loss of employment
- Family breakdown and fragmentation
- Long-term or temporary medical conditions without sufficient medical evidence from an appropriate medical professional

To what extent do you agree with the proposed change?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	9.38%	21
2	Agree	36.61%	82
3	Neither agree nor disagree	25.00%	56
4	Disagree	9.38%	21
5	Strongly disagree	12.50%	28
6	Don't know / no opinion	7.14%	16
		answered	224
		skipped	36
Comments: (34)			

22. This proposal would end our current practice of providing 'fare payer' travel assistance for pupils in post-16 education.

**Current policy**

For young people aged 16 to 19 in post-16 education, the current policy provides the option of travel assistance at a set rate of £785 per year, called a 'fare payer fee', in the following circumstances: When we have surplus seats available on council commissioned school coaches; and / or When the young person has additional needs

**Proposed change**

National guidance states that councils do not have to provide free transport for students aged 16 to 19 or to make available any transport provision based on a financial contribution from families, which is often known as a 'fare payer fee'.

We propose updating our policy to be in line with national guidance, which means we will no longer offer a 'fare payer fee'.

For post-16 pupils with additional needs, we are keen to encourage independent travel to help with the transition into adulthood. We propose supporting young people aged 16 to 19 who qualify for travel assistance based on their needs, with a personal budget and skills training, commonly known as 'travel training' instead of the current 'fare payer fee'.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	4.63%	5
2	Agree	9.26%	10
3	Neither agree nor disagree	8.33%	9
4	Disagree	24.07%	26
5	Strongly disagree	50.93%	55
6	Don't know / no opinion	2.78%	3
		answered	108
		skipped	152
Comments: (70)			

## 27. What town or parish do you live in?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Arborfield and Newland	1.52%	3
2	Barkham	2.54%	5
3	Charvil	0.51%	1
4	Earley	15.23%	30
5	Finchampstead	7.61%	15
6	Hurst	0.51%	1
7	Remenham	1.02%	2
8	Ruscombe	0.00%	0
9	Shinfield	15.74%	31
10	Sonning	0.51%	1
11	Swallowfield	1.52%	3
12	Twyford	5.08%	10
13	Wargrave	2.54%	5
14	Winnersh	3.05%	6
15	Wokingham	23.86%	47
16	Wokingham Without	3.05%	6
17	Woodley	10.15%	20
18	Don't know	1.52%	3
19	Outside Wokingham borough	4.06%	8
		answered	197
		skipped	63

## 28. What sex/gender do you identify as?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Female	72.50%	145
2	Male	26.50%	53
3	Transgender	0.00%	0
4	Prefer not to say	1.00%	2
5	Other (please specify):	0.00%	0
		answered	200
		skipped	60

### 29. How old are you?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	17 or younger	0.50%	1
2	18-20	0.00%	0
3	21-29	0.00%	0
4	30-39	10.95%	22
5	40-49	52.74%	106
6	50-59	29.35%	59
7	60 or older	6.47%	13
		answered	201
		skipped	59

### 30. What race or ethnicity best describes you?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Arabic	0.50%	1
2	Asian/British Asian: Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
3	Asian/British Asian: Chinese	2.49%	5
4	Asian/British Asian: Indian	3.48%	7
5	Asian/British Asian: Pakistani	2.99%	6
6	Black/British Black: African	2.49%	5
7	Black/British Black: Caribbean	0.50%	1
8	White: British	70.15%	141
9	White: Other	9.95%	20
10	Mixed race	1.00%	2
11	Gypsy/Traveller	0.00%	0
12	Prefer not to say	3.48%	7
13	Other (please specify):	2.99%	6
		answered	201
		skipped	59

### 31. What do you consider your religion to be?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Buddhism	1.00%	2



### 31. What do you consider your religion to be?

2	Christianity		39.30%	79
3	Hinduism		2.99%	6
4	Islam		3.48%	7
5	Judaism		0.00%	0
6	Sikhism		0.50%	1
7	No religion		41.79%	84
8	Prefer not to say		8.96%	18
9	Other (please specify):		1.99%	4
			answered	201
			skipped	59

### 32. Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Asexual	2.01%	4	
2	Bisexual	3.02%	6	
3	Gay	0.50%	1	
4	Lesbian	1.01%	2	
5	Heterosexual/Straight	79.40%	158	
6	Prefer not to say	13.07%	26	
7	Other (please specify):	1.01%	2	
			answered	199
			skipped	61

### 33. Have you undertaken any form of sex/gender reassignment?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Yes	0.00%	0	
2	No	91.92%	182	
3	Prefer not to say	8.08%	16	
			answered	198
			skipped	62

### 34. Are you currently pregnant or have you given birth within the last year?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	1.50%	3
2	No	84.50%	169
3	Not applicable	9.00%	18
4	Prefer not to say	5.00%	10
		answered	200
		skipped	60

### 35. Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health condition?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	13.93%	28
2	No	78.11%	157
3	Prefer not to say	7.96%	16
		answered	201
		skipped	59

Selection of comments received:

Theme	Comments
<b>School suitability and choice</b>	<p>I wanted my son to go to a single-sexed school, so the nearest school was not suitable. You should get travel assistance to whichever school you choose is right for your child, regardless of the distance.</p> <p>I do not quite agree with the new changes on "suitable school," the school allocated by the council to the children may not be the school they applied due to insufficient school places available.</p> <p>By including the section on the suitable school, you reduce the parents' right to choose a school. If this wasn't including sen children with EHCPs then i'd have been ok with it, but i don't like how you're proposing to word this as it should be about the right school meeting needs. For children with special needs, the definition of a "suitable school" is too vague and could be misinterpreted.</p> <p>It should allow for the knowledge and skills of the professionals involved with the child to select a school that may not be the nearest conveniently available to the council. The child's needs are more important than the council's financial affairs; this is not an area in which the council should be trying to reduce expenditure.</p>
<b>Catchment area considerations and fairness</b>	<p>Changing boundaries when a sibling is already at one school should not affect other siblings when they apply later down the line. You should not be including schools that are not of catchment.</p> <p>If they are not available for us to choose from when we are making our options, then other local schools should be ruled out of the equation. It feels unfair to exclude kids from traveling to a school inside their catchment if there is an available school outside of their catchment.</p>
<b>Proximity and distance considerations</b>	<p>Part c is not logical because no one knows if a child would have been offered a place at their nearest straight-line distance school unless they actually applied, as schools have different admission oversubscription criteria.</p> <p>Nearest school surely isn't the only variable with children with disabilities. The phrase 'suitable' is open to wild interpretation, and the current administration and officers, unfortunately, do not have the ability to make such a decision.</p> <p>To my mind, the distance should be measured from the child's home to the agreed school that they are attending.</p>

<b>Concerns about transport assistance and decision process</b>	<p>If the child was not offered a place at their catchment school (which is a whole other issue!), then the school they are offered should be their defined school.</p> <p>I believe these proposed changes will be detrimental to the local families. It is not acceptable to not be offered a place in the local catchment school due to over-subscription and have to pay to get your child to the neighbouring borough school.</p> <p>You need to look at the school capacity and keep children local as much as possible. I really feel that this will impact on children's attendance rates if you are expecting the parents to pay for transport further than their local catchment school.</p>
<b>Concerns about schools in neighbouring boroughs</b>	<p>I feel very strongly that it should not include schools in neighbouring boroughs. One reason people live in Wokingham borough is because of the quality of the schools and shouldn't be disadvantaged because Wokingham council hasn't made enough provision for education.</p> <p>Residents do not have influence over councils in neighbouring boroughs, they can't vote for the councillors who influence neighbouring boroughs and ultimately impact the schools.</p>
<b>Travel assistance for children with special needs</b>	<p>Eg my local school is maiden earley, oak bank was not of catchment and was not an option, my daughter has been sent to bulmersche by the council. That is 3.1 miles walking distance. Under your new proposal, i would not get council support because oak bank is closer, even though it is not of catchment and was not available as an option. Special needs differ per child; sen school, for example, Addington, would not be suitable for my lad who needed a school specializing in attachment trauma and ptsd, for example.the nearest sen school is not necessarily right for all children with a sen ehcp. It's too complex for that.</p>
<b>Impact on send children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- concerns about the proposed change disproportionately affecting children with special educational needs and disabilities (send).</li> <li>- clear discussions are needed to consider why another school may be chosen for a child with send, as not all sen schools will be suitable for every child with special needs.</li> <li>- parents cannot be held liable for transport costs in disputes regarding "nearest qualifying school," especially for children with send.</li> <li>- the proposed change may penalize send children, which may not be fair considering a particular school may be necessary for them.</li> <li>- it is essential to ensure children with send are adequately supported, even if it means providing transport to a school that can better cater to their needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Parental choice and preference</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parents should have the right to choose the most suitable school for their children, and any assistance should be provided within reason.</li> <li>- removing parental choice and enforcing a school chosen by the la might be considered discriminatory, especially for children with disabilities.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- concerns about the onus being put on parents to prove when the closest school became full, leading to potential challenges and unnecessary work for parents and schools.</li> <li>- the proposed change may negatively impact families with multiple children, especially when siblings need to attend the same school for practical reasons.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact on school capacity and catchments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- worries about schools becoming full and the implications for travel assistance eligibility, especially for mainstream children without EHCPs.</li> <li>- some parents are concerned that if the nearest suitable school is not within catchment, it might not be considered a viable choice, limiting their options. - concerns about potential increased traffic and safety issues if parents have to drive children to schools farther away due to lack of travel assistance.</li> <li>- disagreements with the proposed change's handling of school capacities and its potential impact on available alternatives for children who applied to schools not within the nearest suitable school's catchment.</li> </ul>
<b>Clarification of eligibility criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- acknowledgment of the proposed change's potential to provide better clarity on eligibility criteria for travel assistance.</li> <li>- the change is seen as positive in terms of clarifying eligibility requirements, but some question if it's fair in practice.</li> <li>- some respondents appreciate the proposal's aim to clarify the concept of the "nearest suitable school," especially for children with SEND, but still have reservations about its implementation and potential consequences.</li> </ul>
<b>Practical considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- some practical concerns raised about the difficulty of proving when the nearest school became full, especially for SEND parents already facing challenges in daily life.</li> <li>- worries about the added workload for schools in dealing with transport assistance requests and queries.</li> <li>- criticisms about allocating funds for unnecessary projects (e.g., cycleway design) while cutting provisions for bussing children to school.</li> </ul>
<b>Safety and well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emphasis on the importance of a child feeling safe and settled at a school, especially for children with EHCPs and SEND.</li> <li>- concerns about the safety and well-being of vulnerable children, especially if they have to travel long distances via unreliable public transport.</li> <li>- worries about disruptions in a child's education due to unnecessary changes in school placement.</li> </ul>

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**Miscellaneous**

- some respondents express disbelief or frustration with the proposed change or the overall policy. - comments about unfairness and challenges faced by families due to the proposed change. - concerns about how the proposed change may interact with other aspects of school placement and funding. - some comments suggest that the proposed change may not align well with the reality of school choices and placements, especially with the proliferation of academies and their individual application criteria. - questions raised about the impact of sendist (special educational needs and disability tribunal) rulings on the la's local policy

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**Question 8**

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Theme	Comments
<b>Impact on disabled parents</b>	<p>- concerns that the proposed change may create additional stress and burden for disabled parents, who are already dealing with amplified stress.</p> <p>-worries that the change might negatively impact vulnerable parents, making the process more complicated for them.</p> <p>- some respondents question the decision to rely on disabled parents to sort out accompaniments and express concern about the child being penalized if the adult is unable or unwilling to do so.</p> <p>- worries about passing the responsibility to disabled parents without adequate support or resources to address their needs.</p> <p>- some see the proposed change as discriminatory against the most vulnerable, and it may not adequately consider various medical conditions that can affect a parent's ability to accompany their child to school.</p>
<b>Impact on social workers</b>	<p>- concerns about social workers' capacity and workload, and worries that they might not have enough time to effectively help with the added responsibility of assessing travel assistance applications for parents with disabilities.</p> <p>- some respondents question whether social workers have the capacity to handle additional work and worry about possible delays in obtaining support for parents and children.</p>

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- worries about increasing handovers between teams and the divide between adult social care and transport teams, potentially impacting children's attendance levels.

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**Lack of clarity and explanation**

- some comments express confusion about the proposed changes, as the question lacks clarity in differentiating between what is being removed and what is staying in the current policy.

- some respondents request more information about the intended effects of the proposed changes and their implications for parents with disabilities and their children.

- the question does not address parents who do not have a social worker and are not currently receiving support from the adult social care team, leaving them uncertain about how the proposed changes would apply to their situation.

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**Practical considerations**

- some respondents agree with the proposed change if it simplifies the process for disabled parents, but they emphasize the importance of quick access to a social worker for effective support.

- worries about complicating the process for parents and the potential impacts on children with special needs who may currently travel independently.

- some suggest that if the proposed change adds extra hurdles or delays in obtaining support, they would not agree with the change.

- questions raised about the reason for the change and the need for further clarification on its implications.

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**Inclusivity concerns**

- worries about the proposed change not being inclusive, especially if it relies on the parent's ability to sort out accompaniments and potentially penalizes the child when the adult cannot fulfill this responsibility.

- concerns that the proposed change might not adequately support vulnerable parents.

- comments questioning the fairness of the proposed change, considering the potential negative impact on already vulnerable parents and children with special needs.

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**Expertise and decision-making**

- some respondents question the competence of social workers to make decisions about travel assistance for parents with disabilities, emphasizing the need for professionals with relevant expertise in logistics and transport to handle such matters.
  - worries that the decision-making process might be less effective if given to social workers rather than specialized professionals.
  - doubts about social workers' ability to make informed decisions regarding travel assistance applications.
- 

**Disagreement with the proposed change**

- some comments express disagreement with the proposed change without specific reasons given.
  - emphasis on the preference for the current policy or lack of acceptance for any change in the process.
- 

**Concerns about additional workload**

- some respondents express concerns about increasing the workload for social workers, who may already be stretched and may not have the capacity to handle additional tasks related to assessing travel assistance applications for parents with disabilities.
  - doubts about the social care team's ability to take on further workload and additional responsibilities.
- 

**Lack of justification for the change**

- some comments express skepticism or dissatisfaction with the lack of explanation or justification provided for the proposed change.
  - concerns that the question does not provide a reason for the change or adequately explain its purpose and potential benefits.
- 

**Safety and well-being**

- concerns about the safety and well-being of the child, especially when relying on disabled parents to manage accompaniments, particularly if they are unable to fulfill this responsibility safely.
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- worries about the potential negative impact on the child if the proposed change results in them not receiving assistance when they normally would.

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**Miscellaneous**

- miscellaneous comments express frustration, disapproval, or concern about the proposed change without specifying the reasons for such sentiments.

- questions and doubts about the effectiveness and practicality of the proposed change without further explanation or justification.

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**Question 9**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Safety and age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- concerns about the safety of young children, particularly those aged 8, walking long distances (e.g., 3 miles) to school without adult supervision</li><li>- some comments highlight that children under 11 should not be walking two miles, and children under 16 should not be walking three miles.</li><li>- worries about the suitability of the proposed policy for children aged 8, and suggestions to reconsider the age criteria or set different criteria based on individual cases and their specific needs.</li><li>- questions about the safety and ability of an 8-year-old child to travel unsupervised, especially if they have a disability.</li></ul>
<b>Individual considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- suggestions to assess each case individually, taking into account the unique circumstances of the child and their needs.</li><li>- worries about the impact on children with special needs or disabilities and whether the proposed change considers their specific requirements.</li><li>- concerns about potential negative effects on children attending existing specialist schools if new, nearer suitable schools are built, leading to changes in school or the loss of school transport.</li><li>- emphasis on the need to consider disabilities and individual cases rather than solely relying on distance criteria.</li></ul>
<b>Transition and notice period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- suggested improvements to the policy by providing a specific number of weeks' notice period (e.g., 6 weeks) if a child is no longer eligible for transport assistance, allowing parents sufficient time to make alternative arrangements.</li></ul>

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- some comments highlight that the policy should end at the end of the school year, not mid-year, to minimize disruptions for children and families.	
- questions raised about what support would be in place to help a child during the transition if they have to change schools due to the proposed changes in travel assistance eligibility.	
<b>Lack of clarity and justification</b>	<p>- some comments express confusion or lack of clarity about the rationale behind the 3-mile distance criteria for travel assistance eligibility.</p> <p>- worries about the lack of consideration for disabilities in the proposed policy and how decisions are made.</p> <p>- some respondents question the justification for the proposed change and express concerns about the possibility of travel assistance being withdrawn for children over a 1-mile difference.</p>
<b>Review frequency and parental notice</b>	<p>- suggestions for annual transport arrangement reviews, allowing parents to plan accordingly each year.</p> <p>- requests for at least 2 to 3 months' notice to parents if changes in eligibility occur, enabling them to make necessary adjustments.</p> <p>- some respondents express the need for clear communication to parents during the initial qualification process for transport assistance.</p> <p>- some comments express agreement with the policy clarification, offering positive feedback on its definition.</p>
<b>Budgetary impact and resource allocation</b>	<p>- some comments express concern about potential budgetary implications and the impact on children if school transport provision is changed based on new availability of places elsewhere.</p> <p>- criticisms about the allocation of resources, particularly in light of other investments, such as a cycleway design, while cutting provisions for school transport.</p> <p>- worries about potential policy changes being driven by budget considerations rather than focusing on the well-being and safety of children.</p>
<b>Support and transition</b>	<p>- questions raised about the support available for children during the transition if they need to change schools due to changes in travel assistance eligibility.</p> <p>some respondents suggest that support and safe routes to school for all children should be a priority, promoting independence.</p> <p>- worries about the impact on single parents and those who are less able to travel without assistance.</p>

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<b>Disagreement with the proposed change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- some comments express disagreement with the proposed change without providing specific reasons for their dissent.</li> <li>- some respondents express concern about the proposed policy ending at age 8 or being withdrawn from children over a 1-mile difference.</li> </ul>
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**Question 10**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Financial considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- suggestions to consider the financial situation of parents who may not fit the low-income criteria but still face challenges in affording transport to a school that is further away. - proposal for parents to contribute financially if they can afford to do so, rather than removing assistance completely. - concerns about penalizing parents who choose a school based on their child's needs, especially if it is not the closest school deemed suitable by the local authority (la). - criticisms about the potential impact on children with special needs and disabilities, who may face additional struggles and disadvantages.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual needs and choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- calls for special considerations and assessments to be given to parents and carers based on their individual situations and needs. - worries about the policy's lack of consideration for parental views and preferences when selecting a school that best meets their child's needs. - concerns about the policy's impact on parental choice, removing the right to choose a school that parents believe is most suitable for their child, even if it is not the closest. - emphasis on the importance of considering the welfare and well-being of the child when making decisions about school transport.</li> </ul>
<b>Suitability of schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- disagreements with the la's view of suitable schools, with some parents highlighting significant differences between the la's perspective and their own when choosing a school for their child with special needs or disabilities. - worries about the potential negative consequences on children if placed in schools deemed suitable by the la but not considered appropriate by parents based on their knowledge and experience with their child's needs. - concerns about the suitability of certain schools for children with EHCPs and whether the proposed changes consider the diverse needs of children with special needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Transparency and clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- criticisms about the lack of clarity and transparency in the proposed policy changes, with some comments suggesting that the presented changes are not a clarification but an actual policy change. - concerns about the policy's wording and the potential for misinterpretation or ambiguity. - questions about the practical implications and impact on transport assistance for children attending alternative provision or specialist settings if the distance criteria are removed.</li> </ul>

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<b>Budgetary impact and resource allocation</b>	- criticisms about budgetary decisions, with some comments expressing frustration over allocating funds for projects (e.g., cycleway design) while cutting school transport provisions, especially for children with special needs. - worries about the potential pressure on the borough to provide a broader range of schools capable of supporting children with various needs, and the associated costs and resource allocation required to meet those needs. - criticisms about decisions being driven by convenience and cost-cutting rather than focusing on the well-being of children.
<b>Impact on send children and families</b>	- concerns about the disproportionate impact of the proposed changes on children with special needs and their families, who already face significant challenges in navigating the education system and obtaining the right support. - criticisms about the potential negative effects on children with EHCPS if the local authority disagrees with parents on what provision is right for their child, potentially leading to the removal of transport assistance or placement changes that can be disruptive to the child's education and personal development. - calls for greater consideration of the child's voice and the individual needs of children with send.
<b>Support for parents and children</b>	- suggestions for policies to be done on a case-by-case basis, taking into account parents' research and discussions with potential schools to determine what is best for the child. - calls for policies to be designed to make the lives of parents with children with EHCPS easier, considering the significant challenges they already face. - worries about the lack of support and services for children with disabilities and special needs if the travel assistance is reduced or removed. - concerns about the potential for more appeals for transport, which can be costly and time-consuming for the local authority.
<b>School transition and placement</b>	- questions raised about the impact on children if they are required to change schools based on the proposed changes in travel assistance eligibility. - worries about the emotional well-being of children if they have to move to the nearest suitable school, causing disruptions to their education and personal development. - concerns about the impact on children if they move to a different school due to a placement won through a tribunal or appeal, which may not be considered the closest suitable school by the local authority.
<b>Low-income criteria</b>	- criticisms about the proposal to remove assistance unless the low-income criteria are met, expressing that low-income parents should not be given priority over others. - some comments highlight the challenges in determining eligibility based solely on low-income criteria and the potential unfairness in such an approach. - suggestions for clearer wording or the removal of the low-income criteria from the proposed policy.

## Question 11

Theme	Comments
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<b>Notice period</b>	- concerns about the tightness of the 20-day notice period, stating that documents can take a while to come through, and the 20-day window may not be sufficient for some parents to arrange alternative transportation. - suggestions to review transport assistance at the end of each school year instead of every term to provide a buffer for parents or carers to make arrangements. - calls for clear processes to request extensions to the 20-day notice period due to delays in obtaining required medical documents.
<b>Impact on families and stress</b>	- concerns about the added stress and complications for families in challenging situations due to the proposed changes in transport assistance. - worries about the potential impacts on mental health and well-being for families, suggesting that savings from policy changes should be directed to increase access to mental health and support services. - concerns about children having to change schools to access transport assistance if they become medically incapable of traveling to their original school, especially if it's not the closest suitable school.
<b>Access to medical information</b>	- worries about the ability of parents to access timely medical information due to paperwork, waiting lists, and an overworked nhs, which may lead to difficulties in meeting the requirements for transport assistance. - suggestions to closely monitor and accommodate situations where families face challenges in obtaining the necessary medical documentation. - concerns about the broad definition of "temporary medical conditions" and the potential for abuse, debates, and litigation.
<b>Equitability and fairness</b>	- concerns about fairness and equity for children who couldn't get into their nearest school due to lack of places and how the proposed changes might penalize them. - suggestions for policies to be more equitable by allowing parents to contribute to the transport scheme if they don't qualify as low income, enabling the service to remain viable. - disagreements with the one-sided 20-day limit for providing notice, suggesting that all involved parties should have a limit for responding.
<b>Accessibility of services and support</b>	- calls for clear definitions of "temporary medical conditions" to avoid broad interpretations and potential inequities in determining eligibility for transport assistance. - worries about potential inequities in policies if some parents can access private medical perspectives while others rely on overworked nhs services. - suggestions to ensure parents can easily access services and information they need to comply with transport assistance requirements.
<b>Impact on education</b>	- worries about the potential impact on children's education if they are required to change schools to receive transport assistance due to medical conditions or other eligibility criteria. - disagreements with the policy wording, which might lead to situations where children lose access to transport assistance if they are already attending a school that is not the nearest suitable school.
<b>Policy clarity and implications</b>	- criticisms about the lack of clarity and potential implications of the policy, highlighting that it may not have been written with a full understanding of the implications. - suggestions for clearer wording and processes in the policy to avoid misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

## Question 12

Theme	Comments
<b>Impact on parents' ability to work</b>	- concerns about how the proposal may affect parents' ability to work, especially if they have to accompany their child during school runs. - worries about parents' capacity to support other dependents or work due to the responsibilities of being a personal assistant/escort. - criticisms of the policy for not considering the challenges faced by parents who have to balance their work commitments with providing assistance for their child during school travel.
<b>Equality and discrimination</b>	- complaints about potential discrimination, with worries that some parents may not be able to fulfill the role of a personal assistant due to various factors, such as work commitments, disabilities, or having other dependents to support. - concerns about the impact on parents of children with special educational needs (sen) who already face difficulties accessing breakfast and after-school clubs and now may be burdened with additional responsibilities.
<b>Costs and logistics</b>	- questions raised about the logistics of parents acting as escorts for their children, especially if the parent has to be dropped back home after drop-off and picked up again before pick-up. - concerns about the costs and practicality of parents acting as escorts, as it may not save money, and there may be additional expenses related to mileage, dbs checks, and transportation arrangements. - suggestions for clear guidelines and processes to address these cost and logistical concerns.
<b>Impact on siblings and family life</b>	- worries about the impact on other children in the family if a parent has to act as an escort for one child, potentially affecting their own school transportation arrangements and daily routines. - concerns about how the proposal may affect family life and the quality of life for parents and their dependents.
<b>Eligibility and policy clarity</b>	- confusion about the proposed changes and how they relate to the previous questions about the statutory walking distance and eligibility criteria. - requests for clarity on specific circumstances and under what conditions parents would be expected to accompany their child as an assistant. - concerns about the wording of the policy and the need for more explicit guidance to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations.
<b>Promotion of public transport</b>	- criticisms about the potential increase in cars on the road and the impact on congestion and the environment, suggesting that the council should promote more use of public transport. - worries that the policy may not consider the promotion of independence and social skills through the use of public transport.
<b>Impact on children with send</b>	- concerns about the potential negative impact on children with special educational needs (send) who require personal assistants or escorts for transportation, and how the policy may affect their attendance at school and the education of siblings. - suggestions for policies to consider individual cases, taking into account the capacity of parents and the needs of children with send and their siblings.

<b>Role and compulsion of parents</b>	- questions about the parents' role and whether they can be compelled to be personal assistants for their children. - concerns about potential conflict if a parent declines or is unable to fulfill the role of a personal assistant. - worries about parents being asked to accompany children in council vehicles while also considering work commitments. - suggestions for clear guidelines on the parents' role and the circumstances under which they can be requested to be escorts.
<b>Policy writing and considerations</b>	- criticisms about the policy writing, suggesting it may not have considered the implications and practicalities of the proposed changes. - worries about the policy being written without fully understanding the challenges faced by parents and families. - suggestions for policies to be more considerate of the real-life circumstances of parents and children. - criticisms of the policy in relation to the current work situation for the majority of the workforce following the covid pandemic.
<b>Costs and prioritization</b>	- criticisms of the proposal as it may not save costs and may result in additional expenses, such as employing escorts or providing alternative transport. - worries that cost-cutting measures may disproportionately affect children with send and their families.

### Question 13

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Impact on low-income families</b>	- concerns about the removal of the 50% discount for low-income families, as it may create financial barriers and hinder access to education for vulnerable children. - criticisms of the proposal as it penalizes low-income families, who may already be struggling financially due to the cost of living. - suggestions to consider the financial burden on low-income families and find alternative ways to generate revenue without disproportionately affecting them.
<b>Equity and discrimination</b>	- accusations of discrimination, with some suggesting that the proposal is means-testing children for education, which is perceived as unfair and disadvantageous to certain families. - worries about the impact on families of children with special educational needs (send) who often have lower incomes due to limited work capacity, yet may be affected by the removal of the discount.
<b>Impact on school attendance</b>	- concerns that the increased cost may lead to some pupils missing out on education due to financial reasons. - worries that this change may have a detrimental impact on school attendance for some students, especially those from low-income families.

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**Cost-cutting and revenue generation** - criticisms of the proposal as cost-cutting for the council at the expense of low-income families. - suggestions for alternative revenue generation strategies that do not disproportionately burden low-income families. - accusations that the council is not doing a favor by offering the service, as it generates revenue from spare seats.

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**Practical implementation** - suggestions for a more reasonable pro rata refund instead of a whole term refund. - recommendations for offering refunds based on the period the pass is not used once it is returned. - concerns about the accuracy and effectiveness of means testing and potential abuse of such systems.

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**Impact on post 16 education** - worries that the proposal may prevent some pupils from attending 6th form or post-16 settings, potentially hindering their educational opportunities and future prospects.

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**Council's approach and fairness** - criticisms of the council's approach, suggesting that the burden of increased costs should be shared among all fare payers rather than solely on low-income families. - worries about the fairness of increasing charges for low-income families, especially given the rising costs of living. - suggestions to consider the financial impact on families when making policy decisions.

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**Refund period** - recommendations for a more reasonable and less harsh refund period, such as a half-termly refund instead of a whole term refund.

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**Refund mechanism** - suggestions for a pro-rata refund based on the unused period of the pass once it is returned, as opposed to the proposal's termly refund.

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**Question 14**

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Theme	Comments
<b>Impact on early development</b>	- concerns about the impact on early development for children with special needs, particularly those with severe disabilities, who benefit greatly from early years educational, social, and health support. - worries that children with severe disabilities, including wheelchair users, may be unable to attend pre-school or foundation due to transportation barriers without assistance. - criticisms of the proposal as discriminatory, potentially denying children with the most severe or

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multiple disabilities the right to start school with their peers. - suggestions to consider the importance of the foundation year in early education and its critical role in learning.

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**Discrimination and equity** - accusations of discrimination against children with special needs, especially those with severe disabilities, summer-born children, and children of parents with disabilities. - worries about the impact on children who may not be able to attend any educational setting until statutory school age. - criticisms of the proposal as disadvantageous to children with disabilities, potentially hindering their access to education and health support. - recommendations to consider individual needs on a case-by-case basis instead of outright refusing assistance for all under-fives.

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**Case-by-case basis** - suggestions to continue providing support on a case-by-case basis as it allows for flexibility and consideration of individual circumstances. - recommendations to retain the current approach that considers individual situations, especially for under-fives with specific needs or disabilities. - worries about the impact on children attending the foundation year at age four if support is not provided based on individual needs.

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**Importance of early intervention** - arguments for investing in early development and early intervention, as the early years are crucial for children's overall development and can lead to cost savings in the long run. - concerns about the potential delay in early intervention for children with special needs and the increased pressure on schools if early intervention is not adequately provided.

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**Practical considerations** - worries about the lack of safe public transport for many children with special educational needs (SEND). - concerns about parents' abilities to take their children to school due to lack of driving or distance from school. - recommendations to clarify the guidelines for considering cases on an individual basis instead of removing the possibility of assistance altogether.

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**Concerns about age** - worries about children who turn five later in the school year and may miss out on education if unable to get to school without assistance. - criticisms of the proposal as it may deny children starting school at age four the right to attend with their peers.

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**Criticisms of the proposal** - criticisms of the proposal as disturbing, outrageous, and appalling, given its potential impact on vulnerable children with disabilities. - accusations that the proposal is part of a cost-cutting exercise and fails to consider the basic human right to education for vulnerable children.

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**Uncertain usage** - requests for clarification on whether this support is currently being used and what purposes it serves.

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**Justifications for the proposal** - some comments express that there may be good reasons or valid cases for the proposal, although they are not explicitly specified.

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**Other criticisms** - additional criticism regarding the council's decisions and expenditures, such as spending on a cycleway while cutting children's bussing.

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### Question 15

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Theme	Comments
<b>Impact on child's well-being</b>	- concerns about the well-being of the child and the potential negative effects on their mental health if they are forced to change schools due to a house move. - worries that children who are settled and doing well in their current school may face disruption if they have to move due to a house move. - recommendations to consider the best interest of the child when implementing the policy and its potential impact on their education and emotional development.
<b>Discrimination and rigidity</b>	- accusations of discrimination, rigidity, and unfairness in the proposed changes. - worries that the changes are too rigid and do not account for various circumstances that may require a house move. - criticisms of the policy for potentially discriminating against families who are forced to move due to circumstances beyond their control, such as homelessness or eviction.
<b>Exemption for local moves</b>	- suggestions to include an exemption for families who are moving locally within the borough, especially if it is a short distance and the school selection/review considered before the current school allocation still applies. - worries about the discouragement for parents to move house if they have to reapply for school transport, especially if they are moving slightly closer to another school.
<b>Impact on special schools</b>	- concerns about how the policy applies to special schools and the unique circumstances of children with special educational needs (send). - suggestions for a sensible conversation about what is best for a child with send when the move puts them closer to another special school. - worries that moving a well-settled child with send to a new school for transport criteria may not be in the child's best interest if the difference in distance is minimal.

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<b>Emergency situations</b>	- concerns about the impact of the policy on families who have to move quickly in emergency situations, such as domestic abuse. - criticisms of the blanket policy that does not consider the specific circumstances of emergency moves.
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<b>House move by choice</b>	- recommendations for the policy to apply to families who choose to move houses but not to those who are forced out of their homes due to circumstances like eviction or homelessness. - arguments that the policy should not penalize families who move by choice, as it may be due to personal reasons like wanting a bigger or more suitable premise.
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<b>Impact on education and stability</b>	- arguments that the policy may negatively impact a child's education and social-emotional development by forcing them to change schools. - criticisms of the focus on budgetary savings rather than the stability and consistency needed for children's well-being. - worries about breaching the child's human rights to have consistency and stability in their lives, especially if their current school provides this.
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<b>Criticisms of the proposal</b>	- strong criticisms and accusations against the proposed policy as penny-pinching, affecting children's education, and prioritizing budget cuts over children's well-being. - criticisms directed at the authority and its expenditure choices, such as spending on a cycleway while reducing bussing for children. - political statements criticizing the liberal/labour coalition and its approach to family support.
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## Question 16

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<b>Theme</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Impact on vulnerable families</b>	- concerns about the impact on vulnerable families who find themselves in temporary accommodation. - worries that forcing children in temporary housing to change schools will be detrimental to their education and well-being. - recommendations to provide travel support for the entire time the children are in temporary accommodation, as it may not be their choice to stay there, and it is beyond their control. - arguments that school can be a protective factor for vulnerable children, and ensuring their attendance should be a priority.

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**Duration of travel assistance** - criticisms of limiting travel assistance to only one school term when families may be in temporary accommodation for a longer period. - suggestions to extend the period of travel support until families can secure permanent housing. - arguments that if the local authority cannot provide permanent accommodation within one term, travel assistance should not be limited. - concerns that changing temporary locations may result in frequent school changes for the child, which is unfair.

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**Discrimination and rigidity** - accusations of discrimination and rigidity in the proposed changes for travel assistance. - worries that limiting assistance to one term is unfair and unjustly affects families in temporary accommodation. - recommendations to consider the reason for temporary accommodation and the family's history before making decisions about travel support. - arguments that offering support only for one term may penalize low-income families living in council-arranged temporary accommodation.

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**Distance consideration** - suggestions to reconsider the 3-mile distance criterion for travel assistance, especially when there are multiple children in different schools. - arguments that the distance from the school should not be the sole criterion, as it may not account for families with multiple children attending different schools.

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**Criticisms of the proposal** - strong criticisms of the policy for being mean and unfair to families in temporary accommodation. - arguments that families may have no control over their temporary housing situation, such as those facing homelessness, domestic abuse, or forced moves. - criticisms directed at the council for potentially adding stress to already disadvantaged children and making it harder for them to attend school. - recommendations for the local authority to increase social housing to address the issue of families in temporary accommodation.

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**Impact on attendance** - worries that limiting travel assistance to one term may impact attendance for children in temporary housing. - arguments that children in temporary accommodation are already at a disadvantage, and this policy may exacerbate their challenges in attending school. - recommendations to provide support for children in temporary accommodation to ensure their attendance is not hindered.

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**Need for case-by-case approach** - suggestions for a case-by-case approach to assess the duration of travel assistance based on individual family circumstances. - arguments that each family's situation in temporary accommodation may vary, and decisions should not be made based on a blanket policy. -

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concerns about the impact on children's education if they have to change schools frequently due to temporary housing situations.

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### Question 17

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Theme	Comments
<b>Concerns about suitability</b>	- worries about the definition of "nearest suitable school" and whether the term is ambiguous or may lead to discrimination. - arguments that the proposed rule does not account for situations where the nearest school may not meet the child's needs, and a further school would be more suitable. - recommendations for flexibility to consider the reasons for the school change and its impact on the child's welfare before denying transport assistance. - concerns that the policy may discourage managed moves, which are intended to provide a fresh start for pupils at risk of exclusion or facing crises. - suggestions for providing financial support if the move is deemed to be in the child's best interests.
<b>Case-by-case approach</b>	- arguments for a case-by-case approach to assess the eligibility for transport assistance when a child changes schools. - suggestions for considering individual circumstances before making a decision. - worries about potential reassessment workload for wbc employees if the criteria need to be reviewed every time a child moves schools. - recommendations for providing funded transport to the nearest suitable school and allowing parents to be accountable for the remaining mileage costs if they choose a different school.
<b>Rigid and unfair policy</b>	- criticisms of the proposed rigid policy and its implications for children and parents. - worries that penalizing parents for finding a better provision for their child may not be in the child's best interest. - arguments against the policy for potentially forcing children to stay in a school that does not meet their needs or may be detrimental to their well-being. - suggestions for a more flexible approach and case-by-case assessments rather than outright refusal of funding.
<b>Managed moves</b>	- concerns about the impact of the policy on managed moves and their intended purpose to provide a fresh start for pupils at risk of exclusion. - recommendations to consider the needs and welfare of the child in managed moves when deciding on transport assistance. - worries that the policy may hinder the success of managed moves or parents' willingness to engage in them if it leads to increased financial burden.

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**Need for definition and examples** - requests for a clear definition of "managed moves" to understand the criteria better. - suggestions for providing examples of what constitutes a managed move and how parents can prove that their nearer schools are not suitable.

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**Impact on bullying incidents** - arguments that children should not be bullied to ensure they receive transport assistance. - concerns about school environments where bullying may be a factor influencing a school change. - recommendations for assessing the reasons for a school change carefully, particularly if it involves issues like bullying.

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**Criticisms of the council** - criticisms directed at the council for seemingly prioritizing cost-saving measures over the welfare of children. - accusations of penny-pinching by the authority, which may negatively impact children's interests. - references to unnecessary spending on other projects while cutting transport for children.

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#### Question 18

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Theme	Comments
Positive feedback	- i think this is a good idea so parents can choose where to send the allocated money to benefit the family situation
Discrimination	- discrimination
Teamwork issues	- this makes a lot of sense as i've had to deal with teams not working together and different panels being needed for each bit
Insufficient information	- not enough info provided.

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**Balancing family rights** - anything that makes things easier for families in this category, but doesn't remove their rights, is good.

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**General acceptance** - that sounds sensible

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**Concerns about limited funding** - it is already very difficult to fund these things and money is limited. This will make things more difficult for these families

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